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Francis Eric Knight-Britton

One of those outstanding innovators whose work will have the greatest likely future significance and impact over the long-term... and likely become or remain "key players" in the technological drama unfolding in coming years. – World Technology 2002 Environment Award citation.

Trained as a development economist, Francis Eric Knight-Britton is Managing Director of EcoPlan International, an independent advisory network providing strategic counsel for government, industry and civil society on policy and decision issues involving technological, environmental and social changes which are creating new circumstances for decisions of public policy and private practice.

Born in Mississippi, he studied liberal arts and physical science at Amherst and Columbia College, and later the doctoral program of the Graduate Faculty of Economics at Columbia University, with a dissertation on technology, economic development, job creation and public policy in the Italian South (PhDc). Over this period he was an Amherst and Columbia Scholar, winner of the Dante Alighieri Prize, and later in the Graduate Faculties was named an International Fellow. He was awarded a doctoral research grant from the Italian government for his work on the prickly policy problems in the Italian Mezzogiorno, and later was honored by a Fulbright Fellowship to continue his work for two years running.

While completing his course work and exams in economics at Columbia, he taught undergraduate courses in economics (theory, economic history, statistics) at Mills College and New York University's Department of Economics. Early in his professional career he continued to expand his horizons by participating as a Fellow in a three-week post-graduate program of the Salzburg Seminar on urban and regional planning, and a month-long seminar at the UN (Geneva) on city planning and policy. He has since lectured in undergraduate and graduate programs at universities in Brazil, Britain, Canada, Colombia, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, the UK and the US.

In parallel with teaching economics and working on his dissertation at the University of Rome, Eric founded EcoPlan International in 1966, an independent forum of observation, reflection and counsel on issues involving technological and environmental change as it affects people in their daily lives. Over the years in his for-profit work he has initiated, participated in, and carried to completion a wide range of advisory assignments and research and demonstration projects aimed at providing decision counsel to government, business and the volunteer sector on thorny issues of technology, economy and society.

The geographic focus of his work extends to more than thirty countries, with advisory assignments in cities as diverse as the compact Westport CT and path-breaking (but ultimately unbuilt) Ahmanson Ranch project in CA, to advisory work in places as far-ranging as Adelaide, Bilbao, Bogotá, Bridgeport, Buenos Aires, [Guadalajara](#), Kaohsiung, Paris, Perth, Saigon, Sao Paulo, Taipei, Toronto, and Zürich. He has served as high level consultant to the United Nations, European Commission, ILO, OECD, and a long list of national and regional government agencies, bilateral aid programs, and as a visiting lecturer at US and European universities.

Britton devotes considerable time to pioneering and supporting public interest projects involving new technology, sustainable development and social justice. A common theme in his work is the strategic adaptation of technologies, products, and institutional structures to changing technological, resource and environmental requirements (and perceptions). Over the last decades he has organized and supported more than twenty international collaborative problem-solving networks which bring together thousands of people and groups around the world that are looking into new and often unusual ideas for sustainability and long-term economic viability in cities. One of the most active of these is the [New Mobility Agenda](#), created in 1988 and for which you can find full information at <http://www.newmobility.org>.

Britton has published extensively in his recognized areas of expertise, and is a founding editor the [Journal of World Transport Policy and Practice](#) (1995), as well as of [World Streets](#) and several associated (spin-off) collaborative publications and programs in [India](#), [Italy](#), [Iran](#), [China](#) and [Portugal](#)).

In June 2002 he was awarded the prestigious World Technology Environment Prize for outstanding achievement. Over 2001-2002 he served as chair of the international jury and senior advisor to the Stockholm Partnerships for Sustainable Cities, a program with which he maintains a long-term interest. In 2000 he and Enrique Peñalosa, then mayor of Bogotá Colombia, were co-awarded the Stockholm Environment Challenge Prize for ‘outstanding socio-technical innovation’.

His most recent collaborative project centers around a series of Master Classes, graduate seminars and projects for international universities and MBA programs on the fundamental, poorly understood and altogether unmet challenges of [Sustainable Development, Enterprise & Society](#), which you can access [here](#). Among his greater frustrations in 2012 is that he would like to be doing more on his long time interesting of “rethinking work” and tax system reform.

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We have no money gentlemen, so we shall have to think.

I have chosen as the principal theme for my work and hoped-for contributions in 2012 and beyond, these words of Nobel Prize winning physicist Professor Ernest Rutherford upon taking over the quite broke Cavendish Laboratory in 1919, in the wake of the First World War. Our challenge now is quite exactly to learn to do more, with less.

* Click [here](#) for 4 minute Spanish/English sustainable cities interview