

Futures Forum Seminar

When Thursday 25 August, 12-1pm.

Where Ministry for the Environment, 23 Kate Sheppard Place, Thorndon, Wellington.

Location map: www.mfe.govt.nz/about/contact/map.html

Creating Futures Project (www.creatingfutures.org.nz)

The purpose of the NZ Government (Foundation of Science, Research and Technology) funded Creating Futures project (2006 – 2010) was to develop and apply planning and communication tools to make informed choices for the future. A key output of the project was an integrated spatial model of the Waikato region (WISE – Waikato Integrated Scenario Explorer), which will be the focus of the seminar.

Objectives

The four year Creating Futures project has recently been completed. The seminar will outline the integrated regional model (WISE) and demonstrate its application for spatial planning and decision making using real-life examples.

The aim of the seminar is to:

1. provide an overview of the project and its outputs
2. describe the 'Waikato Scenarios'
3. describe WISE (Waikato Integrated Scenario Explorer) and its uses
4. discuss the capability of WISE and its potential application for local/central government strategic planning and policy analysis.

Agenda

- Creating Futures project: An overview.
- The 'Waikato Scenarios'
- WISE – an integrated spatial simulation model
- Examples of using WISE for the analysis, evaluation and communication of policy options.

Presenters' profiles

Dr Beat Huser – Manager Sustainability Programme, Waikato Regional Council, Hamilton, New Zealand. Project Leader Creating Futures.

Beat holds a PhD in Environmental Sciences from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich, Switzerland. He has research experience in Europe, USA, India and New Zealand, and has been involved in local government in New Zealand for over 20 years. In his present position at the Waikato Regional Council, Beat is manager of sustainability projects, responsible for indicator development, state of the environment and sustainability reporting and the sharing of information in collaborative initiatives with other agencies and the community (www.choosingfutures.co.nz/marco-indicators). He is a member of various national working groups, advisory and steering committees representing the Waikato Regional Council and local government on current resource management and sustainability issues.

Project summary

Creating Futures is a new and innovative four year research project aimed at developing, testing and implementing integrated tools designed to assist long term and integrated planning and decision making. The project, lead by the Waikato Regional Council, brings together an interdisciplinary team of environmental and social researchers, economists and policy analysts from New Zealand and abroad. Creating Futures' contributors include Landcare Research, AgResearch, the Ecological Economics Research Centre of NZ (EERNZ), Market Economics Ltd, NIWA, Scion, The Research Institute for Knowledge Systems (RIKS, the Netherlands) the University of Waikato and the Université de Versailles Saint Quentin-en-Yvelines (France).

The project had two specific objectives.

- 1) Developing processes to enable evaluation, deliberation and choice of alternative futures for social, environmental, economic and cultural changes through the use of scenario analysis linked to multi-criteria evaluation frameworks.
- 2) Developing a spatial decision support system (SDSS) that:
 - integrates cultural, economic, environmental, and social components
 - quantitatively forecasts plausible future scenarios of regional development as part of long term integrated planning
 - helps monitor progress towards achieving long term sustainable community goals and outcomes.

The tools developed through the project will expose links and trade-offs between economic, environmental and social/cultural outcomes, including cumulative effects over space and time. The information, knowledge and tools from the project can be widely used and applied for the council's (and other organisations') planning and decision making.

The research project and resulting tools (such as WISE) will be designed to closely link to council's strategic and statutory planning processes. This provides a direct pathway for uptake of the information, tools and knowledge gained from the project. Building council's capacity and capability for integrated spatial planning is a key aspect of the project.

Project leader: Dr Beat Huser, Waikato Regional Council.

Science and objective two leader : Dr Daniel Rutledge, Landcare Research Ltd.

Objective one leader: Dr Liz Wedderburn, AgResearch.

Future plans

- Ongoing funding has been secured for the next ten years through the Waikato Regional Council's Long Term Plan 2009-2019 to:
 - embed WISE into the council's planning and decision making processes
 - further enhance its scope and functionality (such as, transport, ecosystem services, coastal/marine)
 - explore, document and communicate practical examples and case studies
 - build in-house capability for the use of integrated spatial models for policy
 - use WISE as a tool for spatial planning in the Waikato and the upper North Island (Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty).
- A new six year government-funded (MSI) project has commenced in October 2009 working with Auckland and Wellington councils to develop a similar tool for those two regions focusing on urban systems, see www.sustainablepathways.org.nz. Several Creating Futures project partners are also involved in the Sustainable Pathways project.
- A National Advisory Board has been set-up to promote and coordinate the development and use of integrated spatial planning tools. Members are potential users of such tools from central and local government (www.sustainablepathways.org.nz/about-the-project/advisory-group/).
- Funding for the development of a web-based directory of spatial models and other decision support systems has been approved by MSI/Envirolink for 2011/12 (EERNZ/Waikato Regional Council and Tasman District Council).

For further information see project website
www.creatingfutures.org.nz

