



HIGHLIGHTS

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Key facts about the project

Regional Initiative Project, Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy, sub-theme: Innovation, research and technology development

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Lead Partner: HafenCityUniversityHamburg, Germany

www.urma-project.eu

Regional food chains as means to strengthen urban-rural cooperation and foster regional economic growth in Twente Region

Twente is working on restoring the regional food chain as means to strengthen urban-rural cooperation and foster regional economic growth. We asked two key players in the Twente region to highlight the significance of regional food chain for future sustainable development of Twente, Ms. Anna Waanders, head of the regional bureau for tourism Twente and Mr. Herman Mulder, alderman at Municipality of Borne and President of the steering committee of the Green Knowledge Portal Twente.

Anna Waanders on the importance of regional food for tourism



Anna Waanders: "A regional strategy for regional products is needed to make Twente tasty for tourists. The tourist wants to experience that small is beautiful and wants to see that 'the mill is really working'. Tourists are often very curious to take the time to discover the world 'from farm to fork': 'You know what you get and where it comes from.' To attract these tourists the region has to arrange 'the unexpected': Surprise tourists."

According to Anna the economic importance of regional products is obvious: there is a specific target group that is willing to spend more money es-

pecially on food experiences. This is part of a trend with Città Slow as mostly named example. This trend is based on innovation, not technical but more renewal of food culture; it offers clients to create a growing personal and unique experience

in close cooperation with companies. "You might consider this as market innovation that attracts new customers," is Anna's opinion. She ends with the remark that regionally produced food is the most natural link between rural areas and the city.

Herman Mulder on the role of the Green Knowledge Portal Twente



What is the significance of regional food products for the development of Twente? And how can the Green Knowledge Portal contribute to restoration and future development of the regional food chain?

Herman Mulder: "Regional food products are characteristic for the region where these products are produced and can be processed further in dishes and meals that are offered in restaurants, hotels and food stores. There is clearly an economic boost if this catches on. It also offers new opportunities for entrepreneurs in the area and strengthens the

territorial identity. This way, new regional markets emerge, with innovative product combinations and marketing strategies. Examples are crossovers with tourism and nature preservation. The rediscovery of regional products leads to new jobs, a better branding of the region and new and inspiring strategic alliances."

The Green Knowledge Portal Twente is initiating and stimulating the development of the regional food chain within URMA. What is the value of the Green Knowledge Portal Twente in this innovative process?

Herman Mulder: "The Green Knowledge Portal Twente literally paves the way to the newest knowledge of students and researchers within the knowledge institutes and universities. Through the involvement of students and researchers a vast amount of new insights are unlocked, leading to new economic sectors and market opportunities. It also enhances the climate for regional cooperation. Another advantage is that young people get to know our region. We are delighted that we can participate as a partner in URMA. The international experience on urban-rural relations accelerates the development in our region and broadens the insights of our regional stakeholders working on the regional food chain."

IN FOCUS: URMA'S PILOT IMPLEMENTATION - TWENTE REGION

In the Netherlands the agricultural business has become highly specialized for world market production so that the connection with the local and regional consumers has got lost. The last years have shown a growing need to restore these local and regional relations/linkages between producers and consumers. This need is based upon the awareness and the importance of a more sustainable society. The economical crisis has also caused a vision to aim for another way of life, which fo-

cus on the quality of life and also include the desire for high-quality food. Within URMA, Twente has taken up the restoration of the regional food chain to strengthen urban-rural relations, based upon the acknowledgment of the mutual benefits.

The Green Knowledge Portal Twente, cooperation between government, entrepreneurs, NGOs and schools and universities in the region, coordinates the Twente

pilot. The approach of the Green Knowledge Portal Twente is an example of urban-rural partnership in a predominantly rural area with a polycentric structure. In the pilot, three business cases are prepared:

Regional food strategy

Restoration of the local and regional food chains and developing cooperation initiatives between local and regional farmers, food industry and SMEs by means of a coordinated regional food strategy and the development of a common brand. The strategy will be finalised in 2013.

Regional food market/distribution centre

The establishment of a regional food distribution centre located in the middle of the region Twente (Municipality of Borne). The distribution centre will be combined with a food store with an exhibition room and a touristic information centre. Earlier this year a new distribution system was implemented. The distribution system is growing steadily and forms the basis for the distribution centre in Borne, which hopefully will start in 2014.

Urban farm Enschede

The establishment of a modern local food farm serves as an example of a locally orientated farm that produces food for the urban area which also functions as a location for practical experiences for students of different educational levels. It supports handicapped or disabled people and will be run by an entrepreneur. The start of one or even more urban farms is expected in 2014.

Strengthening urban-rural cooperation in Twente

The cooperation between the urban area and the rural area will be promoted by these three projects. At first it will lead to more urban consciousness about how food is produced and about the importance of diminishing the distances of food distribution. By calling more atten-



Restoration of regional food chain © Rolf Oldejans

tion to regional food production, the people living in urban areas will be more interested in this food and also in the rural area where the food is produced. This will provide a strong basis for renewed social and economic relations between urban and rural citizens as well as entrepreneurs and will support economic growth in Twente.

What has happened recently in URMA...

URMA at the Open Days (Brussels, October 2013)

URMA was invited to participate in the exhibition in the building of the European Committee of the Regions, an exhibition about 100 EUrban solutions from many European projects. In this exhibition information about the URMA project was to be seen on a panel and it was well visited.

Side event: "Smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth through territorial linkages – the example of food" (8 October 2013)

The URMA project was also involved in a debate, organized by the Dutch region Brabantstad and Amsterdam, a debate on Smart, sustainable and inclusive

growth through territorial linkages, with food as example. The debate was held with representatives of METREX, Eurocities, PURPLE, SALAR/CEMR, AIEAR, the projects Pure Hubs and URMA. The OECD and the DGs Regio and Agri from the European Commission commented on the discussion. URMA was represented by Rolf Oldejans from the city of Enschede. He presented the URMA project and stated that food security leads to strengthening urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas. The URMA project determines three types of partners: the Dutch and German partners with projects to rediscover the old food chains, the Italian partners where food is real tradition but for food production; nevertheless is modernised. Now they are looking for opportunities to make use of e.g. nature parks. The Polish and Bulgarian partners have a more traditional food cycle which has to be modernized with less dependence of subsidies. During the discus-

sion the audience especially liked the added value of food chains between urban and rural areas and the concreteness of the URMA project.

DG Regio reacted on the discussion by asking for a better match between ideas and funds. The representative of DG Agri pleaded for more discussion and highlighting obstacles. The OECD pointed out the necessity of an integrated approach to become economic development, an approach which leads to a better urban-rural partnership.

Professor Michael Dower of the University of Gloucestershire who chaired the debate, came up with the following conclusions: Most of the action will take place on a lower level. The discussion led to a plea for more decentralisation ("let 1000 flowers grow"). And more support for regional partnerships by the national governments would be very helpful.

Report about 4th study visit and interregional workshop in Milan: inspiring facetes of urban-rural relations



Porta Nuevo area © REM • Consult

From 10-12 October the Lombardy Region organised a very informative and inspiring study visit and an interregional workshop in Milan. The visit started in the Porta Nuevo area in the centre of Milano. This used to be some sort of a 'no-go' area, but is now impressively transformed into a modern, sustainable and attractive urban environment with architectonic sky-scrapers and particular attention for high quality public spaces. The contrast could not be bigger when we arrived at the second location of the study visit: the Parco delle Risaie (Rice Field Park). Surrounded by highly urbanized areas there is an enclave of about 600 hectares of rice fields, a true oasis for the production of rice and other agricultural products. In Parco delle Risaie urban – rural relations become visible and tangible. Riccardo Castellanza (President of the Association of Parco delle

Risaie) presented the experience of Parco delle Risaie. The presentation focussed on values of landscape and environment, on the relevance of rural surface in between urbanised neighbourhoods, on the history and milestones of the Association (in which the partnership between citizens and farmers paid a fundamental role), on the initiatives and actions organised. The visit to the park ended with an enthusiastic presentation of local food products and typical dishes. At the extraordinary and beautiful Nymphaeum of Villa Litta the EXPO2015 territorial projects were presented by Andrea Piccin. Local, national and international participants are involved in the EXPO2015. The EXPO2015 catalyzes territorial transformation, new policies of Lombardia



Villa Litta © REM • Consult

Region as well as agricultural and environmental projects. In the presentation specific attention was paid to the Waterways project. The Waterways project constitutes an ideal landscape scenario for representing the EXPO MILANO 2015 theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life" and a connective tissue to bond the EXPO site to the City of Milan and the surrounding territory. It contributes to the development of a varied sustainable tourism portfolio and leaves an interconnected, cohesive system of parks and green areas as well as an extraordinary network of bicycle paths as a legacy to Milan and Lombardia.

The interregional workshop highlighted the manifold aspects of urban-rural development in Milan region. Especially important for highly urbanized areas as Milan is the preservation of agricultural areas. The ideas about the value of agricultural land have changed over the years leading to an increasing need for policies to preserve agricultural areas. During the workshop the system of agricultural productions and best practices like V'ARCO Villoresi and Parco delle Risaie were presented. The increasing value of peri-urban landscapes in large metropolitan regions touches aspects as environment, landscape, regional economy, identity, cohesion and inclusion. New insights lead to new policies and instruments for the improvement of the role of peri-urban areas, ensuring a sustainable development of the region



Interregional workshop © REM • Consult

and territorial long-term performance. Especially for the URMA-partners a very interesting presentation about the Buon Mercato of Corsico Municipality showed the importance of innovative concepts to support local and regional economy. Buon Mercato (a joint initiative of public administration, Comune di Corsico and local actors) promotes ethical purchasing and a sustainable lifestyle. It facilitates direct purchasing of commonly used goods from farmers and other producers. Fundamental principles of Buon Mercato are fair prices, short supply chains, legality, zero km, ecologically sustainable production and transparency.

All in all a good organised and very informative and inspiring study visit. Many thanks to the Regione Lombardia! All presentations are available for download on the [project website!](#)

9th OECD Rural Development Policy Conference (Bologna, 23-25 October 2013) Rural-Urban partnerships: an integrated approach to economic development

During the conference the results of the OECD report „Rural-Urban partnerships: an integrated approach to economic development“ were presented. This report is examining examples of cooperation in eleven regions in Europe, the United States and Australia. All participating regions gave insight in their experiences of rural-urban cooperation, among them was URMA partner West Pomerania Region. Furthermore HafenCity University had the opportunity to present the URMA project and its first results throughout a pre-conference workshop that was organized by EUROCITIES and METREX.

A main result of the workshop and the conference was that there is need and high interest in further exchange on experiences with rural-urban cooperation to improve and develop these partnerships.

The conference was organized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) together with the European Commission and co-hosted by the Italian Department of Development and Economic Cohesion and Regione Emilia Romagna. Find more information about the conference [here!](#)



Upcoming events

22 November 2013

Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2013 "Mobilising Regions: Territorial Strategies for Growth" in London (United Kingdom)

22-23 November 2013

Spaces and Flows: Fourth International Conference on Urban and ExtraUrban Studies in Amsterdam (Netherlands)

28-29 January 2014

URMA project – Study Visit & Project Meeting in Pleven Region (Bulgaria)

June 2014

URMA project – Study Visit & Project Meeting in Twente Region (Netherlands)

9-12 July 2014

AESOP Annual Congress 2014: FROM CONTROL TO CO-EVOLUTION in Utrecht/Delft (Netherlands)

Recent publications

OECD (ed.): Rural-Urban Partnerships: An Integrated Approach to Economic Development

<http://www.oecd.org/gov/regional-policy/rural-urban-partnerships-an-integrated-approach-to-economic-development.htm>

BMVBS (ed.): Urban Rural Culture - Museum partnerships between cities and rural areas

http://www.bbsr.bund.de/BBSR/DE/Veroeffentlichungen/BMVBS/Online/2013/DL_ON142013.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

PURPLE (ed.):

Topic paper Food & Nutrition security. The role of peri-urban regions in food & nutrition security

<http://www.purple-eu.org/uploads/Topic%20Papers%20updates/food%20security%20-%20purple%20topic%20paper.pdf>

Useful links

EU Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: legislative proposals

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/proposals_2014_2020_en.cfm

The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas (METREX)

<http://www.eurometrex.org/ENT1/EN/>

EUROCITIES

<http://www.eurocities.eu/>

Rurban (Rural-Urban) Partnerships

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/cohesion/urban_rural/index_en.cfm

<http://www.oecd.org/regional/rurbanrural-urbanpartnerships.htm>

Peri-urban regions platform Europe (PURPLE)

<http://www.purple-eu.org>



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Poland	Regional Office for Spatial Planning of West Pomerania, Szczecin Institute of Urban Development, Krakow
Italy	Tuscany Region Lombardia Region
Netherlands	Municipality Borne Municipality Enschede
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