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## **Inclusive cities need sustainable urban fringes**

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### **Abstract**

Within the discipline of city planning, urban fringes are getting more and more into the centre of attention. This paper discusses the experiences of local and regional authorities in four countries (UK, Flanders, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden) that worked together in the project Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF; part of the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme). This project resulted in a valuable set of learning experiences that can contribute to sustainability and inclusiveness in urban fringes and therefore in cities as a whole. The paper addresses what inclusive urban fringes look like and how local authorities can contribute to them. The conceptual framework to stimulate inclusiveness in urban fringes focuses at creating synergy between different interests and qualities. This happens within a participative process, with all stakeholders involved. Not only the present and local situation is taken into account, but also the expected impact that choices in the Urban Fringe areas have on other areas, nearby or far away, and the expected impact in the future. This approach helps in realising synergy between the urban fringe area and the city itself, and is therefore a necessary condition for inclusive cities. Special attention needs to be given to lesser privileged groups in society, both in the process of stakeholder involvement and in issues like accessibility and values and functions. Based on this view on sustainable development and inclusiveness, two categories of policy interventions will be discussed in the paper: building stakeholder networks and creating synergy between different interests and qualities.

### **1 Introduction**

Within the discipline of city planning, urban fringes are getting more and more into the centre of attention given the transformational changes in both urban and rural areas, plus the fact that both are increasingly getting interwoven. We define the urban fringe area as

the zone connecting urban and rural areas, where urban and rural functions and qualities meet and interact. This area has both substantial risks and opportunities. The risks lie in issues like deprivation and loss of spatial quality, as a result of a concentration of unattractive monofunctional space consuming developments like waste dumping and processing sites, unorganised small businesses and unused farmland. The opportunities lie, among others, in creating attractive and accessible open space for citizens, local production of food and sustainable energy, multifunctional facilities for flood prevention and water storage etcetera. Developments in the urban fringe area are increasingly seen as vital for the environmental, economic and social quality of the city as a whole, thereby affecting the quality of life and opportunities for economic and social development for all groups in society, especially underprivileged groups.

The question we address in the paper is what role sustainable urban fringes can play in making cities more inclusive, and what kind of tools can be used to stimulate sustainability and inclusiveness in urban fringe zones. The experiences discussed in this paper were derived from the Interreg IVB project SURF (Sustainable Urban Fringes), where local and regional authorities in five countries (UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden) worked together, to stimulate sustainability and spatial quality in urban fringes. This project resulted in a valuable set of learning experiences that can contribute to sustainability and inclusiveness in urban fringes and therefore in cities as a whole.

The paper starts with describing a conceptual framework, where the concepts of sustainability and inclusiveness and their connectedness are described. Then it describes the interventions used within the Interreg project Sustainable Urban Fringes, the context where they were applied and the results obtained. It ends with a reflection, discussing to which extent the interventions used contributed to sustainable development and inclusiveness, and what could be added to policy interventions for further improvement of the outcomes.

## **2 Conceptual Framework**

Sustainability and inclusiveness are two quality concepts that are used frequently in discourses in the field of housing, planning and area development. The concept of sustainable development has firstly been defined by the Commission Brundtland (1987). They defined Sustainable Development as *a development that meets the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of futures generations to meet their own needs*. In other words, a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It offers a vision of progress that integrates immediate and longer-term objectives,

local and global action, and regards social, economic and environmental issues as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress. Within the work of the Brundtland Commission, the position of poor and underprivileged people was of special interest. In the decades since 1987, this concept of sustainable development has been incorporated more and more into housing, planning and area development. See for example the work of Timothy Beatly (2000) and many others.

The UN Habitat programme defines an inclusive city as a city that promotes growth with equity. *“It is a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic and political opportunities that cities have to offer”*. The authors see social equity as one of the three pillars of sustainability, and one that is vital to creating a shared, sustainable urban future. The UN programme sees participatory planning and decision-making are at the heart of the Inclusive City. According to UN Habitat, *inclusive urban governance reduces inequality and social tension; incorporates the knowledge, productivity, social and physical capital of the poor and disadvantaged in city development; and increases local ownership of development processes and programmes*. (UN-Habitat, 2001)

Goltsman and Iacofano (2007) published a substantial handbook on ‘The inclusive city’, where they present inclusive city planning as a solution *“based on economic, social, environmental and culturally sensitive policies that allow everyone to improve economically as the area improves”*. They stress that cities need planning that recognizes the right of every person to full involvement in the development process: *“through participation, people can shape their own environment to meet their own needs”*. The most vulnerable groups in society usually have limited access to participation processes, as a result of lack of skills, knowledge and information. This creates the risk that their needs are less taken into account in urban planning, which possibly leads to a further deprivation of the quality of their living environment, and of their life as a whole. To address this problem, the authors propose a participatory design process based on three criteria: functionality (design that incorporates the needs of all types of individuals), context sensitivity (harmony with the surrounding environment), and equitable impact to *“mitigate the social and human impacts especially on the most vulnerable members of society”*.

The conceptual framework used within the SURF project combines elements of the two approaches described here above. We define five quality dimensions in the concept of sustainable area development: social quality, environmental quality, economic quality, spatial quality and process quality. Where many models for sustainable development aim

at *balancing* different interests and qualities, our starting point is *creating synergy* between different interests and qualities, for instance combining the strengthening of environmental and nature values with enhancing the accessibility of rural areas and offering high quality job opportunities. Given the different aspects and interests this can only happen through a participative process, with all the stakeholders involved. Empowering these stakeholders, therefore, is an important aspect in developing sustainable urban fringes. Not only the present and local situation have to be taken into account, but also the expected impact that choices in the urban fringe areas have on other areas, nearby or far away, and the expected impact in the future. Within the context of the urban fringe it is about integrating different qualities, both urban and rural, taking into account both the dimensions of time and space. The figure below (De Bruijn 2004) illustrates our approach towards sustainable development:



To make the concept of quality tangible for stakeholders, it is important to use the knowledge and experience of stakeholders, in order to formulate the quality aspects in terms that are relevant for the stakeholders. In many cases, this articulation can differ from the formulation that professionals use. Professionals engaged in area development should be curious to know the perceptions of their stakeholders, and be able to talk their language. On the other hand they should also keep an eye on effects of activities on qualities far away and years ahead, as this affects other stakeholders and interests without a direct voice in the decision making process. The issues mentioned below try to cover both elements.

### *Environmental quality*

Environmental quality is the ‘planet’ dimension of sustainability. Important elements are energy saving and climate change reduction, safeguarding natural resources and pollution prevention, and biodiversity conservation. The economic and social benefits ‘there and elsewhere’ of these elements of environmental quality for the quality of life on our planet are obvious, but it is important to pay enough attention to the direct benefits for stakeholders, like cost reduction (especially relevant for energy saving), health improvement, improvement of quality of life and convenience in situations like housing and traveling. In many projects and initiatives on sustainable development, both by local authorities and businesses, sustainable development is limited to environmental issues. This creates risks in terms of acceptance of these projects, and leaves opportunities to combine interests un-used.

### *Social quality*

Social quality of an area covers the ‘people’ dimension of sustainable development. Van der Maesen and Walker (2006) define four different domains of social quality: socio-economic security; social cohesion; social inclusion; and finally social empowerment. All these domains have links with the characteristics of an area. Socio-economic security covers issues like finances, housing and the environment, health and care, availability of work and education. Health can be promoted in the urban fringe in different ways. There is a growing amount of evidence that green space is beneficial for health, in many ways: by decreasing stress, by improving air quality and by creating easily accessible opportunities for physical exercise like walking, cycling, playing and sporting (Maas, 2009). Social cohesion can be stimulated by the spatial planning of areas by realising places and facilities where people can meet and communicate. Van Dorst (2006) shows how the physical arrangements of streets and neighbourhoods can stimulate social cohesion and thereby contributing to sustainability and liveability. Involvement of underprivileged groups in decision making processes, communication and maintenance of open space can contribute significantly to social inclusion and social empowerment, and lead to open space that is better adapted to the needs and interests of these groups. See for example the experiences of the City of Aberdeen, described below.

### *Economic quality*

Economic quality covers the ‘prosperity’ dimension of sustainable development in a broad perspective. It covers, among others, the availability of conditions to make a living. Both physically like the availability of natural resources and other economic assets, the availability of infrastructure for entrepreneurship and the level of education of the population, as well as in terms of facilitating government regulations and regimes. Furthermore, it can cover indicators like employment and unemployment, the earning

capacity of a region and investments in maintaining quality on a long term. Also the attention for fair trade should be considered as a part of economic quality. This does not only refer to trade with developing countries, but it can also refer to fair payments for local and regional entrepreneurs.

### *Spatial quality*

In the models commonly used to describe sustainable development, the three dimensions *people – planet and prosperity* mostly are used. Within SURF, we described spatial quality separately, because of the focus of the project on area development and land use planning. This helped us to create a more complete picture of the qualities needed. We followed the definition of spatial quality, as used by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment in their Spatial Planning documents (See e.g. Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment, 2005). They identify three main values determining spatial quality:

- Functional value or use value: logical, safe and practical arrangement of functions and activities in the space; accessibility for different modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, cars) and connections between urban and rural areas; multifunctional land use where possible; separation of functions where necessary.
- Perception value or aesthetic value. Though aesthetics is to a large extent an individual perception, some common and broadly accepted elements of aesthetic value can be mentioned. This refers, among others, to issues like regional identity, the visibility of landscape and cultural history, the readability of the landscape.
- Future value: this refers for example to the adaptability of an area for possible future changes in functions, needs or life styles.

The direct benefits for stakeholders can be seen in issues like aesthetics (do people like the place), readability and logical structure (can people find their way and understand where they are) and convenience (can they do the things they want as easily as possible). Assink and Groenendijk (2009) argue that spatial quality is gaining importance as a factor for location choice of companies. If this is the case, efforts of both authorities and businesses to improve the spatial quality of an area can contribute to economic development and thus job opportunities in a region.

### *Process quality*

This final dimension focuses on the involvement of stake and share holders in the informal decision making process and the formal planning processes. Given that sustainable development always means taking into account different qualities and therefore different stakeholders, the process dimension is of crucial importance. Who are

involved in what way in what stage of the planning process? How open and transparent are communication and policy development processes? Are all stakeholders involved and informed? Do decision making processes and procedures lead to synergy between the different qualities, and do they lead to serious attention for effects of decisions on the long term and in other places?

The key challenge is not only to deal with the different perspectives and qualities individually but to do so in an integrated way, focusing on the realization of synergy between qualities and between needs and interests of different stakeholders. In many cases, there are possibilities for synergy and improving one quality may also benefit one or more other qualities. In other circumstances, it may be better to choose just one or two of the qualities. On the other hand, focusing on one quality only (for instance economic development) at the expense of other qualities (landscape or social well-being) cannot be considered as sustainable development.

Summarizing, the core of sustainability and inclusiveness is the integral perspective it starts with and the balance it brings to various qualities. Sustainable development is not to be seen as a limiting perspective. On the contrary, a sustainable perspective creates opportunities that were, up until now, hidden. It is, therefore, about *added* value. Sustainability and inclusiveness should be considered as two sides of the same coin, starting from a slightly different perspective but finally realizing the same aims and qualities.

### **3 Interventions**

How can authorities and other stakeholders contribute to sustainable urban fringes and benefit from sustainable development in urban fringes, and how can these processes and the physical results contribute to inclusive cities? The traditional government tools, like rules and regulation, financial incentives and top down communicative instruments seem to lose their influence and are more and more replaced by tools and interventions in a network setting. This is especially the case in the urban fringe, an area characterised by multifunctionality, multi-ownership and a variety of stakeholders and interests. In addition to that, private stakeholders like businesses, housing corporations and real estate developers seem to become increasingly aware of the benefits of sustainable area development both for their own organisation and for the society as a whole. This results in more attention for sustainability in their projects, both in words and in actions.

Managing multifunctionality, multi-ownership and multistakeholders is considered as the key to the success of sustainability policies. Within the SURF project, we identified two main categories of potentially successful policy strategies for the urban fringe:

– *Building networks;*

Sustainability and inclusiveness need the involvement of all stakeholders. Public authorities traditionally had the leading role in land use planning, but in many situations this is changing rapidly. The growing interest of real estate developers, land owners and other private investors in sustainability and inclusiveness and the shift towards a more governance – bottom up – oriented approach in public planning make it necessary to develop tools for network building and stakeholder engagement. In urban fringe areas, this task can be extra challenging because of differences in culture and tradition between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ networks and stakeholders. From the perspective of inclusiveness, the big challenge is to involve underprivileged groups of society in these networks and in the bottom up approaches developed by and within these networks.

– *Creating synergy between different qualities;*

Sustainable development asks for combining different qualities and realising synergy. Especially the creation of job opportunities in the urban fringe zone is an important issue. Important reasons for this are the changes in agricultural practice and the fact that the rural area around cities is in many cases less suitable for intensive world market agriculture. Also degradation of the ‘urban’ part of the urban fringe area (housing areas, industrial sites) can lead to loss of employment in the urban fringe area and the need for initiatives to stimulate competitiveness. A sustainable approach implies that the search for competitiveness should always go hand in hand with stimulating spatial, environmental and social quality. If done properly, this can contribute to the creation of high quality jobs for lower educated people, and accessible and attractive open space in the urban fringes.

## **4 Examples from the Interreg project Sustainable Urban Fringes**

This section describes some of the experiences of the SURF partners in building networks and creating synergy, with a special attention for involving and empowering underprivileged groups. This is where sustainable development and inclusiveness meet and merge.

### **Build Networks: River Don Project, Aberdeen**

A very inspiring example of the involvement and empowering of underprivileged groups in decision making and maintenance of urban fringe areas can be found in Aberdeen. The City of Aberdeen has two characteristic rivers in its urban fringes: the River Dee in the south and the River Don in the north. Where the River Dee is well known and appreciated for its landscape quality and recreational opportunities, the River Don did not



have this position. The River Don cuts through areas of industry and some deprived communities. Whilst the river is an important area to the city, access to the river for city residents was poor. However, there are areas of great cultural and historic importance such as the Brig o Balgownie and Seaton Park.

The City of Aberdeen worked in many ways on network building in the areas around the River Don and involvement of the inhabitants in all stages of area development: inventory, planning, decision making, communication and maintenance. Citizens were invited to contribute to the inventory of green space quality in the Open Space Audit. The Open Space Audit is a participative, integrated inventory of the quantity, quality and distribution of different types of open spaces within the City of Aberdeen. The methodology assesses the quality of the open space from different perspectives and with the involvement of different categories of stakeholders: experts, users, decision makers, and city staff. This approach allows experts to acquire a broad understanding of the quality and appreciation of open space, creates awareness among citizens and allows them to participate in the process of green space improvement.

The City of Aberdeen employed residents from the neighbouring communities for different positions in the project, for example communication and network building and maintenance work in the green spaces. Because these people know the project area and the neighbourhoods very well, they serve as very effective ambassadors for the project area, reaching and involving other residents who usually are not reached by standard communication means and methods like websites and leaflets. The work they do helps them substantially in skills development and empowerment, improving their opportunities on the labour market after the finalisation of the project. Even people punished for criminal activities were involved in maintenance work, and this appears to help them in their reintegration strategy into society.

The physical changes in the River Don area are presented in the River Don Spatial Plan. This plan is broadly supported in the neighbouring areas, as a result of the intensive communication and stakeholder involvement. More and more of the communication activities happen bottom up and require hardly any involvement from the local authorities. An example of this is the River Don Facebook group, with almost 200 members, mainly local, exchanging information on open space and biodiversity in the River Don area and organising activities in the area.

### **Building networks: Friends of the Weusthag, Hengelo**

A second example is the Friends of the Weusthag organisation in the city of Hengelo, the Netherlands. The Weusthag is a green enclave in the northern part of the city of Hengelo. The enclave is the result of growth of residential areas around the area. It was left green because it served as an infiltration area for drinking water. The area has a substantial

amount of farmland (dairy farming, horses) and hosts facilities like a park, pet zoo, sports facilities and a restaurant. The *Friends of Weusthag* is an organisation that has been established by the direct stakeholders of the park area. In essence, the tool is a structured way of organizing bottom-up initiatives of stakeholders that have a direct interest in the project area. The local government facilitates this development. Inspiration for the transformation of the area to a citizen park was found after officials of the city visited other inspiring examples like the Bürgerpark in Bremen (Germany) and the Sonsbeek park in Arnhem (the Netherlands).

The Friends of Weusthag organisation will get a large part of the responsibility of the area and can develop new ideas into plans. Due to the bottom-up principle citizens will feel involved in the development of the Weusthag. The Weusthag organisation started as a foundation mainly composed of land owners in the area, whose main interest was to maintain the status quo in the area. This was not in line with the vision of the local authorities, who wanted to see the Weusthag area as an open and developing area, improving the quality of life of all people living around the park. Also here, like in Aberdeen, some of the neighbouring residential areas host deprived communities, with limited access to jobs, education, recreation facilities and green space.

One of the roles the local authority saw for itself is to stimulate balance: create a good and complete overview of all the needs and interests in the area, and try to facilitate that these needs are met, as long as they fit into the overall vision and the future perspective of the city. In order to realise this, the City of Hengelo provided an interim chair for the organisation and facilitated in setting up the organisation and the working groups. In this period, the level of mutual trust has increased and the scope of the people involved has broadened. The limited amount of trust between the stakeholders and the local authorities was the result of a long period of limited or no activity in the Weusthag area, leading to a decrease of attractiveness and accessibility.

An important strategy that the local authorities used to gain trust, was to make sure that things really happened on the ground and that people not only talk. Quick wins and easy to realise physical improvements in the area make clear that the municipality is also interested in improving the park area and is willing to listen to the stakeholders. The stakeholders now have a lot of enthusiasm to improve the quality of the area and set up activities for people living around the area.

### **Creating synergy: Business and biodiversity, Almelo**

Almelo is a city in the region of Twente, Province of Overijssel in the eastern part of the Netherlands. The city has around 73.000 inhabitants. As a Municipality, Almelo sees biodiversity as an important issue that is strongly related to development of business sites.

The NGO Landscape Overijssel works together with the businesses to implement a biodiversity project at several industrial sites in the city. Business areas are considered as quiet and peaceful places after office hours and offer opportunities for the development of nature. All the business sites are situated in the urban fringe zone of Almelo. Activities to enhance the quality of the green space on these sites contribute to improved ecological connections between urban and rural areas, but they also make business areas in Almelo more attractive for entrepreneurs and employees, and thereby influencing location choices of businesses and their employees.

The main partners in the project are the businesses themselves and the Foundation Landscape Overijssel, an NGO working on nature protection and biodiversity. The municipality brought the partners together and facilitates, but does not take the lead. A landscape architect makes an inventory of the opportunities to enhance biodiversity on the industrial sites, both at and on the buildings (green roofs, nesting facilities) and in the open space between the buildings (ecological meadows, frog pools, butterfly bushes etcetera). It proved positive since most companies see this aspect added to their business image as beneficial. They see and understand that incorporating biodiversity on business sites adds to a better working environment which could improve the employees' health and also promote their corporate image. Each of which are aims in their own interest.

The initiators of the project receive very positive comments on the initiative by the businesses on the site, and experience willingness to cooperate. According the City of Almelo, more and more businesses are willing to integrate biodiversity on their business sites. A substantial part of the business community is in favour of this nature and biodiversity project and already joins or is interested to join the project. This is one of the ways the business work on Corporate Social Responsibility. In a short period of time the Municipality of Almelo detected a moral change from the businesses. Nature and biodiversity used to be a threat for the businesses, but nowadays more and more businesses see the opportunities that it can offer. In a summary, the project has the potential to create synergy between many different qualities and interests: the ecological quality of the buildings and the sites, the economic perspective of the businesses, the attractiveness of the sites for workers and visitors and the positive influence it might have on job creation. Since the project is in an early stage, systematic evaluation and monitoring of the results is not yet available.

### **Creating synergy: Enschede round, Enschede**

The Rondje Enschede (Enschede round) is a cycling and walking track in the urban fringe of Enschede. This city has around 160.000 inhabitants and the rural area around Enschede is characterized by a high landscape quality. Nevertheless, the landscape

quality is under pressure as a result of changing farming practices. The City of Enschede has also the desire to provide room to 'green' housing development in the urban fringe, making the city more attractive for higher income residents and thereby contributing to economic competitiveness of the region. This implies a more multifunctional use of the rural area around the city. Recreation and tourism are considered as potentially a very important and promising business sectors in the urban fringe.

In order to stimulate environmentally friendly recreation and support 'green' business development in the urban fringe, the Enschede Round was developed. It presents an attractive cycling or walking track published on a map and on a website. It has signs all along the track for walkers and cyclists. The map also provides a list with information regarding entrepreneurs near the track that cyclists or walkers can visit during their activities, and regarding public recreational facilities. In this way, Rondje Enschede promotes the use of the urban fringe and connects entrepreneurs, visitors and other stakeholders in the urban fringe. A mixture of stakeholders and facilities is presented on the map of Enschede Round, e.g. local food production, farmer's shops, bed & breakfasts, pubs and restaurants, natural playgrounds and facilities from the creative sector. An online version of the map is available at [http://rondje.enschede.nl/00006/Kaart\\_Rondje\\_Enschede/](http://rondje.enschede.nl/00006/Kaart_Rondje_Enschede/), a hard copy is distributed on many public places in the municipality. To promote the map and the routes, several events were organised, linked to sports, leisure and recreation.

Although no systematic evaluation and monitoring has been organised since the launching of the map and the round, the general impression is that it is effective. The Map of the Enschede Round led to a lot of positive response by users. The starting event of the Enschede Round attracted hundreds of interested people. Many people acquired a copy of the map and walked or cycled part of the Enschede Round. It is thought to lead to more awareness of the attractiveness of the urban fringe for local residents, leading to more visits in the urban fringe. It brought entrepreneurs together, who developed a combined website to present their businesses and the services available to possible customers (<http://www.buiteninenschede.nl>). The Enschede Round appears to be a trigger for entrepreneurs and NGOs to organise activities or to link their existing activities to this track. It helps to create continuity in communication and a good relationship between authorities and businesses.

## 5 Reflection

The cases presented here are presented as interventions to stimulate sustainable development and inclusiveness in urban fringes. The urban fringes as such were presented as important areas for the development of sustainable and inclusive cities. To

which extent do the cases presented support the ideas about the importance of the urban fringe and can we conclude that there is evidence that the interventions presented work?

### **What else is needed to realise sustainable and inclusive cities?**

#### **Importance and opportunities of the urban fringe**

The experiences within SURF show that green space facilities in the urban fringe provide a location where people from different social classes can meet. The residential areas near the urban fringe of many of the cities in the SURF project habit both underprivileged groups and relatively wealthy and higher educated people. The rural area near the city is an attractive place to live for people from higher social classes. Though not systematically monitored yet, the impression and expectation is that attractive green space in the urban fringe can help to bring together different social classes from society. It is very interesting to look for more evidence in this respect, both within the SURF cases and in other places.

Not all the opportunities for sustainability and inclusiveness were used in the project areas in SURF. Issues like recreation, green space, biodiversity and accessibility were important in many of the SURF projects, as well as job creation in line with the issues mentioned above. An item that received little explicit attention within the SURF project was local food production and urban farming. This can link to sustainability and inclusiveness in urban fringes in many ways: it can provide local employment in combination with fair food prices both for producers and for customers. It can combine leisure activities (gardening) with food production and thereby income generation and reduction of spending. It can bring down the transport footprint of food and close nutrient loops on a short distance, which contributes to environmental sustainability.

The same can be said for an item like local sustainable energy production. There are lots of opportunities for local sustainable energy production in urban fringes. Urban fringe areas can offer both space and resources for energy production, and their vicinity to the city enables distribution of the energy to places where it is needed. This can improve the availability of local energy, improve the involvement of residents in their own energy production and bring down the costs needed for energy supply. On the other hand, sustainable energy initiatives in urban fringes sometimes lead to resistance by residents, because they fear or expect loss in spatial quality in their neighbourhood. Experts from Atelier Overijssel (2010) described opportunities in this respect and recommended to integrate provision of sustainable energy more directly into area development processes. If well integrated, it can contribute to the quality and identity of the landscape.

## **Interventions**

The interventions presented here are in line with the ideas developed in the last years, on changes in government and governance, and a shift from top down to bottom up policy development. See for example De Bruijn (2008). The knowledge on network management and bottom up policy development is broadly available, but not always applied successfully. Much of the real quality of the policy development processes appears to rely on the personal skills, attitudes and enthusiasm of the executing staff (civil servants and consultants or representatives from NGOs). Curiosity and the skills and willingness to listen are important factors.

These soft skills get a growing attention within Education for Sustainable Development in universities. Roorda (2012) developed a set of sustainability competences, focusing on interdisciplinarity, stakeholder participation and the creation of synergy. Key words in these competences are Responsibility, Emotional Intelligence, System Orientation, Future Orientation, Personal Involvement and Action Skills. Management approaches like the 'Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, 1989) can be helpful tools to develop these skills in practice.

## **Need for leadership and new financial instruments**

Apart from bottom up processes there is still a strong need for leadership in policy towards sustainability and inclusiveness. When bottom up process focus too much on the direct perceived needs of the most actively participating stakeholders, there is a substantial risk that the weaker and less powerful stakeholders and interests do not get a voice in the decision making processes. This implies, among others, the skills and power of decision makers to focus on needs and interests on the long term (later), on other places (elsewhere) and of stakeholders without a strong voice. It also implies a focus on linking the global and local interests, and looking for synergy between those two types of interest. One of the positive developments in this respect is the growing knowledge on the value of green space and ecosystems, see for example the work done within the project TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity). There is a growing amount of experience in quantifying benefits of ecosystems and green space, and of the benefits of investments in sustainability and inclusiveness, and using this knowledge in decision making processes. Methods like Social Cost Benefit Analysis can help in expressing the values. In addition to this, there is a need to develop new financial constructions to deal with situations with split incentives, where some stakeholders invest (like real estate developers, housing corporations or municipalities) and others benefit (like citizens or businesses).

## Conclusion

The initiatives within SURF helped in realising on the ground experience with sustainability and inclusiveness in area development, focussing on urban fringe areas. Network building and creating synergy were the main common features of the tools developed and applied. The preparation and realisation of physical changes and other initiatives in urban fringes is time consuming, which implies that hard quantitative evidence of the results and the effectiveness of the initiatives is not yet widely available. Nevertheless, many of the project initiators and stakeholders involved report enthusiastically about the progress they made in stimulating sustainability and inclusiveness in urban fringes, and thereby contributing to the quality of cities as whole.

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