



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



CENTRE FOR
URBAN STUDIES

CENTRE FOR URBAN STUDIES

Research Priority Area

SELF-ASSESSMENT 2012-2016

Centre for Urban Studies
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PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING FORM, IN ENGLISH

1	<p>Description of the RPA's organisation during 2012-2016</p> <p><i>This section should show</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• who the key principal investigators are,• how the RPA is organized,• how it is embedded in the UvA, and• what its key sources of funding are. <p><i>(max. 400 words)</i></p> <hr/> <p>Word count (excluding footnotes): 393</p> <p>Key principal investigators</p> <p>A crucial strength of the Research Priority Area Urban Studies/Centre for Urban Studies¹ is its broad base of researchers². To us, <i>all</i> these researchers are 'key'. In Appendix 9 we highlight Full Professors and other members who in 2012-2016 had a leading role in research acquisition.</p> <p>Organization of the RPA</p> <p>The RPA is staffed by a director³ (0,2 FTE), a coordinator (0,8 FTE), and a student assistant (0,4 FTE). They are supported by an Executive Board (EB) comprising the full professors of the research program groups participating in the RPA, and an Advisory Board (AB) of younger, up-and coming scholars. The EB's main function is to discuss and agree major decisions, and that of the AB is to generate new ideas. The low-threshold Seed grant program⁴ is a key means of providing opportunities for the initiative of all members, and particularly the younger ones. Communication with members is provided by the website (http://urbanstudies.uva.nl/), a frequent newsletter (every 4-5 weeks), and direct announcement (e-mail, posters) of events.</p> <p>Embedding in the UvA</p> <p>The RPA aims to realize the collaboration potential of a critical mass of researchers at the UvA focusing on urban phenomena but scattered across different research groups and disciplines, presently including Human Geography, Planning, International Development Studies, Sociology, Political Science, Anthropology, and Computational Science⁵. In addition, we collaborate with the interdisciplinary Centre for Sustainable Development Studies (http://csds.uva.nl/) and the ASCA Cities project at the Faculty of Humanities (http://www.cities.humanities.uva.nl/).</p>
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¹ Please note that in this report and Appendixes the terms 'Research Priority Area Urban Studies' and 'Centre for Urban Studies' are used interchangeably and respectively abbreviated as 'RPA' and 'CUS' - 'Research Priority Area (RPA) Urban Studies' is the official term within the University of Amsterdam, 'Center for Urban Studies' (CUS) is the term for all other purposes, including communication inside the RPA and with the outside world, as on the website: <http://urbanstudies.uva.nl/>.

² At the end of 2016 these included 108 researchers, of which 50 tenured staff (15 full professors, 7 extraordinary professors, 11 associate professors, and 22 assistant professors) and 58 non-tenured staff (13 post doc researchers, 4 lecturers, and 41 PhD students), for a total of 58 FTEs. See Appendix 3 for details of researchers.

³ In 2012-2016, Jan Nijman until 31-8-2015, and Luca Bertolini since 1-9-2015

⁴ See Appendix 12 and <http://urbanstudies.uva.nl/funding--grants/seed-grant/seed-grant-open-call-%E2%80%93-centre-for-urban-studies.html>

⁵ See full list in Appendix 3

Key sources of funding

The single source of funding of the RPA is the 300K€ per year of the UvA RPA policy. With this we fund the initiatives of the members ('other costs' in Table 1 below), the Urban Studies postdoc/UD positions, part-time scientific personnel including the director, and the team coordinating and supporting the activities of the RPA ('personnel costs').

Table 1: Budget 2012-2016

BUDGET	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Benefits	8.500	373.762	300.000	300.375	300.834
External benefits	10.000	10.000		375	834
Other benefits	10.000	10.000		375	834
Internal benefits	427.524	363.762	300.000	300.000	300.000
Budget	447.524	363.762	300.000	300.000	300.000
Costs	-324.139	-498.582	-339.508	-318.425	-298.140
Personnel costs	-206.807	-295.258	-220.694	-201.051	-183.550
Personnel costs (extern)	-3.211	-5.189	-3.806	-1.812	-8.410
Personnel costs (intern)	-203.596	-290.070	-216.889	-199.239	-175.139
Other costs	-117.332	-203.323	-118.814	-117.374	-114.590
Result	-315.639	-124.820	-39.508	-18.050	2.694
Ultimo	526.286	401.466	361.958	343.907	346.601

2 Description of the RPA's strategy during 2012-2016

This section should elucidate

- *the vision/mission of the RPA,*
- *the specific targets (research, societal relevance, strategic) the RPA had,*
- *the strategies followed to achieve the targets.*

(max. 400 words)

Word count (excluding footnotes): 400

Vision and mission

With half of humanity living in urban areas and the world projected to be in a process of 'planetary urbanisation', many vital societal challenges are now first and foremost linked to the urban context. The efforts and added value of the RPA are directed at facilitating the interdisciplinary, international, and societal collaborations that are essential to understand and address these challenges⁶.

Specific targets

The former self-assessment stated that the RPA's aim was "to establish one of the world's leading centres of urban studies in terms of research, education, and policy studies" by building "on existing strengths at the UvA in various social sciences" and developing "synergies that allow innovative and cutting edge-research ventures and curricula" (p.1).

It furthermore stated that "In the near future, we foresee a closer integration of research and teaching ... In terms of research we will seek ever greater synergy in the formulation of

⁶ In particular, our research agenda focusses on questions of urban economic transformations and equity; social inclusion and citizenship; migration; environmental sustainability and urban metabolism; urban conflict, violence, and security; housing; mobility; planning and governance.

collaborative research within the FMG but also beyond it ... In all, we seek to maintain a cohesive *Centre for Urban Studies* that is selective in membership, dynamic and adaptable in terms of funding opportunities, and stable in terms of reputation and niche.” (p.4)

Strategies

In order to enhance research collaboration, we have promoted initiatives bridging different disciplines and research groups within the RPA (see ‘Interdisciplinarity’, in section 3 below); for the sake of cohesion and selectivity, membership is still mostly limited to the FMG (the social sciences), but there are increasingly joint activities and project-based collaboration with scholars outside (as shown by grant acquisitions, seed grants, and events⁷). Next, we have invested in promoting international collaborations, by supporting a continuous flow of visits by international scholars⁸, and activities to explore the scope for international collaboration, including a series of ‘Urban China Research Seminars’ and two larger, joint seminars in Mumbai and Sheffield. Finally, we have sought to enhance collaboration with societal parties, especially by means of an extensive and growing program of outreach activities⁹.

In order to enhance research-teaching integration, the selective Research Master Urban Studies has been consolidated¹⁰, the Master of Urban and Regional Planning and Master of Human Geography have been renewed and internationalized¹¹, and a new Minor of Urban Studies has been implemented. RPA members also have a significant role in the interdisciplinary bachelor ‘Future Planet Studies’. Finally, several summer schools with an urban focus have been initiated¹².

3 Description of key results for the RPA for 2012-2016

This section should list the key results of the RPA, in its entirety, regarding the following subjects, connecting as closely as possible to the SEP 2015-2020. The text can refer to appendices(a list of possible appendices is provided below).

1. *research quality/excellence*
 - *according to the SEP categories ‘products, use, recognition’ (e.g., citation impact, personal grants, project grants, etc.)*
 2. *societal relevance (if not applicable, please provide justification)*
 - *according to the SEP categories ‘products, use, recognition’*
 3. *scientific case*
 - *innovation of and visibility and impact on international academic field*
 4. *talent case*
 - *ability to attract and retain (international) research talent*
 5. *external funding*
 - *ability to attract GS2, GS3 and GS4*
 6. *interdisciplinarity; key academic and non-academic partnerships*
 - *describe how (interdisciplinary) partnerships help to achieve results 1-5 above*
- ... (max. 1000 words)

Word count (excluding footnotes): 976

⁷ See Appendix 10, 12 and 13 respectively.

⁸ See Appendix 14

⁹ See section 4 ‘Outreach activities’ in Appendix 5

¹⁰ 15 1st year students in 2015-2016, more than half international, and enrolment 40% up in 2016-2017

¹¹ 95 students in the two combined in 2015-2016, one third international

¹² Including: *Housing, People and City Spaces, Shifting cities and Planning Paradigms in the 21st Century, Thinking the City: Dynamics of making Amsterdam, Planning and Living in Cities, and Planning the Cycling City.*

Research quality and excellence

Products

Table 2 shows the publication totals of RPA members in 2012-2016. Especially worth noting is the strong growth of higher quality publications (refereed articles and monographs – see also Appendix 8), and the sharp increase in productivity (output per research FTE)¹³.

Table 2: Research Output 2012-2016

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Refereed articles	76	87	118	133	132
Non-refereed articles	10	2	38	5	3
Books	3	6	4	7	15
Book chapters	54	52	37	71	64
PhD-theses	1	0	12	10	3
Professional publications	42	51	21	46	23
Publications aimed at the general public	72	88	62	79	71
Total publications	258	286	293	351	311
FTE research (incl. externally funded)	57.56	60.43	55.01	46.98	36.76
Output per FTE	4.48	4.73	5.33	7.47	8.46

Use

Appendix 4 lists the top 10 most cited works published in 2012-2016, after discounting for the time lag from publication to citation. Appendix 8 shows total citations in 2016 by year of publication.

Recognition

Many RPA members hold senior positions in editorial teams of scientific journals¹⁴. The large number of members with such responsibilities is once again an indication of the very broad and diverse base of quality researchers of the RPA.

Four young RPA members have obtained prestigious personal research grants in 2012-2016¹⁵:

- Rivke Jaffe (NWO-VENI, NWO-VIDI, ERC Starting grant)
- Richard Ronald (ERC Starting grant)
- Willem Boterman (NWO-VENI)
- Robbin-Jan van Duijne (NWO-Research Talent)

¹³ Appendix 11 lists the publications by the scientific personnel directly appointed by the RPA (the Urban Studies Post Docs/UDs).

¹⁴ Appendix 15 lists the editorial responsibilities held by RPA members in international scientific journals. In order to focus on higher level, senior appointments, we excluded from the list participation in editorial boards and guest editorships of single theme issues.

¹⁵ The first three have obtained the grant during their appointment as Urban Studies Post Docs/UDs (see Appendix 11), showing the great effectiveness of the scheme. The fourth (Robbin-Jan van Duijne) also obtained the grant during a direct appointment by the RPA (see Appendix 11).

Societal relevance

Products

Table 2 above documents the substantial amount of professional publications, and publications aimed at the general public that members are able to produce, in addition to scientific publications. Section 4 of Appendix 5 and Appendix 12 and 13 document the extensive and growing program of outreach activities initiated and supported by the RPA.

Use

Arguably, the most important indicator of research use by societal parties is their direct participation in and funding of research projects. Members of the RPA have been highly successful in both respects, and Appendix 10 documents this.

In total, research in which societal partners directly participate and/or co-finance the project amounts to **€4.963.465** for projects acquired in 2012-2016.

Recognition

Recognition by societal parties is of course also and importantly documented by their willingness to participate in and/or fund research projects. Furthermore, societal parties have funded seven professorships in 2012-2016, listed in section 2 of Appendix 5. Finally, several of our members are active in civil society advisory bodies, as Appendix 16 shows.

Scientific case

The high and growing number and share of international peer reviewed publications and monographs (see Table 2 above) is perhaps the best proof of the *innovative character* of the work of the RPA members. This is also underscored by the success in securing grants for projects in international research programs, totalling **€8.482.306** during this period (see Appendix 10).

All of the above is also proof of the *international visibility* of the RPA and its members. A further indication is the constant flow of international visits (see Appendix 14), as is the high and growing number of views of the website (from 11.000 visitors in 2012 to 38.810 in 2016).

Citations by peers are a well-recognized marker of *impact*. Appendix 4 lists the top 10 cited works published in 2012-2016. Appendix 8 shows total citations.

Talent case

The most direct evidence of the ability of the RPA to attract and retain talent is the Urban Studies Post Doc scheme (see Appendix 11). The program is aimed at young, talented researchers with a high potential. If successful in major grant acquisition, and if consistent with the department personnel plan, the temporary appointment is made permanent. Out of the seven Urban Studies Post Docs who have completed their appointment in the 2012-2016 period five have now a permanent position. In one case (Rivke Jaffe) this has also resulted in the creation of a new professorial chair in 'Cities, Politics and Culture'. In a second one (Richard Ronald) a professorial chair with an interdisciplinary focus on urban housing is about to be finalized.

External funding

Appendix 10 documents the impressive acquisition of research grants (GS2) and contract research (GS3), a constant stream despite increasing competition both in the Netherlands and abroad, totalling **€14.803.362** for projects acquired in 2012-2016. The quality must be also noted: the focus is on substantial, multiple year funding, allowing the hiring of at least a PhD or a Post Doc.

Interdisciplinarity; key academic and non-academic partnerships

All of the above could not have been achieved without collaboration, and its active cultivation by the RPA. Collaboration – interdisciplinary, international, and with societal parties – is a natural attitude and practice among researchers of the RPA. The RPA aims at legitimizing, facilitating and further deepening and broadening this attitude and practice. The acquisitions documented in Appendix 10 are an evident proof of the bonus of collaboration: most projects, and all international projects and contract research projects, formally require collaboration with other disciplines, scholars abroad, and/or societal parties. A strong anchoring in national and international academic networks, and in networks with practice, is also a vital condition for the large number of editorships, membership in advisory bodies, and overall visibility.

All investments and activities of the RPA focus on promoting collaboration. The Urban Studies Post Doc program (see Appendix 11) requires the position to be sponsored by two members in different research program groups, and for the Post Doc to be appointed on a 50/50 basis in the two groups. The Seed grants program started in the fall of 2015 (see Appendix 12) is expressly aimed at supporting cross-cutting initiatives between RPA members from different research groups, between RPA members and scholars in other universities, both in the Netherlands and especially abroad, and between RPA members and societal partners. The international workshops in Mumbai in 2015 and in Sheffield in 2016 were specifically aimed at exploring possibilities of joint projects.

4 Description of added value of the RPA-dedicated funding received (if applicable)

This section should show how (additional) RPA-dedicated funding (from university or faculty) was used, and how the use of RPA-dedicated funding helped to achieve RPA goals (refer to the proposal on the basis of which the additional funding was received). This section only applies to the use of RPA-dedicated funding.

(400 words)

Word count (excluding footnotes): 392

Our budget and expenditures are detailed in Table 1 above. While there have been some fluctuations across the years the underlying spending philosophy has been constant. Expenditures have been directed to the following three posts, each roughly taking up one third of the total:

-The CUS team, as of end 2016 consisting of a director (0,2 FTE), a coordinator (0,8 FTE) and a student assistant (0,4 FTE). The key functions of the team are the enablement, coordination and administrative and logistical support of the initiatives of the members of the Centre, and the communication both inside and outside the Centre. Notably, without a team of this size the activities mentioned in the following point would not have been possible.

-The diverse activities of the Centre, including the outreach activities, the seed grant activities, the events and lecture series, the international visits¹⁶, and special activities as the international workshops in Mumbai and Sheffield. The rationale behind this rich program of activities is that we believe that the Centre exists in the first place to add value to the work of all of its members, and in particular to facilitate initiatives that would not happen within the existing program group and department structure. The latter point is a key selection criterion when deciding what to fund (e.g. requiring that the initiative involves members of different program groups). A second key selection criterion is that initiatives contain the potential of a future development of significance (e.g. establishing the conditions for a successful research grant application). Since 2015 this approach has been consolidated and formalized in the seed grant program described in Appendix 12. While it is too soon to document the spin-offs of this program, starting in 2017 we will focus our expenditure strategy more (albeit not exclusively) on supporting further development of the most promising 'seeds'.

¹⁶ See respectively section 4 in Appendix 5, Appendix 12, Appendix 13, and Appendix 14

-The postdoc program, which has allowed the appointment of one to two postdocs per year for a period of two years, and is documented in detail in Appendix 11. The program has been essential in attracting talent to the University of Amsterdam, and has been the springboard for the successful acquisition of prestigious personal grants, eventually resulting in permanent appointments, and in two cases even in the creation of new professorial chairs. In terms of returns to investment there is hardly a stronger case to be made.

5 Description of plans for the near future (2017-2021)

This section should provide insights into the RPA's viability (cf. SEP 2015-2021), based on

- *a SWOT-analysis (using Appendix D4 in SEP 2015-2021),*
- *the competitive advantage of the RPA compared to international peer research units,*
- *the specific targets (research, societal relevance) and strategy of the RPA.*

(400-800 words)

Word count (excluding footnotes): 794

SWOT Analysis

<i>Internal organization</i>	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<p>A critical mass of urban studies scholars, from different disciplinary backgrounds, with strong publication and grant acquisition records¹⁷; embedded in performant research groups¹⁸; collaborating beyond disciplinary borders¹⁹</p> <p>Interdisciplinary exchange also beyond the RPA, the social sciences (natural sciences, engineering, humanities), and academia (societal stakeholders); combining strong embeddedness in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and internationally²⁰</p> <p>Strong record in the attraction and maintenance of talent²¹</p> <p>A highly successful Seed grants program promoting cross-cutting, innovative initiatives²²</p> <p>An extensive and targeted program of outreach events²³</p>	<p>Limitations on financial resources and time horizon do not allow for more substantial investments, e.g. additional research time for RPA members, self-funded PhD positions, longer stays for and/or more visiting scholars</p> <p>The potentials for interdisciplinary collaboration in research, integration with teaching, and societal impact can be realized even more</p>

¹⁷ See Table 2 and Appendix 10; see also Appendix 7

¹⁸ See Appendix 7, among more showing that Geography at the University of Amsterdam is ranked 1st in Continental Europe

¹⁹ As among more documented by the joint seed grant activities, see Appendix 12; and by the still small, but rapidly growing number of joint publications by RPA members from different research program groups, see Appendix 17

²⁰ All of the above is best shown by the participation and often leading position of RPA members in national and international research consortia (see Appendix 10)

²¹ As most notably with the Post Doc program (see Appendix 11)

²² See Appendix 12

²³ See section 4 in Appendix 5, and Appendix 13

	<p>Direct feed of research into education programs (including an interdisciplinary Research Master Urban Studies²⁴)</p> <p>A stimulating environment for visiting scholars from abroad²⁵</p>	
<i>External Context</i>	<p>Opportunities</p> <p>The major and defining opportunity is that urbanization is expected to continue worldwide, and with it the demand for knowledge to help cope with its challenges. This demand is reflected in policy agendas²⁶, and in dedicated research funding schemes²⁷. The latter increasingly demand the interdisciplinary collaborations that are common practice within the RPA, and focus on topics matching the RPA's expertise.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>A reduction of structural research and higher education funding at the national level would shrink the human resource base (e.g. the granted minimum of research time for RPA members).</p> <p>An abandonment of the UvA RPA policy would subtract essential resources for facilitating collaboration, and undertaking innovative activities.</p> <p>Increasing competition for, and dependence on external funding of PhD students</p>

Competitive advantage of the RPA compared to international peer research units

Urban studies scholars at the UvA are embedded in a formal RPA or 'Centre', which has the key advantage of boosting support and visibility of interdisciplinary activities. The RPA is also distinctive in that it is a network organization²⁸, which gives us the advantage to flexibly realize collaboration potentials between the members of a large and diverse pool of researchers.

Research units that are most directly comparable, include:

- Manchester Urban Institute, University of Manchester (<http://www.mui.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- Urban School, Sciences Po, Paris (<http://blogs.sciences-po.fr/recherche-villes/>)

²⁴ <http://gsss.uva.nl/programmes/research-masters/content3/urban-studies-research-msc.html>

²⁵ See Appendix 14

²⁶ Examples are the 'New Urban Agenda' of the UN, and the 'Urban Agenda' of the EU. An example at the local level directly relevant for the RPA is the municipality of Amsterdam, which on its website states that "Amsterdam is a Smart City par excellence: with the help of knowledge institutions and businesses it deals innovatively and sustainably with urban problems"

²⁷ See e.g. recently the cross-cutting, €232 million call 'Smart and Sustainable Cities' of the Horizon 2020 work programme 2016-2017, or the multi-year Joint Programming Initiative 'Urban Europe'. Cities and urban contexts are also central in the H2020 draft work programme 2018-2020, as e.g. shown by the draft texts of the calls 'socioeconomic and cultural transformations of the fourth industrial revolution', 'low-carbon and sustainable transport', 'demonstrating systemic urban development for circular and regenerative cities', 'strengthening international cooperation on sustainable urbanisation: nature-based solutions for restoration and rehabilitation of urban ecosystems' and 'smart cities and communities'. At the national level, 'Smart, livable cities' is one of the 25 priority themes of the Nationale Wetenschaps Agenda (NWA – Dutch national research agenda).

²⁸ Rather than a self-standing, enclosed organization, as other urban studies RPAs are, including LSE Cities, University of Sheffield Urban Institute, or CUNY Centre for Urban Research

- Georg Simmel Center for Metropolitan Studies, Humboldt University, Berlin (<https://www.intzent.hu-berlin.de/en/gsz>)
- Centre for URBan research, University of York (<https://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/research/groups/curb/>)
- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University, Melbourne (<http://cur.org.au/>)

What differentiates us from these units is the combination of:

- A large and diverse number of highly performing, internationally operating scholars²⁹
- Embedding in an internationally leading social science institute³⁰
- Being rooted in a city and country with a distinctive history of urbanisation as well as urban scholarship and policy innovation

Targets (research, societal relevance) and strategy

The overall aim is to continue to realize the opportunities generated by the demand for knowledge to address worldwide urbanization challenges, while coping with the threats of diminishing resources.

<i>We aim at ...</i>	<i>We will pursue this by ...</i>
... being a catalyst of interdisciplinary knowledge development, both for own members, visiting scholars, and partners in research networks	... continuing activities that generate new ideas and projects (e.g. seed grants program, network day, international visits, international workshops), while focusing more on supporting the follow-up of promising initiatives and on expanding the disciplinary range of collaboration (e.g. humanities, natural sciences)
... attracting and maintaining talent, and being a breeding ground for recipients of prestigious personal grants (NWO veni-vidi-vici, ERC, Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowships, NWO-Research Talent)	... continuing and possibly extending the post doc program (e.g. with shorter grant-writing fellowships) ... supporting grant-writing by brokering professional help from within the university and providing additional help (e.g. grant-writing workshops, peer-reviews, sharing of lessons)
... having a pivotal role in national and international research consortia	... giving priority to seed grants applications and networking activities that have a potential to result in a research consortium ... brokering professional help from within the university, lobbying for more structural support (e.g. for project management) and providing additional help (e.g. student-assistants)
... being a highly effective vehicle of knowledge dissemination and societal impact	... continuing the outreach activities and the collaboration with public venues
... being a key player in the Amsterdam 'urban research and policy laboratory'	... facilitating exchange and collaboration with complementary knowledge institutions in Amsterdam, the municipality and other local stakeholders ³¹

²⁹ As documented in section 1 and elsewhere in this report

³⁰ The AISSR: <http://aissr.uva.nl/>

³¹ A crucial opportunity in this respect is realizing the collaboration potential between the RPA and the engineering-based Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (AMS-Institute: <http://www.ams-institute.org/>). We can build for this on successful, early models. See in particular the 'Platform for Urban Mobility' in section 4 of Appendix 5.