



“Connecting Urban & Rural”



Over 30 delegates met in Belgium for a Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project workshop addressing urban fringes.

The event was held in Ghent, East Flanders but involved a day long excursion to West Flanders in a hands on approach to solving the problem surrounding the urban fringe of the West Flanders SURF partner.

The workshop provided the opportunity for SURF partners to progress work on their primary focus from one of the projects 4 key urban fringe themes -

- Economy, competitiveness and enterprise
- The role and value of green spaces
- Planning and stakeholder engagement
- Governance of urban fringes

Delegates had the chance to learn more about research into urban fringes from East Flanders Expert, Dr Hans Leinfelder, Head of the Department of Spatial Planning at the Central Government of Flanders.

Until recently, Dr Leinfelder worked for the University of Ghent, Centre for Mobility and Spatial Planning and in his research work was strongly involved in urban fringe issues.



SURF was approved by the Interreg IVB Programme in September 2009. The project brings together partners from 5 countries across the North Sea Region.

The SURF project is split into 4 workpackages dealing with -

1 Project Management

2 Publicity & Communications

3 Review & Analysis

4 Testing & Implementation

Dutch Project Parade

A regional approach to urban fringes was the theme of a national project parade on suburban areas, organised by the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, in November, 2010.

More than 50 delegates attended the "Together Strong Urban Fringe Areas" event which is part of the Beautiful Netherlands initiative.

Participants had the opportunity to gain inspiration from practical projects and take this knowledge back to their own suburban areas.

Delegates were encouraged to use the landscape as a starting point and liaise between town and country in developing their projects.

The event included a presentation by SURF partner, Rolf Oldejans, on a regional approach to urban fringes which outlined work of the SURF project.

The audience was very interested in the SURF approach and the Ministry has asked for more information on the project.

'Knowledge Agreement'

Saxion University and the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment have signed a Knowledge Agreement. The document allows Saxion access to information from other Urban Fringe experiments in the Netherlands, that are supported in the programme 'Mooi Nederland' (Beautiful Netherlands). Saxion University is one of the SURF projects scientific partners. They are working with Leeds Metropolitan University to progress work on the 4 SURF themes.

Further information about Beautiful Netherlands can be found on the website <https://kennispleinmooinederland.vrom.nl/home>.

SURF test runs an Implementation Lab "Lite"

Enhancing transnational learning, SURF partners were encouraged to work together and share information at a recent event in West Flanders.

An "Implementation Lab Lite" was specially designed so the process could be used in the busy SURF schedule.

Usually a three day process the Implementation Lab is a tried and tested concept to encourage participants to problem solve an issue.

As part of the process delegates travelled to the Roeselare region in West Flanders for a series of site visits to gain better understanding of the local urban fringe.

A study dossier about the area was distributed to delegates. There was also the opportunity to meet and question local experts.

Jasper Dugardeyn, a regional expert of the Province of West Flanders, responsible for Nature and Environment; and Pieter Foré, Coördinator of KATHO Expertise Centre Green Management gave presentations to show more insight into the issues.

A panel discussion with invited speakers over lunchtime allowed fuller understanding of the region and the way it worked.

The speakers were Peter Norro, provincial director responsible for Nature and Landscape; Liesbeth Gellinck, representative of the



Flemish Land Agency; and Koen Venneste, a provincial advisor.

Workshops in the afternoon completed the process and a full report on the Implementation Lab will be produced indicating results and suggestions from the session.

The event was led by Huibert Haccou from Saxion University, Netherlands. The University is a partner in the SURF project.

Urban Fringe on Television

Enschede was featured in a recent Nature in the City programme broadcast on Dutch television in November 2010.

The programme was part of a series that seeks out people and cities that

are leaders in conservation.

The episode visited the urban fringe area in Enschede and featured people who have made a commitment to looking after urban wildlife.

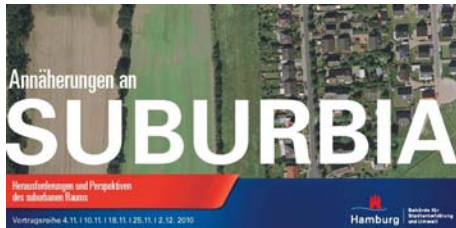
Join us on LinkedIn

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project has a discussion group on LinkedIn. Why not joining the group and have your say? Visit www.linkedin.com

Spotlight on SURF partners

In each edition of the SURF newsletter we will catch up with the work of some of our partners. In this edition the spotlight falls on Hamburg and West Flanders.

Hamburg



The project aims to enable stakeholders to react, stabilise and improve the quality of life in suburbia, despite administrative boundaries and traditional competitive attitudes. This is to develop suburbia's contribution to regional competitiveness.

Although Hamburg is still a growing city the urban fringes are affected by changing demographics. An older population in the city is placing economic, social, demographic and spatial pressures on the existing housing stock in the urban environment.

The SURF project has enabled stakeholders and experts from the Metropolitan region of Hamburg to meet and discuss the challenges facing Suburbia.

A series of "Approaches to Suburbia" events were held in November and December.

The events aim to build up a common understanding of challenges, potential and perspective of the suburban fringe and allow an exchange of experiences on suburban matters. Participants at the events were able to listen to experts from the region, researchers and practitioners in identifying the most important challenges for Suburbia.

Speakers and panel members hope to encourage an exchange of experiences, ideas and best practice on suburban matters.

Further events are planned for 2011 and 2012.

West Flanders



The project aims to increase the overall spatial quality of the landscape in the urban area of the city of Roeselare, in connection with the surrounding municipalities. This should lead to a better interaction and link between urban areas and countryside.

SURF partners had a chance to examine the urban fringe in West Flanders at the project's recent Implementation Lab.

Stad-Land-schap 't West-Vlaamse hart brings together nine municipalities of Mid-West-Flanders who are working on a joined up approach to enhance the attractiveness, recreational potential and landscape nature of the region.

The project aims to improve interaction and links between urban area and countryside to improve quality of life and access to leisure for people living and working in the region.

Stad-Land-schap is-

- Working out a green-blue recreational network
- Implementing green management techniques.
- Working on a reconversion of the Storoute, a disused railway track into a cycle track.
- Realisation of landscape business plans.

Find out more about the initiative on the website www.westvlaamsehart.be



SURF Recent Achievements

Saxion University - Supervised an MSc thesis on Urban Fringes which used SURF partner Bradford as a case study...

Hamburg organised a series of stakeholder discussion events "Approaches to Suburbia..."

Presentation about the SURF project to a political cross border commission of the Euregio and the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) in Minsk, Belarus ...

A portrait of the urban fringe in Enschede was shown in a Dutch TV series...

Rolf Oldejans had a meeting with the Dutch partners of the Plurelproject...

Norfolk held a stakeholder study tour of the urban fringe...

Bradford - organised an urban fringe business networking event...

Saxion University signed a 'Knowledge Agreement' on urban fringes with the Dutch Ministry of the Housing, Environmental Planning & Environment...

West Flanders have published a project magazine 't West-Vlaamse hart'...

Enschede and Hengelo hosted urban fringes visits by a Dutch Ministry as inspiration for the national policy on urban fringes...



Find out more about the SURF partners on our website www.sustainablefringes.eu

Developing Open Space in Peri-Urban Areas

Review & Analysis

Kevin Thomas, a SURF Partner from Leeds Metropolitan University, presented a paper at the "Developing OpenSpace in Peri-Urban Areas" Conference in Bruges in October. The event aimed to open dialogue between scientists, policy- makers, administrators and stakeholders on the challenges of developing green investments and their value in peri-urban regions. Kevin, presented the paper, written with Michelle Wishardt and Steve Littlewood, titled 'How to make urban fringes work better?'

The general theme of the conference is the development of open space in peri-urban areas and the value of green investments, with a specific focus on biodiversity."

Over 200 International delegates attended the event which was hosted by the Flemish Land Agency (VLM).



SURF partners Kevin Thomas and Steve Littlewood recently had an academic journal article published on 'green belts and green

infrastructure'.

The paper titled "From Green belts to green infrastructure? The evolution of a new concept in the emerging soft governance of spatial strategies" by Thomas K & Littlewood S (2010) can be found in the document Planning Practice and Research, 25 (2) April, on pages 203-222.



Project Partners are:

- Aberdeen City Council (Lead Partner)
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- City of Bradford
- Norfolk County Council
- City of Enschede
- Saxion University
- City of Almelo
- City of Hengelo
- Province of East Flanders
- Province of West Flanders
- City of Hamburg
- Municipality of Harryda
- Province of Antwerp

International Agriculture & Horticulture Fair

SURF Flemish partners are taking part in an International Agriculture and Horticulture Fair :AGRIFLANDERS in Ghent, from 13-16 January, 2011.

This leading exhibition for the Flemish agriculture and horticulture industry is set to run for four days. The exhibition will showcase the latest agricultural and horticulture products and technology.

The SURF Flemish provinces will be represented at the event, with information on SURF and short presentations from the Antwerp, West Flanders and East Flanders projects.

SURF welcomes



The Flemish, Province of Antwerp has joined the SURF project following official approval from the Steering committee. The Province aims to create accessible green spaces around major cities and through the SURF project, will look at the urban fringe around the valley system of the river Laarse. SURF will benefit from information sharing and transnational learning from our new partner.

The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme

Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region



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