

Harvest of Mid Term Meeting

Towards a “Green Infrastructure Business Plan” by stakeholders

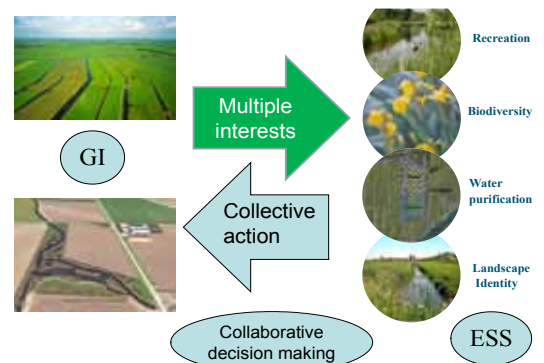
Antwerp, 21st of November 2013



What is GIFT-T!?

GIFT-T! is about community based planning with green infrastructure to create benefits from ecosystem services.

Green Infrastructure can deliver multiple benefits. In 5 live case studies we make these benefits concrete for stakeholders, organise collaborative decision making and initiate and support collective actions. We want to see how Green Infrastructure planning can be taken from the domain of governments towards the domain of people and businesses that benefit.

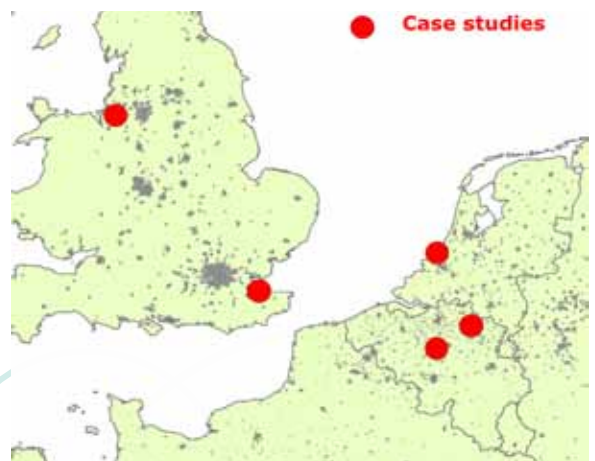


GIFT-T! results in 5 Green Infrastructure Business Plans, with which stakeholders can realize the changes in Green Infrastructure to get the benefits that they want. Supporting this process, we develop, test and improve a toolbox for community based planning.

Why a Mid Term Meeting

GIFT-T! is now halfway. Goals of this meeting were to hear back from a bigger and external audience of GIFT-T! on our results so far and improve from their suggestions.

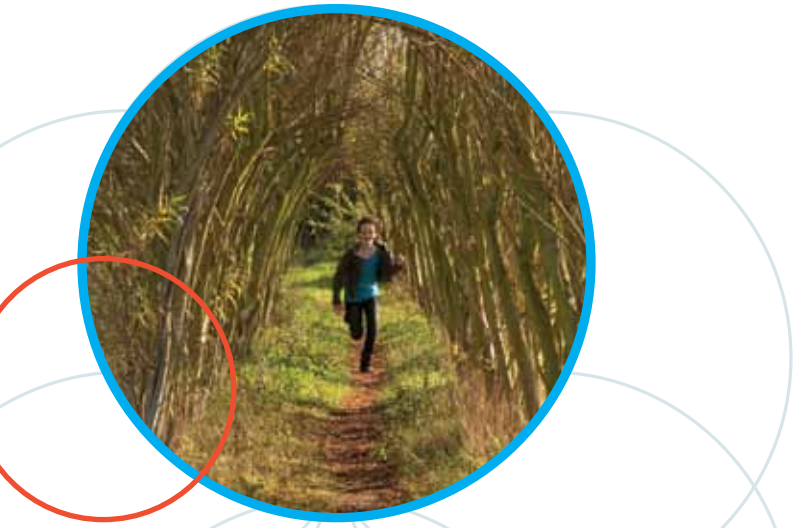
An international audience of over 75 people came together in Antwerp (Belgium) to hear how GIFT-T! has progressed over the first 18 months and to give their opinion.



What the stakeholders told us

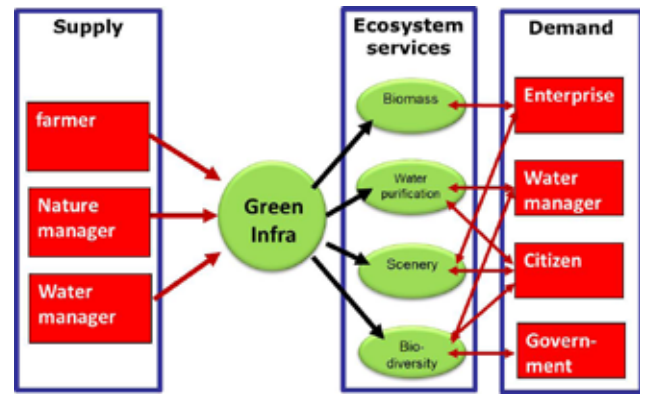
One key stakeholder of each GIFT-T! case study shared his experiences and gave his view on the GIFT-T! approach. Together we learnt how Heineken (NI) was engaged in GIFT-T! and why and how Heineken will work together with the Province of South-Holland and Alterra on a climate neutral brewery, a sustainable economy and a high quality landscape for well-being. From a commercial standpoint, we heard how Peel Holdings (UK) values the enhancement of Green Infrastructure with people in degraded areas.





The Royal Properties Group (B) showed that they invest in the development of a new residential area together with Green Infrastructure in the public space in cooperation with the local government. They expect that embedding new housing in its green and social environment will pay off. The local newspaper Peninsula Times (UK) stressed the importance of enabling and encouraging local communities to enhance the Green Infrastructure in their surroundings. Here, the living environment of people is due to large changes as a result of national and international developments. This affects the quality of the landscape negatively, but also the vitality of the social networks. The Belgium Forestry Group (B) argued that in their work only one way of planning of Green Infrastructure is feasible; stakeholder based planning. Improving and mainstreaming the GIFT-T! approach and tools can increase the development of Green Infrastructure.

Marco Fritz of DG Environment shared his delight about hearing that the EU on Green Infrastructure is already taking place in businesses. This because public funding is not sufficient and private investment is needed. The cases shown are important for getting the message across that investing in Green Infrastructure pays off in multiple ways. He explained that the DG Environment has four focal points regarding Green Infrastructure: the use of natural elements instead of engineering, protection of biodiversity resources, sharing of information and good examples, and innovation in the use of GI in new methodologies. To stimulate this, a natural capital bank for businesses for investing in the environment is created.



Impression of the meeting



One of the presenters of the case studies: Mr. Richard Mawdsley, of Peel Holdings on the case study of The Mersey Forest (UK)

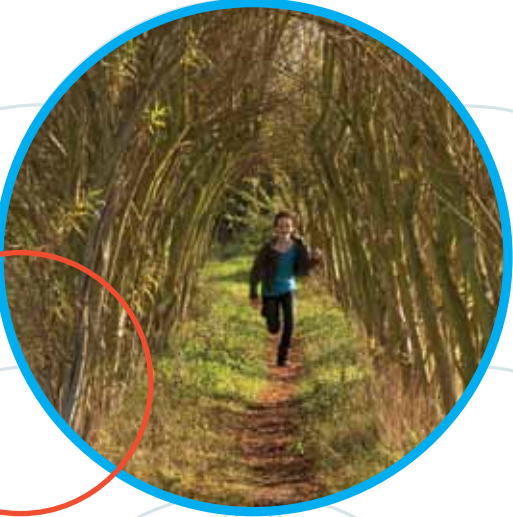


Mr. Marco Fritz of DG Environment informed us on latest news on GI policy and reflected on the presentations

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Info Market with GIFT-T! results so far

At the info market participants had the opportunity to see what is going in all the cases of the GIFT-T! project. The case studies presented their process of stakeholder based planning of GI so far and showed the tools they used. Alterra showed what was learned on stakeholder based planning in the case studies so far, captured in generic conceptual models. SEGEFA shared how valuation techniques can be used to support the planning process and how this is tested in the GIFT-T! case studies. Also, as at all lively markets, people met, exchanged ideas and got inspired.

What the audience told us

Ignace Schops, chair of the meeting, concluded that GIFT-T! is delivering inspiring examples of Green Infrastructure development by the multi stakeholder approach. The audience provided the following suggestions for making the most of GIFT-T! in the second half:

Broadcast your good examples to a wider public

Show how 'happy places' are created by community based planning of GI. This will convince and inspire people, businesses, politicians and policy makers at all levels.

Strengthen the case of community based planning

Build networks of cases that can work together and reinforce each other. Use valuation techniques to show the (potential) benefits of Green Infrastructure to convince people and to underpin the cases.

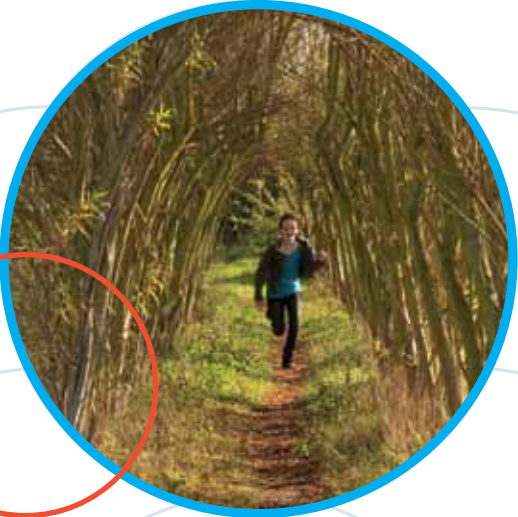


Impressions of the info market

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Biodiversity as an opportunity

Show how the 'risk of biodiversity' for businesses can be translated into an opportunity. As well as how we can protect our natural resources using community based planning of Green Infrastructure and thereby strengthen the N2000 network.

How GIFT-T! will take this on board

In the next half of the project we take this feedback to heart. We will adjust our communication strategy by, and broadcast our good examples. Further, we will organise a peer-to-peer conference for businesses between the cases and liaise with other EU projects. We will continue developing valuation methods providing insights about the added value of Green Infrastructure (both economic as well as non-economic). And last but not least we will compute the added value of the planned Green Infrastructure as a result of GIFT-T! to the connectivity between N2000 sites in NW Europe.

Thank you!

We want to thank all participants and presenters for sharing their view and knowledge. Together, all the pieces of the GIFT-T! project made an inspiring and promising whole. For people in the case studies, for policy makers and for businesses but also for us, the project team. Thank you very much for your contribution.



Mr. Ignace Schops, our chair, shared his views and thoughts by interweaving the day with his anecdotes and metaphorical tales



Green infrastructure for creating 'happy places'



The GIFT-T! team thanks you all for your contribution

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