



## Workshop Minutes

13 October 2010

### Workshop A: How to involve the public in green investment projects

*Speaker: Angela Jones & Hannah Chisholm (Royal Society Protection of Birds)*  
*Moderator: Yill Havers (Hoogheemraadschap van Schieland en de Krimpenerwaard )*  
*Secretary: Paul Jenkinson (Southend-on-Sea)*

#### Main conclusions:

Any organisation (whether it be the government, private foundations or NGOs) faces the same problems engaging the public.

#### Lessons learned:

If we can appeal to the public on their own level, to their own life situations, wishes and dreams, we can involve them. They can then take ownership of their green open spaces (their living environment).

The best way to involve people is to share information and connect with them.

### Workshop B: When green ambitions meet reality: The importance of smart land use management: a new role?

*Speaker: Dr. Leen Gorissen (VITO)*  
*Moderator: Juul Adriaens (VLM)*  
*Secretary: Bart Paesen (Regionaal Landschap Lage Kempen)*

#### Main conclusions:

There is a long way to go!  
What needs to be done?

Create a common language to explain/discuss the problem with different sectors and the general public.

Reorganise the institutional structure and start with integrated management on all levels

Act with nature, not against.

Slow down the turnover planning rate.

Improve the quality of legislation by aligning it with other legislation and verifying the impact it has in the field in advance.

In order to change policy you have to change politics.

In order to change politics you have to change the voters.  
In order to change the voters you have to educate the general public.

### **Workshop C: The importance of high quality green spaces - from a social perspective: moving towards a new green space in the 21st century?**

*Speaker: Ir. Pauline de Koning (BELW advies)*  
*Moderator: Jasper Dugardeyn (Province of West Flanders)*  
*Secretary: Frans Pauwels (VLM)*

#### **Lessons learned from the presentation:**

From a social perspective a high quality green space has a high usability. Often, the restoration of historic relict landscapes alone does not respond to this demand in a peri-urban context.

The examples illustrate that we must design/add a new layer to the landscape, a functional area; from the social aspect an integrated design is essential.

Achieving and maintaining these high standards of user quality comes at a price, therefore a solid economic foundation is necessary.

#### **Conclusions from the discussion:**

Government, the public sector alone cannot provide this solid foundation. Do not be afraid to involve the private sector. This only works if there are regulations starting at the planning stage. The private sector demands a consistent government and clear regulations and conditions from the outset. This is the only way we can afford and bring nature to the city centre and peri-urban areas, which is what people are increasingly demanding. In addition educate people to look at and experience the typical biodiversity/nature of the city. Also provide them with an effective and safe way of connecting the centre with peri-urban green spaces.

### **Workshop D: Role of the various stakeholders and responsibility of each partner for further nature development in peri-urban areas.**

*Speaker: Mischa Indeherberg (Agentschap Natuur en Bos)*  
*Moderator: Jan Verboven (VLM)*  
*Secretary: Leen Van den Bergh (VLM)*

Interactive presentation Mischa Indeherberg (ANB)

**Central Position:** central agencies/administrations for nature and forestry are not primarily responsible for local green development in peri-urban areas.

Also:

When green ambitions meet reality: which choices do we have to make? What will we do ourselves and what do we leave to others?

**Questions:** How do we share responsibilities, roles and resources?

**Other perspectives:** economic crisis, costs and benefits issues involved in public services for nature.

### Case

Tasks ANB: (1) conservation, restoration of biodiversity, (2) enhancing the accessibility of nature areas, (3) looking for green cities (Flanders = green city network) => plenty of communication tools (day of the park, woodland week, etc.) examples of how an agency/administration is involved in many different issues => the economic crisis obliges the organisation to make choices instead of doing everything and to evaluate its policy.

Exercise: possible choices for the organisation (photos) - discussion:

Central agency: **Only larger parks in peri-urban regions => stand-alone nature is a task for municipalities or even citizens:** majority agrees => question: how about permission in cities to manage elements of nature? Sharing responsibility is one thing, but who envisages the wider coordination for managing the civil initiative? What about expertise/specific knowledge, also necessary in small nature areas? The principle of subsidiarity: each stakeholder has to do that what he can, if a lower stakeholder can do something then it's up to that level.

A higher-level stakeholder has to find a vision for the smaller nature elements before this task can be transferred to a lower level. Supervision / control is also necessary => a form of management agreement in urban areas?

**Investing in stable elements in nature (parks) instead of investing in temporary & dynamic nature** (= area with a different goal from nature).

What is temporary (20 years?)? In cities temporary land development sometimes stimulates citizens to get involved in nature in their environment and to advocate a definitive nature destination, and a network of temporary nature in the city enhances the quality of everyday life. Temporary nature in cities is important, but the question is whether it is the job of a central agency. However what is needed is a wider perspective on this discussion. Let's take the example of the city of Ghent: natural buffering of channels, railways, etc. enhances biodiversity (for example the Ghent canal area). Higher-level organisations can play a stimulating and facilitating role in temporary nature but never claim it because of destination issues, the other stakeholders involved etc.

**The central agency chooses conventional/traditional nature elements because of their relevance to biodiversity instead of expensive artistic nature, which is often experimental and temporary.** Discussion: you cannot divide traditional from artistic nature in a peri-urban environment because the citizens are much more involved than in the countryside. What about the link between nature and recreation?

### **Main conclusions**

Taking the economic crisis into account, higher-level administrations must evaluate their policy and make choices related to sharing responsibilities, roles and investment between stakeholders involved in green areas in peri-urban regions.

Participants agree that central agencies should focus on large, traditional and stable elements of nature and that temporary, small and artistic elements in cities should be left to lower level stakeholders, such as municipalities or even citizens.

However initially a broader vision of these elements and a follow-up system is needed before the central agencies can transfer these tasks to a lower level.

Questions to be answered: What about specific knowledge and skills that are often unavailable at lower levels? Who looks at the broader picture of these small elements of nature? Who pays the bill and who is responsible for the follow-up?

### **Workshop E: Playing for biodiversity? Benchmarking for improving farmers' biodiversity performances.**

*Speaker: Prof. Dr. Geert Desnoo (University of Leiden)*

*Moderator: Marian Gerard (Province of Limburg)*

*Secretary: Dorien Vanerum (Province of Limburg)*

#### **Main Conclusions:**

Paying for biodiversity. "You have to pay anyway" will always be necessary if you want farmers to continue to be involved. Management measures demand considerable effort on behalf of the farmer with regards to activities such as field margins.

#### **But investments have to be made to:**

1. Raise public awareness involving farmers by determining how we can achieve our biodiversity goals on a larger scale and preferably together.
2. Introduce biodiversity in farmer's education.

### **Workshop F: Functional agrobiodiversity: The future of our agriculture?**

*Speaker: Dr. P.C.J. Van Rijn (University of Amsterdam, IBED)*

*Moderator: Ben Delbaere (ECNC)*

*Secretary: Karolien Michiel (VLM)*

FAB's contribution to agrobiodiversity and the rural economy (rural policy).

- Benefits for farmers
- Real value for biodiversity (what biodiversity) in an agricultural (eco) system
- What does FAB deliver? What kind of biodiversity?
- We need a clear definition of FAB
- The current approach is wrong: buffer strips (current AES) to protect watercourses should be more multifunctional
- FAB measures should be combined with using less pesticide in the field
- Make FAB visible (regional branding)
- FAB in AES? Or are there enough economic incentives?
- Can it be implemented in cross compliance?
- Only with native plants (plant seeds)
- FAB as part of a green infrastructure
- FAB as an example of multifunctional land use
- A need for guidelines for public spaces

#### **Main conclusions**

Three key issues

- Enthusiasm and visibility for farmers
- Economic incentives (for example using regional branding) - creating win-win situations
- A combination of FAB and AES

## **Workshop G: Do investments in green infrastructure contribute to a stronger, better and healthier regional identity?**

*Speaker: Jan Parys (Soresma)*

*Moderator: Pete Stringer (Red Rose Forest Manchester)*

*Secretary: Jasper Dugardeyn (Province of West Flanders)*

In our regions the definition of regional identity is more focused on culture. Nevertheless nature could/should be another aspect that is taken into account. This was for instance demonstrated by the Duisburg case where the old industrial heritage was given a new lease of life by investing in green infrastructure and soon became known as a particularly pleasant place to live. A similar case is that of the Hoge Kempen. This Belgian region already represented a significant natural value, but this image was expanded and further investments were made outside the nature reserve. Nowadays people are proud to be part of the Hoge Kempen region.

The Province of West Flanders commissioned SORESMA to perform a study on how to create and/or strengthen a green image for the Roeselare-Leie canal area. Five communities are located along the canal. The west side of the area is very urban and there is a great deal of industry. Even though there are some green spaces it still reflects a “grey” image. If we look towards the east the landscape is more rural.

Four main themes were identified: ecology, infrastructure, economy and the social perspective.

We based our conclusion for these themes on a field visit and interaction with the local communities.

### Ecology

The canal is already the area’s blue-green spine, but this could be further developed. The canal is a 16 km long air filter due to its location in the main direction of the wind. Furthermore the canal has a cooling effect.

### Structure

The Canal (and therefore the Mandel valley) has led to infrastructural and urban developments lateral and perpendicular to the Canal. This is typical of the region compared with the more concentric developments of other urban areas, therefore a main green ladder structure can be developed.

### Social wellness

The green ladder should be further developed by implementing small-scale greenery. The “green around every corner” principle stimulates social interaction, walking, cycling, etc., which leads to greater wellbeing in the community.

### Economy

Creating a green image will provide opportunities for economic improvement. It attracts people to industrial areas. Furthermore companies consider a green image to be trendy and they are even willing to pay for it.

Three issues were discussed in separate groups. They should all provide input on how to achieve this (or a similar) vision?

- Regional participation: what do we get from it? It costs money, only leads to discussion or does it actually stimulate involvement, create a common goal? Does it really offer different insights?

- Green only costs money. The benefits can't be demonstrated, the value is indirect, private investments are rare, red delivers more than green. On the other hand, "eco" is trendy → image is incredibly important, green is a community's invisible gold.

- Who's behind the wheel? Should someone take charge? My way or the highway? Or does it help to gain a global understanding of the strategy?

Conclusions drawn from the different workshops are listed below.

## **Main conclusions**

Investments in green infrastructure can definitely contribute to a greener regional identity. However implementing the vision could be the greatest problem. In order to do so there are three paths to follow.

### **Regional participation**

In order to be able to define a region there should be a common goal. People (both citizens and politicians) will only be convinced once they realise that investments in other communities will ultimately benefit their own community. Therefore it is important not to limit cooperation to the "green level", but to expand it to include multiple aspects of governance.

### **Who's behind the wheel?**

The green infrastructure theme must be embedded in a larger scheme. Only then will it become more of a priority. It should not be a goal in itself, but be included as a project component.

Both bottom up and top down are possible ways to tackle green infrastructure projects, but the ideal is a combination of both.

### **Green only costs money**

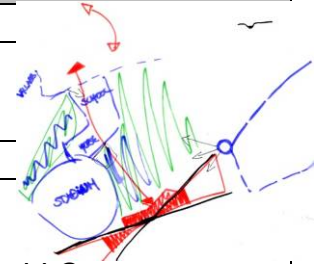
Of course this is not completely true, though it is hard to calculate the return in EUR.

Nevertheless some examples are available that could be used to convince investors.

Gasthuisberg clinic has shown that their patients heal faster when they have access to green spaces. In Ghent and Germany companies pay for the implementation of green infrastructure to enhance their companies' reputation.

## Workshop H: How can a good landscape design result in a more dynamic region?

Speaker: Sylvie Van Damme (HOGENT)  
Moderator: Siska Van de Steene (VLM)  
Secretary: Huig Deneef (VLM)



### 1. Introduction

First presentation: A story about Bruges (history of Chartreuse, World Cup soccer 2018 and cycling in the green belt around Bruges) and the peri-urban development of the “Chartreuse” site presented by Siska Van de Steene (VLM).

2nd presentation: Chartreuse and the World Cup 2018 - new multi-functional football stadium for FC Bruges, presented by Tine Decuypere (Resoc Bruges). The additional program will be 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of shopping area and 75,000m<sup>2</sup> of office space. The case is delicate because of the size of the development and sensitivity of its location within the green belt.

Third presentation: Think globally, design locally: the local landscape as a driving force for integration in design projects in peri-urban areas, presented by Sylvie Van Damme (University of Ghent)

Workshop’s objective: make sketches based on different maps (Ferraris + historical landscape, archaeological site (burial mounds, “enclosure”, map of listed areas), new developments (transport, suburbanisation), scale levels, recreation (cycling, walking) and the missing link. The problem that needs to be solved relates to the development of the Chartreuse area. Other spatial claims: an old farm as equine assisted therapy, regional school for the disabled, and soccer stadium

**Assignment:** *The green recreational circle is under construction and still has a large number of missing links. One of these missing links is in the Chartreuse area. The question is how to close this gap by using the landscape’s qualities, taking into account the existing spatial claims. Is it possible for example to combine the regional cycling route with the local horse riding route? And how can the green recreational circle help to unlock the new soccer stadium for cyclists and pedestrians?*

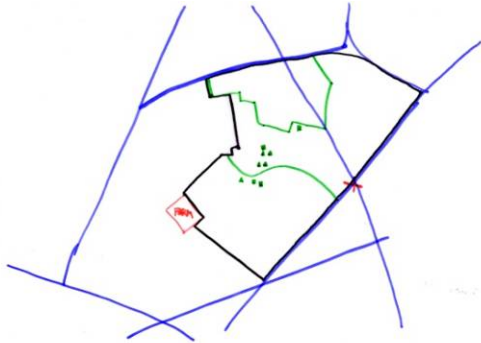
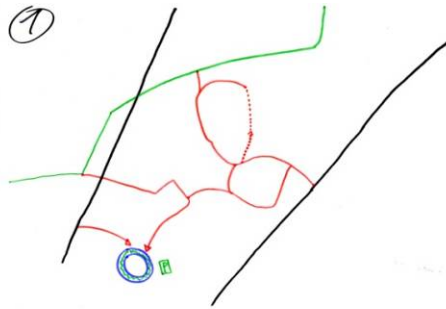
### 2. Workshop

The students are divided into different groups to sketch problems/solutions for the case study.

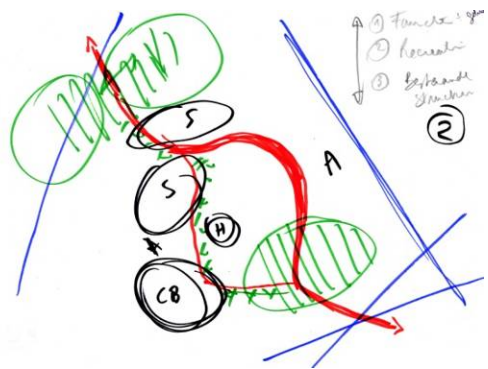
Main results of the workshop are.

Group 1: inventory of existing roads, buildings, points of attraction, various cycling routes connecting main attractions and existing cycling routes in the Green Belt. Improving access to the football stadium. Multi-modal access to the site (see drawing group 1)

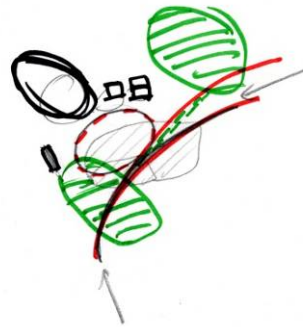
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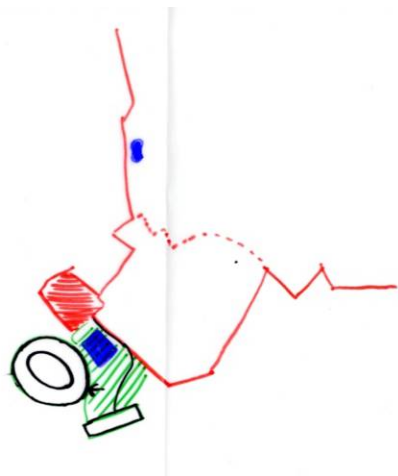
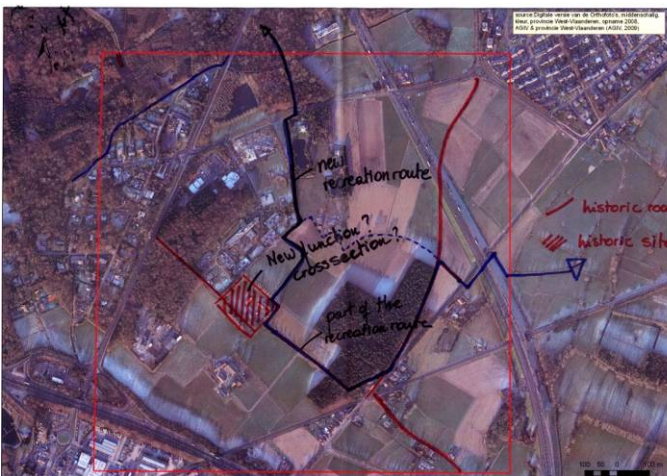
Group 2: separate functional and recreational needs in two groups, exercise and feedback to find a common solution: points of attraction, including important forests. Drawing quick cycling routes connecting two forests and a loop to connect the main attractions (see drawing group 2).



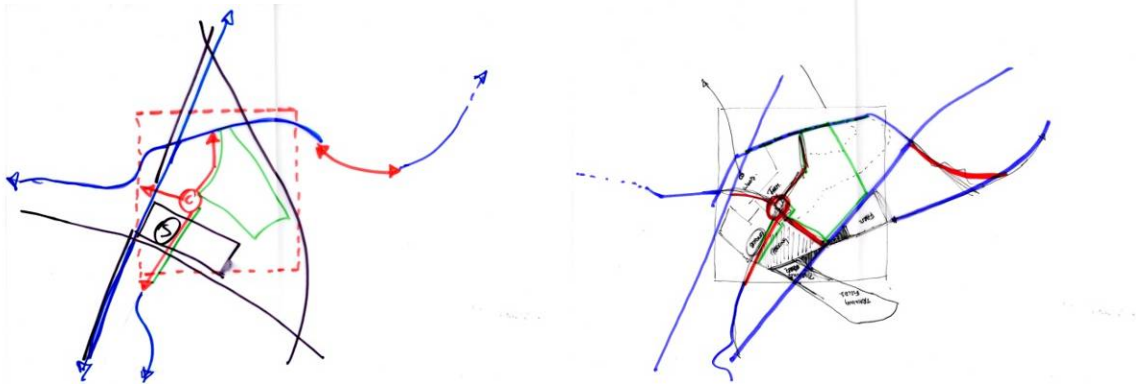
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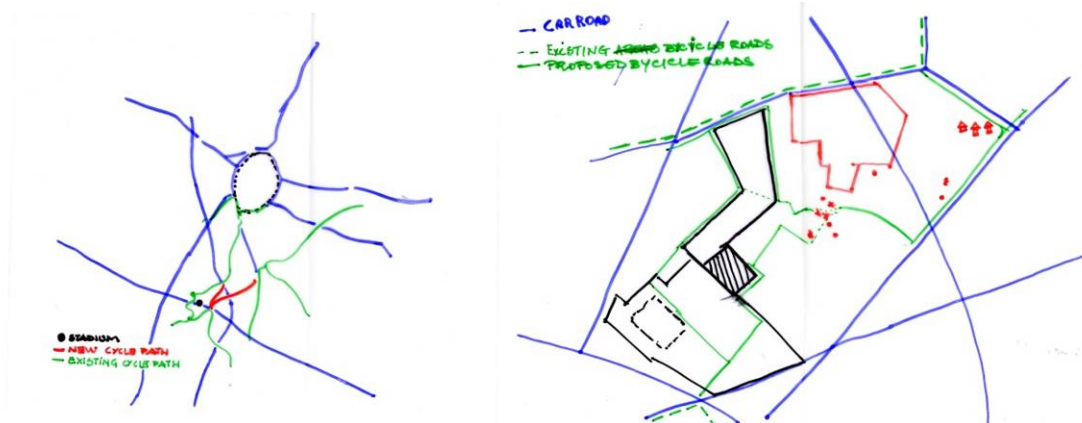
Group 3: quick analysis: farm, old road, historical road, landscape-elements, water, improving the connection between the railway station and football station (see drawing group 3)



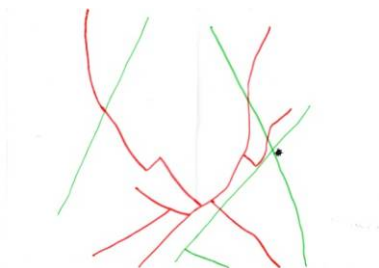
Group 4: analysis: football stadium car park, existing cycling routes and main attractions. Vision: connect existing and new elements by cycling routes (distinguish recreational and functional purposes (see drawing group 4).

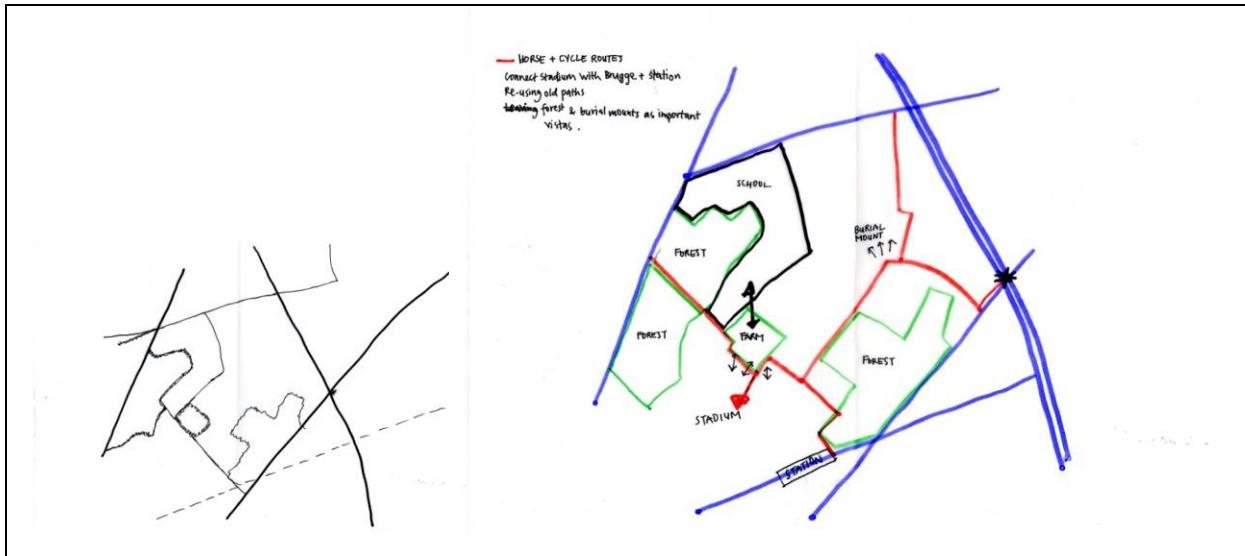


Group 5: analysis: macro-scale green belt, cycling network. Vision: cycling route along the highway, Potential for recreating the cycling route (linking the forest to the historical area), separation of functional routes (see drawing group 5).

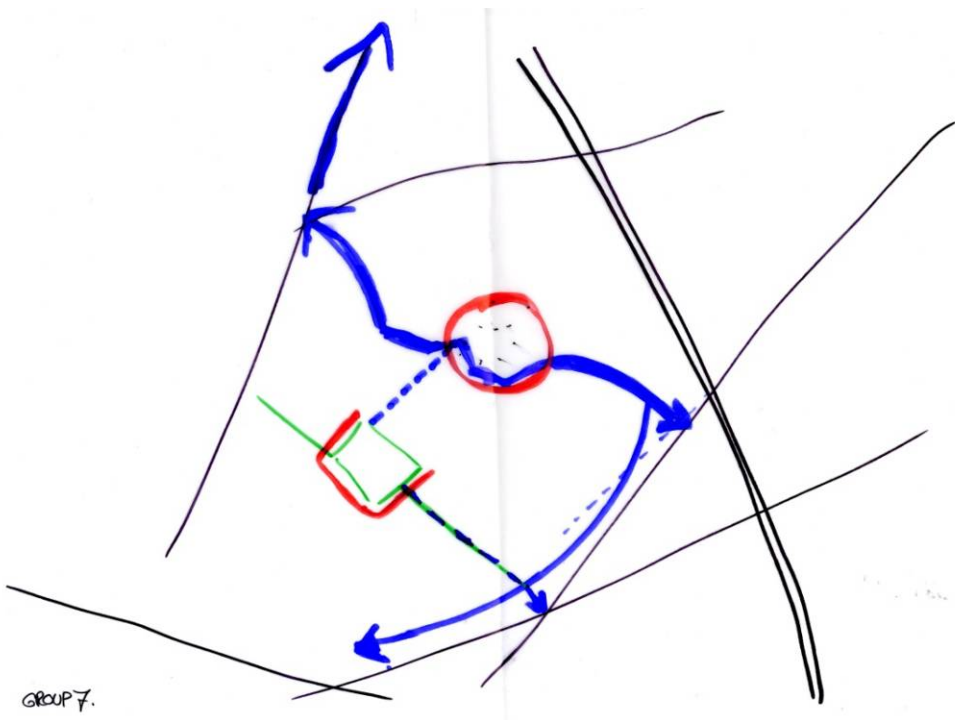


Group 6: analysis of historical maps to increase landscape values using existing historical routes, forest values and existing routes. Vision: Connect the train station, football station, farm - school and city centre. Multi-functional use of the routes, (cycling, horse riding) (see drawing group 6).

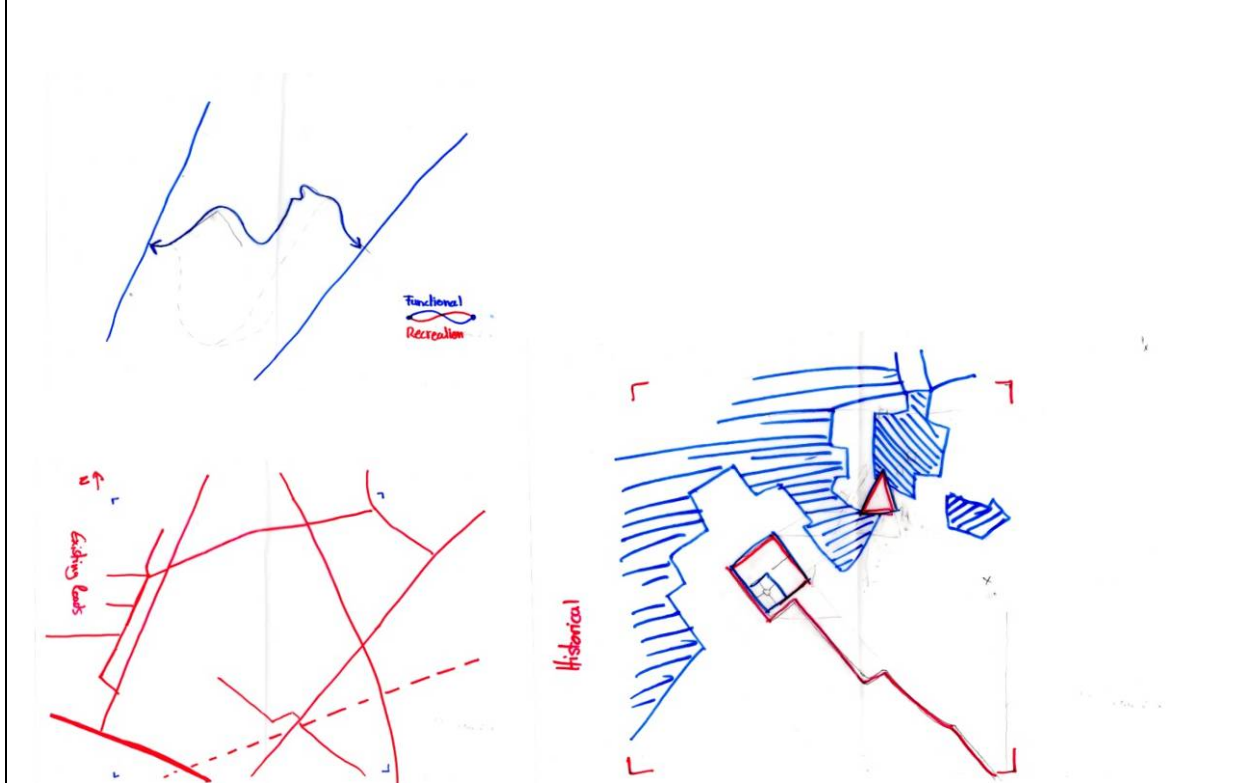




Group 7: analysis of roads and hierarchy of cycling routes. Vision based on hierarchy (fast - slow and leisure). Fast, direct connection between the main functions and city centre. Experience nature. Good presentation - graphics! (see drawing group 7)



Group 8: social interaction, walking, horse riding, views of historical sites, farm and use of the qualities of the varied landscape. Functional link to the football stadium - railway station (see drawing group 8).



### Main conclusions

1. The introduction of an exercise by students on a practical case study (implementation of the new football stadium in the Green Belt of Bruges-Chartreuse) by students from different backgrounds is interesting because of the co-learning effect.
2. The outcomes of the sketching exercise from 8 working groups are all different but are all based on the methodological approach (dialogues) and creative input.
3. Students are the future “ambassadors” for the development and promotion of a green and sustainable development for Europe. Therefore it’s important for them to participate in international congresses such as Green Works. This (new) approach needs to be followed up!

## **Workshop I: The economic and ecologic meaning of short rotation coppice wood.**

*Speaker: Prof. Dr. Reinhart Ceulemans (University of Antwerp)*

*Moderator: Marion Liberloo (VLM)*

*Secretary: Joep Fourneau (Regionaal Landschap Lage Kempen)*

### **1. Presentation of the participants**

A. Boerenbond (Farmers Union)/Innovatiesteunpunt (Innovation support point): Bart Vleeschouwers

Any contribution that reduces climate change is worth implementing, SRC wood is one of them. SRC offers farmers possibilities; producing SRC to generate energy is only profitable when using the wood chips to generate your own energy. Selling wood chips is not profitable at the moment because the price of wood chips is lower than other crops. This may change in the future but at the moment selling them is not an option.

B. Pieter Verdonckt: Proclam

Proclam organises SRC demonstration projects for farmers. We experience the same problems as those mentioned by Bart Vleeschouwers: SRC is profitable for generating one's own energy but not for selling. Farmers are very interested in SRC; there is a lot of potential, not only for farmland but also for fallow land.

With respect to biodiversity: we have done some monitoring of biodiversity on plots with SRC wood. Results depend on the stage in the SRC process: plots that have just been harvested attract different species from those plots with branches two years old. Though there is a danger in the polder: these open areas attract meadow birds. Planting SRC wood could change the biotope for these birds and endanger these species.

C. Kristof De Rous: PLBK

PLBK also has a project with a farmer that uses the energy produced by SRC. This farmer buys wood chips at the moment but he is investigating whether he can grow his own SRC wood. There remains some uncertainty.

D. Mike Savage: Red Rose Forest

We are also promoting SRC, in Northern Ireland we are carrying out large-scale SRC projects. In our policy wood chips should be used to heat public buildings. There is however a significant problem with SRC: plantations are often located too far from the heating installations. Transport costs are relatively high so SRC does not really contribute to reducing climate change.

Laura Broeckx: University of Antwerp

I'm doing research on SRC as part of Prof. Ceulemans' research group. Although there are still many issues I believe it can mitigate climate change.

Ouafik El Kasmioui: University of Antwerp

I'm a commercial engineer. Initial investment costs are a serious problem for farmers. Materials are expensive, knowledge is not optimal and land prices are very high. When the farmer does not own the farmland it is just not profitable. This is a serious problem. Maybe SRC wood on contaminated sites is an option, on the condition that water and nutrients are sufficiently available. These sites are of course unsuitable for growing crops. The price of wood chips is not competitive, e.g. compared to corn.

Bart Paesen: Regionaal Landschap Lage Kempen (RLLK) - Lage Kempen Regional Landscape

RLLK is carrying out restoration projects on traditional coppiced hedgerows. We are trying to reintroduce the abandoned management of these hedgerows. With no economic value (e.g. wood chips from coppiced branches for generating energy), this management is very expensive and only possible on a small scale. We also have indications that reintroducing this form of management will have a positive effect on some species/biodiversity. The difference with most SRC projects is that we focus on existing, historical hedgerows. No farmland has to be used for production. Another positive point is the value of our landscape. We look for a combination of different aspects for managing coppiced hedgerows: economical, ecological, etc.

Linda Meiresonne: INBO

INBO is performing research on a selection of poplar tree clones. We also cooperate with farmers in these projects. As already mentioned, it is necessary to support farmers with investment costs when starting up this process; contracts with wood chip consumers are also necessary. Large-scale plantations are mainly profitable on sites that are not suitable for growing other crops. It is important to continue the research on poplar tree clones to improve the efficiency and optimise adaptation to climate change.

Prof. Reinhart Ceulemans: University of Antwerp

The well-known NIMBY problem is also experienced in SRC: nobody is against it but when there is a plantation "in my back yard" problems arise.

Secondly, poplar trees are considered (by some) to be an exotic species, clones are genetically manipulated, etc. So it is quite a challenge to convince people of the benefits of this type of cultivation.

It is possible that managing existing coppiced hedgerows can be an important intermediate stage in finding support for SRC.

**Conclusions:**

Cooperation between farmers, is it a good idea?

It is a good idea, but high initial costs are a huge problem. Secondly there is a discrepancy between supply and demand. The price of wood chips is not competitive. Oil is much cheaper at the moment. Perhaps this will change in the future?

There is a market for wood chips, but at the moment pellets are imported from Canada because this is cheaper than buying pellets produced here.

Natuurpunt is selling the remains of heath land restoration projects to an azalea cultivator. This is an example of how it can be profitable.

There are many forests and hedgerows in Limburg. Consequently this presents great potential for coppiced wood exploitation.

Efficiency must be optimised. There are examples of wood chips being transported great distances because it is cheaper than producing and drying their own chips.

How to convince farmers about SRC?

Long-term contracts are needed. Farmers need certainty.

There are also problems with legislation: e.g. depending on the diameter of coppiced branches, wood is considered as litter, which has consequences for its use. This is not the case for SRC wood on farmland, but it is for existing coppiced hedgerows.

The restoration process for coppiced hedgerows has to be carried out in 2 stages: firstly there is restoration management where large branches can be used as firewood. Secondly there is the regular management of smaller branches that is considered as SRC wood, used for wood chips.

Biodiversity: little is known about the effects of SRC on biodiversity. On the other hand there are indications that reintroducing the cyclic management of existing coppiced hedgerows can have positive effects on some kinds of typical species related to this traditional agricultural activity.

Subsidies: is it OK to subsidise SRC as a mitigating measure?

At the moment management agreements are applied on a small scale and SRC is not a measure that can be subsidised in this way.

Farmers that use their SRC to generate their own energy prove that this is a good system. Local communities should invest more in heating systems based on wood chips for heating buildings, etc. In this way high transportation costs can be avoided. In Tournai there is a fine example of one such large-scale project.

We don't have enough time for this interesting discussion, so this group should meet again. Different participants want to welcome the group at their project sites. VLM will initiate a new meeting.

#### Main conclusions

1. We should meet again; time was too short. There is a lot of excitement and willingness to discuss this issue. VLM will organise a new meeting.

2. Linking SRC with hedgerow restoration, management and maintenance is an added value because:

- There is a large short-term potential for bio-energy production from hedgerows.
- Restoring hedgerow management can raise awareness and participation in the SRC project, among farmers as well as the public.
- Coppiced hedgerows have a multi-functional value when calculating economic and ecological benefits (e.g. recreation, biodiversity, regional history/identity, etc.).

3. Several issues still prevent SRC from being adopted on a larger scale in Flanders:

- Huge initial start-up costs for the SRC system (subsidies could help)
- Market and trade: the price of chips cannot compete with food crops; it's not profitable
- Significant transportation costs reduce efficiency. Therefore short chain production systems are best practice at the moment.

#### **Workshop J: Model agreements in the place-keeping of open spaces: examples from MP4 (Making Places Profitable - Public and Private Open Spaces)**

*Speaker: Dr. Marcia Pereira (Heriot Watt University of Edinburgh)*

*Moderator: Dr. Nicola Dempsey (University of Sheffield)*

*Secretary: Hendrik Vermeulen (VLM)*

#### **Main conclusions**

New methods of cooperation between the public sector and other stakeholders to build and maintain open spaces have been sought for various reasons (e.g. awareness of the need to develop a more participatory planning, cuts in public spending, etc.). The MP4 project has investigated different forms of cooperation between the public sector and those who benefit from investment and maintenance, with a view to identifying what we call "model agreements". This workshop, is therefore aimed at providing participants with an opportunity

to explore and discuss ways of engaging different stakeholders as partners in agreements related to **place-keeping** (i.e. long-term maintenance and management) of open spaces. Such agreements range from formal to informal, and written to verbal, and can involve a range of stakeholders including communities, local authorities, and public and private organisations.

The workshop drew on the study of different partnership models associated with the place-keeping of open spaces used by several local and regional authorities participating in the MP4 project. These models have been analysed by academic partners based on interviews with key stakeholders and the study of related documents. The analysis includes the types of stakeholder involved, types of place-keeping agreements, purpose of the place-keeping agreement, and responsibilities. These provide the basis for an evaluation, against the background of an understanding of the cultural and socio-economic context, the institutional frameworks, resources and ideas and mental models that exist within each context.

It was demonstrated that the models presented differ mainly in the degree of responsibility held by local people and private partners in the renewal/maintenance aspects of their environment:

- In Flemish examples, decisions are made by the public sector and local people are consulted. Farmers, municipalities and other public organisations share the responsibility for place-keeping within different types of model agreements.
- Dutch examples show the work of an organisation (Emmen Revisited) that operates in between the local authority and the community, acting as a bridge. This organisation is highly successful in promoting community involvement in the design and decision-making processes. They are now exploring new ways of promoting more user involvement in place-keeping.
- The British example illustrates how local people can have informal, very specific responsibilities in different projects, under the form of a “Friends of” group.
- In the German example, responsibilities are to a certain extent transferred to housing companies organised in a management group, taking responsibility for the maintenance of private and public open spaces.

No conclusions were reached as to which one of the cooperation forms is the most desirable, but the workshop identified the scope to learn from each other’s examples and their application in different contexts, being careful and respectful of local specifications.

## **Workshop K: Farmers: obvious partners for biodiversity or not?**

*Speaker: Bart Schoukens (Boerenbond)*

*Moderator: Sven Defrijn (Boerenbond)*

*Secretary: Daniël Sanders (VLM)*

Thesis :

Traditionally farmers are most close to nature, have knowhow and machinery : logically they should be preferential partners for nature and landscape management and maintenance in rural areas.

Summary of the discussion :

How to get farmers motivated (for Greenworks) ?

Economical incentives will help

A change of mentality is needed

- Formerly : farming = fight against nature

Nowadays social need is : farming = carrying for nature

Certain elements of biodiversity are a product or consequence of farming (i.e. skylarks, hollow roads). So farmers have the responsibility of safeguarding these elements for the future. Nevertheless, there is (or was) a lack of confidence between nature organizations and farmers.

If realistic (feasible) management plans are designed and they are implemented without questions by the farmers  
→ confidence can be restored (or is growing)

Certain elements of the knowhow of nature management are lost by the farmers : re-education and training is needed.

Important role of 'Agro-environmental management co-operations' :

- Getting farmers motivated
- Create a positive atmosphere : constructive approach, negotiation on equal level
- Re-education and training of farmers

Slow, but steady and ongoing long-term process.

Main conclusions

A change of mentality by farmers is needed (importance of agro-environmental management co-operations(= agrobeheersgroep)) to get them motivated to help increase biodiversity.

Due to a constructive approach, negotiation on equal level and realistic management plans with economic incentives (implemented by farmers without questions) confidence between farmers and nature organizations is growing and a mentality change is ongoing.

## Workshop L: Economic evaluation of peri-urban green investments: model

*Speaker: Dr. Simone Allin (University of Sheffield)*

*Moderator: Dr. Bert Vermeire (Regionaal Landschap Meetjesland)*

*Secretary: Nel Ghyselincx (VLM)*

The aim of the workshop is to present and discuss the economic model that has been produced to evaluate green investments (GI) in the VALUE project.

Simone Allin presented the outlines of the model's methodological approach. She gave an overview of the different types and qualities of GI in the VALUE projects. She presented the possible benefits and costs as well as the different techniques of economic evaluation. All this led to a definition of GI within the VALUE project and the design of a consistent model that is broadly applicable for economic evaluation, at site scale and the regional scale, of GI by VALUE-partners.

To get the discussion started, Bert Vermeire gave the following statement: the economic valuation technique has a sound scientific foundation, but its use is limited due to the fact that the outcome will never be interpreted and used by all stakeholders in the right way. Most of the participants agreed with the statement, a few disagreed.

**Discussion:**

- The reason why not everyone will interpret the conclusions correctly is because some people don't understand the information or don't have access to it or abuse the information for other purposes.
- The outcomes are abstract, benefits are sometimes only evident in the long-term and their impact on individuals is hard to capture.

**Main conclusions:**

- The method used to communicate the conclusions is very important!
- It should be kept simple (so that everyone can understand) and clear (so that it's not misunderstood)
- Try to make the direct effects more visible to individuals and the total effect understandable for government

**Workshop M: Reinventing Bilbao through green investments: strengths and limitations of ad-hoc planning.**

*Speaker: Prof. Dr. Jacques Teller (University of Liège (ULG))*  
*Moderator: Dr. Jean Marie Halleux (ULG)*  
*Secretary: Allyson Marek (ULG)*

**Remarks during the presentation:**

- Work has been facilitated by land owners (railway) who made the land available
  - Iconic cultural heritage pieces have been added to other partners (shops, railway, etc.)
- Green spaces connect all these elements

**Remarks during the discussion:**

- The redevelopment of the area around Bilbao's docks is very similar to the one in Manchester: high quality and luxurious - but extremely expensive - housing. Tourist attractions: museums, art galleries, etc. are new and highly attractive. This is mainly linked to speculation, but nowadays projects are blocked because there is no longer any speculation in Spain. In Manchester the situation is similar because the real market has suffered a downturn and fundraising from the government has been reduced.
- There are some very valuable projects but the danger is that everybody will start to do the same and it can't work everywhere, it depends on the context.
- In Lisbon, 3 riverside projects need to be implemented but the water and soil are contaminated, presenting a major hurdle.
- Opportunities with low prices! Try to convince local authorities and municipalities to buy land! The problem of viability has been demonstrated but the situation won't be repeated for years.
- In terms of carbon footprints, a model of organic development could be implemented but we have to stop the models that are not working.
- Aligning parallel administration in charge of the project with policy-makers' ideas; the need for effectiveness. Though traditionally, municipal administration is not included in the process, is not involved.

**Main conclusions:**

1. This kind of planning can be replicated in other industrial cities. For example, Manchester has developed exactly the same "green planning" with green spaces and tourist attractions but the danger is of replicating it everywhere without considering the context.

2. These redevelopments e.g. Bilbao and Manchester are mainly linked to speculation but nowadays many projects are blocked as a result of the economic crisis. The real estate market has suffered a serious blow and governments have stopped funding.
3. Public administration has to be efficient. If a project is to be successful, the process has to be quick, clear and well managed. Traditionally municipal administration is not included in the process and a kind of parallel administration is set-up.

## Workshop N -S: Land development in Europe and its contribution to biodiversity in peri-urban regions (2 parts)

Speaker: Jeroen Reyniers (VLM)

Moderator: Griet Celen (VLM)

Secretary: Maggie Lodts (VLM)

### Presentation “Land development and its role in biodiversity”

“Land development” is an implementation approach to realise the objectives of regional and rural policies, with a focus on the relationship between the spatial dimensions of property and user rights as well as land use.”

This approach grew from a purely *agricultural land consolidation* practice that *evolved into integrated projects* in which more and more goals were incorporated.

The practice’s omnipresence in *all European countries and far beyond* illustrates the approach’s potential.

Environmental concerns have changed over time, which has led to modifications in land development projects and land consolidation. Not just the imposing assessments, checks and filters but also the project objectives themselves have evolved as well as process and planning methods. There has been a 180° turnaround e.g.:



Land development (LD)/ modern land consolidation (LC) is possibly a very powerful instrument to contribute to biodiversity.

The strength lies in land development’s fundamental approach. It considers “Global” issues, analyses them in a landscape context while finding solutions at the plot and local levels. It deals with property rights and land use (through buying, leasing, selling, reallocation, expropriation, etc.) and multi-layered land use (through waste water treatment, water retention, flood prevention, information panels, cycling and footpaths, *nature development*, etc.) all with a high level of local involvement.

BUT: For both a substantial and balanced contribution to biodiversity through integrated land development, some prerequisites must be fulfilled:

1. A legal and institutional framework must be designed so that it is not indebted to or owned by one or another specific sector.
2. Project planning and plan design framework must allow public biodiversity goals to be translated into local solutions. For example, until now land development excelled at creating network and spot nature, separation at landscape and plot level, not multi-functionality. New land use paradigms must be explored and tested.
3. Realising “high level” goals (such as biodiversity) in practice always requires sufficient “external” input. Land development procedures clarify subsidy streams and provide a framework for the distribution of costs and benefits.
4. Targets must be balanced: integrated approaches, by their very nature, tend to fulfil only partial individual goals/ideals, they must be judged on their accomplishments as a whole. Integration means also transferring some personal power to others. Creating a mutual understanding, ideally empathy, is crucial for success in this regard.

### **Workshop**

During the short workshop session, four main questions were discussed in 2 groups: Which innovations are needed to develop more biodiversity in relation to:

1. A legal and institutional framework?
2. External input (market failure, funds, land, etc.)
3. Project planning and design plans.
4. Integrated approaches, balanced goals.

### **Some discussion points**

- What do we put in the centre? “Biodiversity”: often the goal is clear but the requirements to achieve the goal are not; or “territory / area”: e.g. more than 10% room for improving biodiversity in each project.
- Who are the clients for biodiversity? Economic return value is needed.
- Find the window of opportunity for integrating policy (at the local, regional, and EU level).
- The EU policy level needs to be integrated.
- The discussion focuses more on stakeholder involvement and less on instruments (LD and LC).

### **Main conclusions**

1. A “Champion” is needed, someone who takes the lead, who can bring a positive enthusiastic story in which everybody - including policy makers - wants to engage, and who communicates clearly on all levels. The money for implementation will soon follow.
2. Stakeholder involvement is important but new techniques are necessary.
3. Integration is needed at EU level (financing, goals, etc.)

## **Workshop O: Soil biodiversity. The key to increasing biodiversity on farmland?**

*Speaker: Dr. MM Pullman (WUR)*

*Moderator: Ben Delbaere (ECNC)*

*Secretary: Karolien Michiel (VLM)*

### **Questions**

- 1) Do you think that soil biodiversity should be a priority issue for EU policy?
- 2) If yes/no: What are the key arguments?
- 3) What policy measure offers the most potential for conserving/restoring soil biodiversity?

- 1) Everyone agrees on the importance of soil biodiversity.
- 2) Soil biodiversity could offer a solution to a number of problems:
  - Soil compaction
  - Organic material
  - Flooding - water storage function
  - A good soil structure to ensure production is necessary for sustainable agriculture
  - Carbon sequestration
  - Nutrient fixation
  - Soil provides multifunctional services
  - Soil controls erosion
  - Soil has a role in the above-mentioned biodiversity, “appealing biodiversity”
  - Soil has a role in plants’ induced resistanceEtc.
- 3) AES should focus on biomass input on an annual basis

### **Main conclusion**

Soil biodiversity can be a solution for many (most) soil problems. AES should focus on adding biomass on an annual basis.

## **Workshop P: Can art save the landscape?**

*Speaker: Jan Hermans (Municipality of Herzele) (Arpia)*

*Moderator: Chris De Smedt (Locus C)*

*Secretary: Korneel Gheysen (VLM)*

### **Minutes**

Presentation about the Herzele art project: a community with potential for the local landscape. Community investment in the landscape, also in Arpia, art in the landscape. Inhabitants and the community wanted to create a modern art project. This led to Arpia (a non-profit organisation).

There are difficulties in integrating art in the landscape: building permits, suspicious nature lovers, prejudices of land owners and land users, the practical problems of working in situ, self-censorship.

The purpose of land art: Drawing attention to the landscape, offering an experience of the landscape, bringing people together and maintaining knowledge.

#### **Questions:**

Does art belong in nature or not? And if it can be allowed into our valuable landscape, on what terms or conditions? Can we and should we restrict the artists’ freedom?

How can art contribute to biodiversity? Using sustainable materials to create the artefacts?

By motivating the local government to invest in the landscape and green developments such as improving and maintaining country roads, planting, etc.

#### **Discussion**

Art can inspire policy makers to think outside the box. The development process is too slow, and takes too long to produce results. Artists can inspire policy makers.

In Herzele, it did have an impact, but it started as an artistic project and became a landscape project. Attention was focused on managing and caring for the landscape. For

example, they were positioned in strategic locations, such as along country roads: thanks to this project the country roads are maintained.

An artwork can be used to increase ecological value. This information can be given to the artist. It's difficult to place a piece of art in a fragile location. Elsewhere nature can provide an additional argument for incorporating a piece of art. Add nature to rest areas using art.

Artists are chosen from their previous work, they continue to work at the locations. Should the organisation follow the artistic process closely or grant the artist as much freedom as possible?

When you have determined the desired biodiversity, you can provide the artist with this information to be used as a starting point.

Should you use it as a restriction?

The artist may not damage the landscape. It's the project's starting line.

Does art contribute to creating a local identity? How is this achieved? Where do you draw the line between nature/culture/identity?

Landscape is the result of man working in nature. Students study the physical, historical, socio-cultural, etc. elements of the locations, and pass this information on to the artists. Visitors learn about the results through guided tours.

### **Main conclusions**

Art can add value to the landscape, by triggering experiences, reflection and illustrating the different values of the landscape (natural, historical, agricultural, aesthetic, etc.). It can in the best possible scenario increase respect for all these values and provide a local identity.

Biodiversity can be an added ecological value for some works of art. It might not be an ideal objective because that would narrow artistic freedom, but the artist could be pointed in this direction.

Art can inspire policy makers and scientists to think outside the box because they generate original perspectives, unexpected viewpoints, etc.

### **Workshop Q: Evaluation of green investments: EU - Case studies**

*Speaker: Ir. Ann Verspecht (University of Ghent)*

*Moderator: Dr. Jean Marie Halleux (ULG)*

*Secretary: Nel Ghyselincx (VLM)*

The aim of the workshop is to present the results of the application of the VALUE model for economic evaluation of green investments of the Green Belt of Bruges land development project.

Ann presented the economic evaluation at site level and regional level. She gave an overview of all costs and benefits that were taken into account.

For the economic evaluation of the site level, the University of Ghent used a cost/benefit analysis. For the regional scale they worked with input/output tables and multiplier analyses. The University of Ghent calculated that payback time for the GI of the Green Belt of Bruges will be 13 to 14 years. The University of Ghent also mentioned some of the model's limitations such as time and money constraints, data availability, etc.

Main conclusions:

- It's very important that the stakeholders agree on the scope and goals of the project. For whom do we implement the project? For whom are the benefits? This helps when

determining the relevant corresponding benefits (otherwise almost anything can be defined as a benefit).

- For example: a benefit of the GI of the Green Belt is “preventing cycling accidents”. The benefit of “repairing cars after they have been involved in an accident” is not taken into account because it is not associated with the aims of the project.
- When making an economic evaluation of a GI, you can also use the technique of “reserve thinking” instead of trying to calculate the value of the actual GI.

## Workshop R: Land acquisition for biodiversity: the quick or slow route?

*Speaker: Jan Verboven (VLM)*

*Moderator: Arne Vandenbogaerde (ELO)*

*Secretary: Leen Van den Bergh (VLM)*

### Minutes

Central question: land acquisition for biodiversity: do we choose the quick or the slow route? What is the best option?

Presentation about the characteristics of farmland in Flanders:

Flanders is densely populated; it's one large peri-urban region. Farmland is mainly a private matter and farmers often lease the land, farm sizes increase, the number of farmers decreases, farmland prices are increasing, the amount of farmland has stabilised since 1990. Over the last few years farmland has been purchased by wealthy people for speculation; farmland is regarded as an investment.

Land acquisition by the VLM (and other Flemish agencies): different forms:

Flemish pre-emptive rights;

Own pre-emptive rights in project areas: depending on land mobility, free of tenancy, sale price => occasional and at random, long-term purchase of larger areas, some effect on local sale prices;

How? On an amicable basis or legally enforced by expropriation;

Land exchange: land consolidation and nature development projects;

Land banking (combination of land purchase and land exchange to carry out nature compensation for large infrastructure projects);

Alternatives for land purchase? Financial compensation.

### **Question: conservation objectives for biodiversity => achieved by means of land acquisition or alternative methods?**

Discussion: the land that is effectively purchased by the VLM is only 2.6% of what is offered by solicitors: why is this figure so low?

Is it possible to buy more land for biodiversity? Yes, but these systems are not popular (e.g. open space compensation such as woodland compensation) Let's take the example of the Netherlands: red for green? In Flanders the law is not strict. Every attempt will result in more restrictions for the regular citizen. For example, if you construct a hard goal, do you then

need to compensate for this by constructing soft goals? Make sure that the efforts always correspond to the personal output.

Question: projects that depend on land acquisition are often desperately slow because the procedures for land acquisition are so complicated. Are there faster solutions? Cooperating with the land's current owners (industrialists, large land owners, farmers, etc. => efforts for farmland breeding birds by management agreements). However, woodland compensation in Flanders, for example, is extremely complicated. This is why land banks are probably the only solution.

Problem: different regulations are often contradictory, resulting in a lack of early or even medium-term implementation.

Problem: local land banks are established late and compete with each other => resulting in immobility.

There was an exercise that explored which procedure should be followed for each type of habitat. It turned out that for most habitats, these procedures have to take place in such difficult circumstances that private individuals cannot manage them alone (e.g. restoring wet moorland => no return, intensive management, specific management materials necessary, specific knowledge required, etc.) Specialist procedures are necessary to achieve conservation objectives, procedures that cannot be imposed on private individuals.

## **Main conclusions**

We use land acquisition to achieve our goals for biodiversity. There are a number of legal instruments for land acquisition such as land banking, land exchange, etc. However these instruments/procedures take a long time before the results are visible.

There are other possibilities for creating biodiversity more quickly. For example: cooperation with private individuals, farmers, land owners, etc. (for example measures taken by farmers for field births, etc.)

But for most species, specialist measures are needed to achieve these goals, measures which cannot be imposed on private individuals. Question: do we have to adjust our ambitions, our level of quality/standards so that we can also cooperate with private individuals? How sustainable are your results if you leave it up to private individuals?

The longer we wait, the more expensive these measures will be, because of the increase in land prices.

Perhaps private investment companies should be obliged to develop 20% of the area for nature goals.

The group is rather pessimistic concerning the conservation objectives.

## **Workshop T: Transnational assessment of practice in place-keeping: model agreements/analysis**

*Speaker: Mel Burton & Dr. Nicola Dempsey (University of Sheffield)*  
*Moderator: Dr. Marcia Pereira (Heriot Watt University of Edinburgh)*  
*Secretary: Hendrik Vermeulen (VLM)*

## **Main conclusions**

Budget cuts in public spending force the public sector to look for new ways of cooperating with local people and the private sector to build and maintain open spaces. In the MP4 project, different forms of cooperation between the public sector and those who benefit from investments and maintenance have been investigated. They were presented and discussed in the workshop. They differ mainly in the degree of responsibility held by local people and private partners with regard to the renewal/maintenance of their environment.

In Flemish examples, decisions are made by the public sector and local people are consulted.

Dutch examples show the work of an organisation (Emmen Revisited) that operates in between the local authority and the community, acting as a bridge. This organisation is highly successful in promoting community involvement in design and decision-making processes. They are now exploring new ways of promoting user involvement in place-keeping.

In British examples, local people have very specific, informal responsibilities in different projects, under the form of a "Friends of" group.

To a certain extent in German examples, responsibilities are transferred to housing companies which are organised in a management group.

No conclusions were reached as to which one of these forms of cooperation is the most desirable, but it was demonstrated that we have a lot to learn from each other's examples and their application in different contexts, being careful and respectful of local specifications.