

Green Infrastructure

From dreams to deals...

Green infrastructure is a network of natural land and landscape elements, which thread through and surround the built and rural environment, and which connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. The network includes agricultural land, forests, urban parks, street trees, road banks, hedges, nature reserves and water courses. Green infrastructure is a multifunctional resource that delivers services and quality of life benefits not only for individuals, but also for our common society and economy. These services are called 'ecosystem services'.

Examples of ecosystem services are the production of food and water, control of climate and disease, crop pollination, as well as spiritual and recreational benefits.

By its very nature, the protection and maintenance of green infrastructure has been developed by numerous stakeholders with central and regional governments playing a leading role. This situation is changing. Governments are reducing budgets and resources for green infrastructure, leaving the stage more and more to citizens and businesses. There is now a need to seek new opportunities to secure and increase the delivery of ecosystem services by our green infrastructure for the benefit of our society and economy.

We need to know how people and businesses can be empowered and encouraged to take responsibility of the green infrastructure. This is what the INTERREG IVB project 'GIFT-T!' is all about.

People and businesses are not always in a position to be able to appreciate and connect with green infrastructure. It is not always immediately obvious that it provides us with a sense of



place, wellbeing, shading, beauty, clean water and so on. GIFT-T! works to help people and business become more aware of their links to the green infrastructure.

The GIFT-T! partnership engages and supports actors in five case studies – taking them on a journey from 'dreams to deals'. We will jointly compile, test and approve methods and tools in practice, that:

- Enable actors to realise and express their need and desire for green infrastructure;
- Enable a region to convert the needs of a wide set of actors into a feasible and shared vision;
- Map and value the capability of green infrastructure to provide a suite of ecosystem services;
- Help regions to convert their shared green infrastructure vision into business plans.

GIFT-T! will deliver a tested, improved and transferable methodology that will helps to move from individual ideas to the delivery of green infrastructure, together with five vivid examples of bridging this gap.

Over the next two years, the seven GIFT-T! partners and their stakeholders will go through this exciting learning process. We invite you to join us in this process and to benefit from our intermediate results and experiences. At our mid-term meeting in April 2013 in The Hague, we will share our methods, approaches and experiences so far. We invite you to discuss our experiences and the problems we have met. We also want to hear about your experiences and thoughts on green infrastructure opportunities and barriers.



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