

International Eco-Cities Initiative

December 2014

Welcome to the latest issue of the International Eco-Cities Initiative newsletter. The bulletin (published three times per year) provides information about our research, events and publications, and seeks to contribute to analysis and discourse on 'eco-cities' and sustainable urbanism of various kinds across the world.

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Forthcoming workshops: Eco-City Frameworks at a Crossroads

Please join us for the third set of workshops hosted as part of our Leverhulme International Network. These will include presentations of key findings from our international comparative research into eco-city indicator frameworks over the past 2-3 years. This research points to a possible convergence of standards in the near future – and yet certain overarching questions remain unanswered. Is standardisation desirable? Whose interests will it serve? What forms should it take? Eco-city frameworks, in other words, appear to be at a 'crossroads', and at this stage your input will be invaluable. We have arranged two workshops in London, on Wednesday 11th February 2015, 16:30-19:00 (at the University of Westminster), and on Friday 13th March 2015, 10:30-13:00, The Bartlett (University College London). Please send an email to our Network Facilitator, Rob Cowley (r.cowley@westminster.ac.uk) for more information if you would be interested in attending either of these. Dates for the workshops elsewhere will be advertised locally and on our website in the new year.

- [See the programme and reports from previous workshops](#)

Dresden Nexus Conference 2015

Our Leverhulme Network research partner Bernhard Mueller (Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development) and Simon Joss are jointly convening a session on 'Eco-cities – Urban environmental development and the NEXUS approach' at the first *Dresden Nexus* conference, which will take place between 25-27 March 2015, in Dresden (Germany). The 'nexus' approach to the sustainable management of water, soil and waste integrates environmental management and governance across sectors and scales. Under the theme 'Global Change, Sustainable Development Goals and the Nexus Approach', the conference will bring together UN organizations, UNU institutes, member states, German ministries, national and international organizations as well as individual researchers and NGOs from around the world.

- [See the conference programme and register online](#)

Research Essay: China's Eco-Industrial Parks

In this essay, Dr Chang Yu outlines the development of 'Eco-Industrial Parks' in China, many of which have taken on increasingly urban characteristics as workers have settled nearby. She argues that policies in future need not only to be adjusted to ensure better environmental performance within the parks themselves, but also to encompass their relationship with the wider urban setting that they often generate. While China's industrial parks have traditionally been associated with high levels of pollution, policy adjustments in future may realise their potential for playing a key catalytic role in the furtherment of sustainable urban development. This research project was supported by Next Generation Infrastructures Foundation, and was co-supervised by one of our research partners, Prof. Martin de Jong (Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands & Fudan University, China).

- [Read 'Eco-Cities in the Making? The Transformation of China's Industrial Parks'](#)

Sustainable Innovation 2014: 10 Key Lessons

The 2014 Sustainable Innovation conference took place in Copenhagen during November, with the theme 'Cities and Regions as Catalysts for Smart and Sustainable Innovation'. Simon Joss presented findings from a case study of BioRegional's 'One Planet Living' framework, and was a panellist in a roundtable discussion on 'Driving Sustainable Innovation in Cities'. Martin Charter (Centre for Sustainable Design, University for the Creative Arts) has summarised the 'key lessons' from the event on the conference website. Among other things, these emphasise the ongoing need to think beyond 'technical' solutions to urban sustainability, and reconsider the relationship between 'top-down' leadership and 'bottom-up' innovation.

- [Read the 10 Key Lessons](#)

Partner profile: Yvonne Rydin — UCL

Professor Yvonne Rydin, one of the partners in our Leverhulme International Research Network, is Chair of Planning, Environment and Public Policy at University College London's Bartlett School of Planning. She is a specialist in governance for urban sustainability, with a particular interest in networks of governing, the role of social capital and the potential for learning to deliver sustainable urban development. Most recently, she has been exploring the potential of a socio-technical studies approach for understanding urban governance for sustainability. Among her past research projects are a study for HEFCE's Higher Education Innovation Fund on Sustainable Construction and Planning in London, an EU FRP5 project on the use of sustainability indicators in several European cities, an EPSRC project on Challenging Lock-in through Urban Energy Systems and, as Chair of the UCL Lancet Commission, an investigation into the role of urban planning in delivering health improvements. Yvonne has published extensively on related topics – her latest books being *The Future of Planning* (Policy Press, 2013), *The Purpose of Planning* (Policy Press, 2011), and *Governing for Sustainable Urban Development* (Earthscan, 2010). She has experience as a consultant working with indicators, and is an accredited Mediator and a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

- [Yvonne Rydin's web profile](#)

Looking Forwards to 2015

As the culmination of our Leverhulme International Network, we are organising a major event in London on 12 June. At this, our research partners will share the final results from our three-year programme of international comparative research into eco-city frameworks. We hope some of you will also be able to join us for the launch of Simon Joss' new book, *Sustainable Cities: Governing for Urban Innovation*, which will be published in the spring. Finally, we are very pleased to announce our collaboration in a three-year ESRC-funded international research project on 'Smart eco-cities for a green economy: a comparative study of Europe and China', led by Federico Caprotti (King's College London), with Simon Joss as one of the co-investigators. The project, beginning in April 2015, will involve research teams from China, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and the UK. Further information on all the above will appear in future newsletters. In the meantime, we would like to wish you all a happy and productive 2015.

LinkedIn Discussion Forum

The 'International Eco-Cities Forum', our online discussion board, now has over 360 members, including researchers, policy-makers and practitioners. It invites contributions from around the world, aimed at discussing and sharing information, reflections and practical learning on sustainable urbanism in its various forms.

- [Join the International Eco-Cities Forum](#)

Further Information

Please see the [International Eco-Cities Initiative website](#) for further information and to sign up for news and events.

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