

## Landmark move possible in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is moving closer to being able to adopt a land-value tax.

The province's register of land titles is set to be completed well before 2010 without having to wait for casual land transactions. It will then be in plan form. This will not only make it the only part of Britain with a register of land values before 2010 but also suitable for use in a landvaluescape model. The development potentially opens the way for implementation of a land tax. Northern Ireland is able to choose how it funds local government, and because the same property tax is used for business and residential property, there is the chance of a province-wide reform. The Department of Valuation and Lands has decided to adopt computer-aided mass assessment (CAMA) for residential revaluation and a company associated with the University of Ulster has launched its own version of 'landvaluescape' modelling.

Last November Tony Vickers, the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain's Chief Executive, gave a lecture to the GI2001 conference, organised by the University of Ulster's Faculty of the Built Environment and supported by the Northern Ireland Executive. Vickers's talk focused on the origins and direction of his research and sought to explain how landvaluescapes can 'reveal the economic reality - intangible but real nonetheless - of each community. The province's rating system was never reformed when Britain was forced to accept the Community Charge, better known at 'poll tax, which was replaced by Council Tax and Uniform Business Rate.