



Swarm Planning: The Development of a Planning Methodology to Deal with Climate Adaptation

(Springer Theses)

Rob Roggema

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This book shows that the problem of climate adaptation, which is described in social planning terms as 'wicked,' is at odds with the contemporary practice of spatial planning. The author proposes a new adjusted framework which is more adaptable to unpredictable, wicked, dynamic and non-linear processes. The inspiration for this new method is the behaviour of swarms: bees, ants, birds and fish are capable of self-organization, which enables the system to become less vulnerable to sudden environmental changes. The framework proposed in Swarm Planning consists of these four elements: Two levels of complexity, the first being the whole system and the second its individual components. Each of these has different attributes for adapting to change. Five layers, consisting of networks, focal points, unplanned space, natural resources and emerging occupation patterns. Each layer has its own spatial dynamic, and each is connected to a spatial scale. Non-linear processes, which emerge in different parts of the framework and include emerging patterns, connectedness and tipping points among others. Two planning processes; the first, 'from small to large' works upward from the slowest changing elements to more rapidly-changing ones. The second, 'on the list of partners' addresses each layer from networks through emerging occupation patterns. Swarm Planning applies this framework to a series of pilot studies, and appraises its performance using criteria for an adaptive landscape. The results show that the use of the Swarm Planning Framework reduces the vulnerability of landscapes as well as the impact of climate hazards and disasters, improves response to unexpected hazards and contains adaptation strategies.

“This book is a must for planners in government and the private sector as it outlines the concept, strategies and techniques for swarm planning. It is also an important guide for policymakers looking to engage communities in a dialogue about the adaptation planning process.”

Professor John Martin, La Trobe University

“The ultimate value of the book lies in encouraging the planning community to consider options that go far beyond those offered by business-as-usual planning methodologies developed for a set of operating conditions that are fast becoming obsolete. As such it makes an important and much needed contribution to the field.”

Assistant Professor Dr. Chrisna du Plessis, University of Pretoria



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