

Expert workshop on "Green Infrastructure projects and policies"

Brussels, Wednesday, 7 September 2011

ALBERT BORSCHETTE, Rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels, Room: AB-3D

Background and Agenda

Ecosystems provide services and goods such as food and freshwater which are crucial for human well-being. These functions are threatened by the ongoing fragmentation and deterioration of ecosystems in Europe. Green infrastructure¹, which in a nutshell can be defined as a network of green areas and features in rural and urban landscapes, can enhance the resilience of species and ecosystems in adapting to climate change while securing multiple benefits for biodiversity and humans and ensuring the provision of ecosystem services and goods. The EU is currently developing a strategy on green infrastructure which will contribute to the EU 2020 biodiversity policy (COM(2011) 244 final)² and thus achieving the goals of EU biodiversity policy.

Several projects have been launched by the European Commission to support the development of the EU strategy on green infrastructure. One of these projects, "Design, implementation and cost elements of Green Infrastructure projects" (carried out by Ecologic institute and GHK Consulting), aims to establish a comprehensive overview of current green infrastructure projects being implemented throughout Europe. Another related project, coordinated by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), concentrates on the effectiveness and efficiency of national and regional green infrastructure initiatives in terms of biodiversity and broader ecosystem benefits and the impact of relevant EU policies on green infrastructure. These studies offer complementary bottom-up and top-down perspectives on green infrastructure measures, assisting in the development of a clear and applicable concept of green infrastructure for future policy making.

The aim of the workshop is to discuss lessons learned from the two aforementioned projects as well as recommendations for future policy making. Experiences from green infrastructure practitioners will be shared and followed by a world cafe discussion, including relevant stakeholders, such as practitioners, scientists and representatives from the EU, national and regional administrative bodies, professional organisations and NGOs. The results of the workshop will help to strengthen green infrastructure in regional, national and EU policies and encourage green infrastructure initiatives at all spatial levels.

¹ **Green infrastructure** is the network of natural/semi-natural areas, features and/or green spaces in rural and urban, terrestrial and coastal areas, which together enhance ecosystem health and resilience, contribute to biodiversity conservation and benefit human populations through the enhancement/maintenance of ecosystem services. Green infrastructure can be defined, enhanced and conserved through strategic and co-ordinated **initiatives** that focus on the creation of new areas/features or recognize the value of and/or connect existing areas/features. (working definition of the project)

² Target 2 of the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020: "By 2020, ecosystems and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing **green infrastructure** and restoring at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems."

8:30	Registration	
9:00	Opening of the expert workshop - Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the context of the study Expectations for future policy action The planned EU Green Infrastructure Strategy 	Alexandra Vakrou and Marco Fritz (DG Environment)
9:15	Preliminary results: Insights into local/regional implementation of GI projects <i>(Project: Design, implementation and cost elements of Green Infrastructure projects)</i>	Sandra Naumann (Ecologic Institute)
9:30	Insights into project results: Main policy tools and instruments for an integrated approach to Green Infrastructure implementation <i>(Project: Green infrastructure implementation and efficiency)</i>	Leonardo Mazza (IEEP)
9:45	Key note speeches: Role and untapped potential of Green Infrastructure (GI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lisa Klingwall - City of Stockholm, Strategic Planning Dept <i>Insights from developing a green and blue infrastructure strategy (Stockholm)</i> Simon Evans – National Forest Company <i>Insights on creating GI - experience from establishing the National Forest (UK)</i> 	
10:10	Discussion	
10:40	Coffee break	
11:00	Short introduction to working group discussions and World Café format³	Sandra Naumann (Ecologic Institute)
11:10	Working group phase I (1 round of 30mins, 1 round of 25mins) Mixed working groups discussing: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design and implementation of GI initiatives in Europe today Integrating GI in spatial planning and relevant policies at regional and national level Costs and benefits of green infrastructure Financing green infrastructure projects and initiatives Policy tools, instruments and the EU framework Identifying indicators and measuring efficiency of green infrastructure 	Hosts for groups
12:15	Lunch break	
13:30	Working group phase II (3 Rounds of 25 min), <i>see topics above</i>	<i>See above</i>
15:00	Coffee break (Synthesis of working group results: What are the outcomes and new findings?)	Responsible chair of each topic/table
15:30	Presentation and discussion of results	Responsible chair of each topic/table; Chair: Matt Rayment (GHK)
16:30	Concluding remarks	Alexandra Vakrou (DG Environment)
16:45	Next steps towards an EU Green Infrastructure Strategy	Marco Fritz (DG Environment)
17:00	End of the workshop	

³ More information in the World Café method can be found here: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/method.html>