



Creating PURE Hubs



Supporting PURE (Pioneers in Urban-Rural Entrepreneurship) to create vital new hubs

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URBAN CHALLENGES, RURAL SOLUTIONS

Urban areas in NW Europe are surrounded by the nearby countryside. These peri-urban areas represent a massive potential resource for tackling the increasing challenges that our cities are faced with, such as ageing populations, public health and environmental concerns, and severe economic problems. Peri-urban areas provide entrepreneurial opportunities, better and more sustainable production sites and supply chains to feed the cities, and additional health and education facilities for citizens. Unfortunately, these peri-urban opportunities are often overlooked and neglected by the urban social and organizational networks and by the strategies of local and regional governments.

Currently, initiatives for addressing these challenges are often isolated, inconspicuous, and seldom integrated across sectors. Development processes take fifteen years or more and are usually directed independently along economic, civic, or governmental dimensions. Solutions tend to focus on specific problems with a sub-optimal overall outcome for the region. The existing urban-rural divide allows for very few crossover actions. Building bridges with fragmented knowledge is slow and demanding.

OUR AIM IS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The aim of this project is to reinforce the economic and social performance of cities and their rural hinterlands and to (re)establish functional links between urban communities and rural production in the peri-urban part of North West Europe.

This project identifies the proposition of 'PURE Hubs' as a specific strategy for generating urban-rural economic and social resilience. We see a 'PURE Hub' as an active node, or connection point, in a comprehensive urban-rural network which can incorporate



infra-structural as well as organisational elements. A PURE Hub can be a physical construction, or an organisational node linking networks of people and organisations.

The common perspective is to...

...reconnect the relationship between rural practice and the needs for urban social and economic well-being, contributing to prosperity and enhanced quality of life in both cities and their rural hinterlands.

...provide economic and social added value by empowering of urban and rural stakeholders through their involvement and commitment within PURE networks facilitating interaction and knowledge transfer.



development processes. This guarantees the knowledge will stay available and operational long after the project has ended. The mix of partners and the structure of the project present favourable opportunities for applied research and additional scientific spin-off.

Finally we see good opportunities for the leverage of extra investments. We see that the strategy of Creating PURE Hubs even before the project's real start, is already inspiring local and regional authorities, development agencies and entrepreneurs. The project itself has generated € 4,25M of match funding; project partners have planned additional investments of about € 4,5M beyond the project's budget and observers have planned about € 3M of related investments. We expect that the amount of leverage funding will increase significantly during project implementation and after dissemination of the project's results.

OUR OBJECTIVES:

NEW RELATIONS, NEW BUSINESS, NEW POLICY

- 1 Enhance the social relationships between urban communities and adjacent rural areas, enabling cross sector cooperation and ultimately more effective supply chains for locally produced goods and services.
- 2 Strengthen innovative urban-rural entrepreneurship, stimulating new economic relations between cities and their hinterlands and developing new business models that better exploit the economic potential of peri-urban areas and also directly meet the socio-economic demands of the cities.
- 3 Sustain and enhance these urban-rural linkages by local and regional governments embedding these linkages in their long-term area development policies.

IMPACT: THE LONG-TERM EFFECT

The project will deliver social and economic innovations and make a tangible difference to the local communities involved with respect to the procurement of food, public health, leisure and education. We will convince rural entrepreneurs of the benefits of transforming their business in view of emerging local urban markets. We will help them with guidance for implementation. We will establish the necessary cross-sector connections known to be crucial for making a lasting change and new job opportunities. By actually creating PURE hubs, therefore, the project contributes towards more competitive cities that are better linked to their hinterlands and towards safeguarding prosperity for both.

The project will function as an evidence-based knowledge hub for urban-rural relationships in general and for urban agriculture and local food systems in particular. It is the kind of knowledge which is presently in high demand with public authorities and local communities and hard to come by.

Documenting our inspiring, practical examples and capturing our approach in a number of transferable strategies provides guiding principles that can help local authorities in their region-specific implementation. This support will be made available by using new social media and innovative imagineering techniques for providing easy access and transfer of information, enabling a much needed bridging capacity between fragmented initiatives.

This function will be organized and delivered under the guidance of knowledge institutions. In an active approach - using the communicating power of already existing networks and the exchange of students - the insights gained will become embedded in regional



AN INSPIRATIONAL BREEDING GROUND FOR TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

Each WP follows a joint, transnational approach along four basic steps. Together we aim to collect and analyse inspiring examples that will stimulate learning processes within the team (step 1). These examples will provide partners with new insights for implementing pilots in hub development. Initial ideas and strategies will be formulated together and subsequently tested 'at location' in the participating regions (step 2).

Transnational monitoring, evaluation, and reflection of these pilots will help our initial ideas to mature and be refined (step 3).

Together we will deliver and demonstrate the concepts and successful territorial strategies to the different audiences that have been selected and prepared during the entire process (step 4).

This project brings a number of initiatives together from different regions in North West Europe. In a stimulating context of research, reflection, and scientific analysis, combined with ground-level experiences, a breeding ground is provided for innovative measures and improving sustainable development.

We take the (future) needs of urban populations as our point of departure. However, cities and their rural hinterlands will both benefit from these new functional links between them. Taking urban needs as a trigger for releasing and safekeeping the benefits of the rural countryside is a novel way of framing policy issues of rural development.

Furthermore, by linking up with different stakeholder groups in the participating regions and exchanging information between them, the project will actually function as a catalyst for the initiation of new and integral development processes.

Our three knowledge partners represent a wide range of complementary disciplines and expertise. They will actively involve student work. Involving young people when sustainable development issues are concerned is, surprisingly, very innovative. It will have a personal effect on participating students as well as consequences for improving the curriculum.



PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

This project brings together a strong multi-sector partnership that comprises both public as well as private organisations from four different NWE countries: UK, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. These regions face similar challenges of how to create a stimulating environment for developing economically based urban-rural relations in the densely populated area of NWE. The answer to this challenge lies in cross-sector cooperation between different stakeholders. Our partnerships comprises 4 types of organizations, representing all of the stakeholders involved.

1

Regionally based socio-economic network organizations add expertise on how to build cross-sector relationships and networks. Most of these partners are public/private organizations and already working to link urban and rural networks. They put in their experience to the project as to how networks are build and what dynamics are involved.

- Rurant, platform for rural development in the province of Antwerp, Belgium
- Leisure Development Office Brabant (Vrijetijdshuis Brabant), the Netherlands
- Eindhoven Region (SRE), the Netherlands
- Greendomain Wasven, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
- Agricultural Innovation Brabant (LIB), the Netherlands
- Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway (GGKM), UK
- Spessart Regional, Germany
- Main Äppelhaus Orchard Centre, Frankfurt, Germany

2

Corporate sector organizations add know-how on innovation and entrepreneurship.

- ZLTO, South Netherlands Farmers Organization, the Netherlands
- Boerenbond, Belgium
- Hessischer Bauernverband, Germany

3

Regional and city authorities have the necessary skills to develop regional strategies and transform them into policy.

- City of Antwerp, Belgium
- City of Leuven, Belgium
- City of Mechelen, Belgium
- City of Turnhout, Belgium
- Province of Noord Brabant, the Netherlands
- St. Helens Council, UK

4

Knowledge institutions: Universities represent a wide range of complementary disciplines and expertise and will provide partners with a range of tools to support the development process of the PURE hubs strategy.

- Applied Plant Research Centre (PPO); Wageningen University & Research Centre, the Netherlands
- University of Applied Sciences HAS Den Bosch, the Netherlands
- Centre for Urban Regeneration (CURE), University of Portsmouth, UK

lead partner **BOERENBOND BELGIUM**

WP1 SOCIETY @ WORK

15 PURE Hubs involving at least 150 stakeholders (average 10 per hub) will function as 'real world test and demonstration sites' to explore and demonstrate the concept in real world situations

Main Apfelhaus in peri-urban Frankfurt

PURE Hub of 2 hectares based on production and processing of fruits with educational and training purposes included. Here a new network will be developed with a focus on education for handicapped children, a network study will be done to engage relevant stakeholders from urban Frankfurt, and network meetings will be organized; a total of 50 workshops will be organized and 3 educational festivals a year on fruits with 1000 visitors each.

City of Mechelen will invest in the community centre in Heffen to become a PURE Hub connecting Mechelen with the nearby peri-urban area of the Hombeeks Plateau by focusing on the sale of local produce and farm visits for leisure and education. In collaboration with **Rurant** a network study will be done, network meetings will be organized with different stakeholders such as local entrepreneurs, investments will be realized to attract new target groups, and public events will be organized.

Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway

will invest in Holm Hall in the centre of Dartford. The investment entails an artist construction of PURE Hub Holm Hall providing new activities combining local food, leisure, and the arts, supported by innovative networks of local artists, entrepreneurs, and the community. A network study will be done, network meetings and 10 programs/events will be organized with at least 2000 visitors.



WP2 ECONOMY @ WORK

Eight local/regional entrepreneurs' networks (2 per region) with total 80 pilot entrepreneurs (10 per network) are receiving support in the development of innovative business ideas and business plans directed at meeting city needs.



Rijk van Dommel en Aa has been assigned a national green belt function. Within this area, in the Eindhoven Region and Helmond, about 120 farmers are active. Farmers organisation **ZLTO** wants to support these farmers to develop new activities based upon the needs of the nearby cities, and to strengthen the green economy in the area. Meetings, workshops and excursions will be organised to inspire the farmers on new green business activities, a network of local rural entrepreneurs will be created, a joint action plan developed. Feasibility studies will be done on sustainable local energy production and care farming and at least 10 entrepreneurs will be supported in the development of new business ideas and plans.

Boerenbond will create a network of rural entrepreneurs surrounding the city of Leuven and do a feasibility study on maintenance of public green space within the city. City authorities want to reduce their costs for maintenance of public green space. Farmers in the area own suitable equipment and have spare time in winter. This will create an additional income for farmers.

Hessisches Bauernverband together with Spessart Regional will create a network of rural entrepreneurs, producers, processors, and traders in the Spessart region near Frankfurt to investigate the feasibility of the development of outlets in Frankfurt city for local food from the Spessart region and develop a regional action plan for implementation. History provides the inspiration for collaboration along the old trading route Frankfurt-Leipzig.

PROJECT FLOWCHART

Programme Priority 4 - OBJECTIVE 1

To promote transnational actions that will enhance the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas; including the economic potential of local and regional assets.

PROJECT AIM

Enhance the economic and social performance of cities and their rural hinterlands and (re)establish functional links between urban communities and rural production in the peri-urban part of NWE.

This project sets out the proposition of 'PURE Hubs' as a specific strategy for generating Urban-Rural economic and social resilience.

A 'PURE (Pioneers in Urban Rural Entrepreneurship) Hub' is an active node in a comprehensive Urban-Rural network incorporating infrastructural as well as organisational elements that:

- Reconnects the relationship between rural practice and the needs of urban social and economic well-being, which contributes to prosperity and enhanced quality of life in both cities and their rural hinterlands.
- Provides economic and social added value through the empowering of urban and rural stakeholders by involvement and commitment within PURE networks facilitating interaction and knowledge transfer.

OBJECTIVE 1

Enhance and organize functional urban-rural relationships

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance and support innovative urban - rural entrepreneurship.

OBJECTIVE 3

Sustain hub-based connections in peri urban area development policies.

WP1: SOCIETY @ WORK

bridging the existing urban-rural divide by developing comprehensive PURE Networks and Hubs, linking pioneers from different networks into the common social fabric needed for channelling urban needs for food and services.

Action 1: Initiate PURE Hubs as part of comprehensive regional food networks.

Action 2: Initiate PURE Hubs as part of comprehensive regional community services networks.

WP2: ECONOMY @ WORK

encouraging and strengthening business innovation and entrepreneurship among pioneers to enable them to respond better to urban needs for food and services through collaborating within the context of PURE Hubs.

Action 3: PURE business transformation, stimulating innovation in traditional rural entrepreneurship, and strengthening collaborative effort.

Action 4: PURE business development, supporting new concepts for expanding businesses.

WP3: POLICY @ WORK

introducing and embedding PURE Hubs as a strategic instrument for integrated planning and development of urban and peri-urban areas in the participating Northwest European regions.

Action 5: Explore the strategic qualities of Creating PURE Hubs for planning and development of peri-urban areas.

WP4: PROJECT @ WORK

designing and applying a transnational methodology and common toolset for development and subsequent dissemination of the PURE Hub strategy.

Action 6: Support the co-development of an easily transferable PURE Hub strategy through design and application of a joint methodology and toolkit

Action 7: Support adequate dissemination processes for the PURE Hub strategy as a reflection of our experiences.

PROJECT OUTPUTS:

- Transferable PURE Hub strategy delivered.
- 15 PURE hubs involving at least 150 stakeholders and functioning as 'real world test and demo sites.
- 8 local/regional entrepreneurs networks with total 80 pilot entrepreneurs are receiving support in development of innovative business ideas and business plans directed at meeting city needs.
- Implementation of PURE Hub strategy in 8 peri-urban area development plans.
- A transnational knowledge network in place, comprising entrepreneur organizations, regional and city authorities, regional economic development agencies, European network organisations and universities: the PURE Hub Club.
- Dissemination of PURE Hubs knowledge through European network contacts, supported by the PURE Hubs Flying Circus: an innovative multimedial on-tour information programme organized throughout NWE area.

WP3 POLICY @ WORK

We will co-develop PURE Hub strategies in 8 peri-urban area development plans.



Rijk van Dommel en Aa includes 8 municipalities, involving parts of the peri-urban areas of the cities of Eindhoven and Helmond.

Region Eindhoven (SRE), together with the local authorities, farmers organization ZLTO and other relevant stakeholders, want to develop a strategy for area development that fits the assigned national green belt function and will focus on the optimization of green economic functions.

A bench-mark study will be done, a network of local stakeholders will be developed, and an area development plan will be formulated.

Mechelen will create a network of the local city authorities, rural entrepreneurs and other relevant stakeholders to formulate an area strategy for the Hombeeks Plateau which will be connected to urban Mechelen by means of the PURE Hub community centre Heffen in peri-urban Mechelen.

St. Helens wants to create a Forest Park within its city boundaries. This Forest Park will provide the inhabitants of St. Helens with facilities for green leisure, nature experience, local food etc. To achieve this St. Helens will create a network of the city authority, entrepreneurs, residents and other relevant stakeholders to develop an area strategy for Forest Park and create community participation in greening activities. The activities also include investments to stimulate sustainable accessibility of this area.



WP 4 PROJECT @ WORK

A transnational and transferable PURE hubs strategy for sustainable urban-rural development described and illustrated by multimedia presentations and disseminated in various ways throughout the NWE area.

The Food&More Project (Southampton)

The core of the project will be food and the "more" will be linked activities which add to the project to make it one of the most important and exciting modern day business, environmental and social opportunities.

With Food at the core - Food&More will bring together and grow networks of individuals, families, businesses, organisations and institutions who will work in a transparent manner to create a project which will deliver in a responsible sustainable manner - Economic, Social and Environmental returns to all sectors of society. Food&More will be a new way of doing business as well as a way for building and empowering communities.

