




# GIFT-T!

Green Infrastructure For  
Tomorrow - Together!

*Developing  
Green Infrastructure  
Business Plans:  
the final WP4 report*

Kees Verdouw, Ingrid Coninx





*This report synthesizes the WP4 results of the GIFT-T! project to inform governmental staff, professional landscape planners and mediators in participatory planning, as well as members of social networks engaged in Green Infrastructure planning practice.*

*The emphasis here is on what we have learned in GIFT-T! about developing Green Infrastructure Business Plans. More information is available the interactive manual and tools presented at the GIFT-T! website [www.gift-t.eu](http://www.gift-t.eu).*

*This report captures the intensive exchange of experiences and deliberations in the GIFT-T! partner team, as we went through applications of the prototype approach in our five case studies. All members of the team contributed to the content.*

This is the final report of GIFT-T! Work Package 4.

Province of South-Holland, The Hague, July 2015



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# 1. Introduction

Shared visions and designs of Green Infrastructure are only effective if they can lead to real improvements to the existing Green Infrastructure (GI). Therefore, the aim of the Green Infrastructure Business Plan or GIBP is to prepare the implementation of the Green Infrastructure ambitions. Although the GI Business Plans are the central output in the GIFT-T! approach, only an outline was sketched at the start of the project. Transnational cooperation, dialogue and intensive experience sharing were helpful in specifying the essential characteristics and added value of the GI Business Plans.

GIFT-T! is a European INTERREG IVB programme composed of five Work Packages (WPs). WPs 2-4 are directly related to the three phases of the bottom-up planning process of GI of the GIFT-T! approach: (WP2) is about achieving a broadly-supported long-term vision, (WP3) is about GI diagnosis and design, and (WP4) about the development of a GI business plan. (WP1) embraces the learning process and the interactive design of the GIFT-T! approach. (WP5) is concerned with communication within and between the five areas of study. The five areas of study are located in Belgium (Landduinenregio, Province of Antwerp; Woluweveld, VLM), in The Netherlands (Leiden and surroundings, Province of South-Holland) and in the UK (Hoo Peninsula, Medway Council; Merseyside and North Cheshire, The Mersey Forest).

It is worth acknowledging the organisational challenges that were part of WP4. After a successful start, due to unforeseen circumstances WP4 lead Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway (GGKM) could not continue its role, and at the start of 2014 the Province of South-Holland took over as WP4 lead.

This Final Report discusses the results of the GIFT-T! partnership and will:

- Describe the different steps leading to the development of a GIBP,
- Analyse the differences between the produced GIBPs, including lessons learnt,
- Summarizes conclusions and suggestions for further development of the GIBP.



## 2. Coproducing Green Infrastructure Business Plans

The Green Infrastructure Business Plan (GIBP) was defined in the GIFT-T! proposal as describing how in a specific area how Green Infrastructure (GI) can be developed to improve the economy and the environment and to contribute to other challenges such as flood risk management, water quality, biodiversity and tourism. The GIBP is based on the outcome of the diagnosis and design phase to explore the most relevant ways to change/implement GI to gain the desired economic, environmental and social benefits as has been specified in the visioning phase. The GIBP specifies the contribution of GI measures to policy and programme changes that are promoted by regional, national and EU-authorities, and to the shared vision and priorities of local community. These specifications will be transformed into concrete actions, a time schedule, responsibilities for taking action and a calculation of costs-benefits distinguished per stakeholder. In addition, the GIBPs will identify new business cases as a means of funding GI implementation.

A successfully developed GIBP requires viable Business Cases and projects, and engagement of the private sector in the business-planning phase is essential (both in the decision-making process and in resource prioritisation).

### *The skeleton GI business plan*

The GIFT-T! partnership started by defining a skeleton GIBP, which included the following elements:

- Executive summary;
- Vision and goals;
- Governance – involving new types of partners and stakeholders;
- Overall Business Case for the planned activities – priorities and valuation;
- Projects and activities – mini-business case per project with SMART objectives, ecosystem services contributions, phasing;
- Budget and resources;
- Monitoring and evaluation.

During the GIFT-T! process (see next sections) it became apparent that a strict content structure does not fit the dynamic processes of developing GIBPs. However, all GIFT-T! GIBPs contained most of the elements listed above.

### *Exploring a web based tool for interactive business planning*

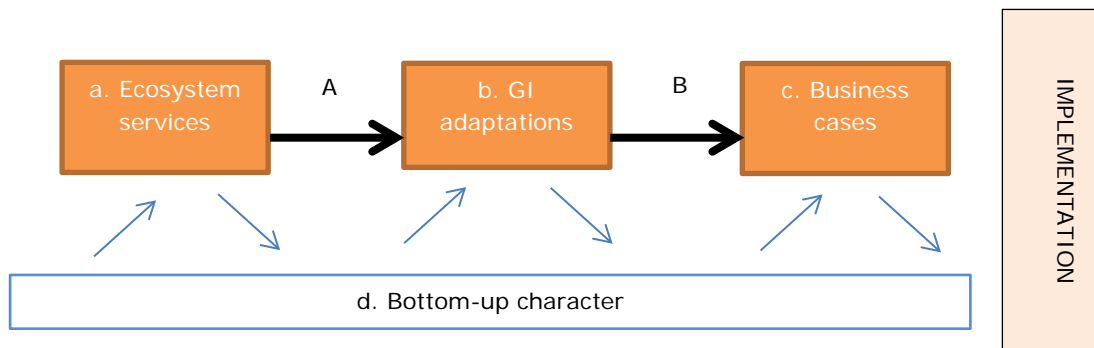
WP4 lead GGKM developed a prototype web-based tool for an interactive GIBP. Key was an interactive map informing website visitors about needs/wishes for ecosystem services (ESs), and how these are fulfilled by the GIBP or Business Cases. Visitors can comment and vote to enable interaction. However, we concluded that this tool requires serious maintenance and continuous follow-up to keep track of stakeholder input. This effort was not budgeted for and only one partner (Medway Council, the successor of GGKM) developed this web-based tool (see [www.gift-t.eu/manual/toolbox](http://www.gift-t.eu/manual/toolbox)).



### Tailoring the GI Business Plans: coherence and continuity

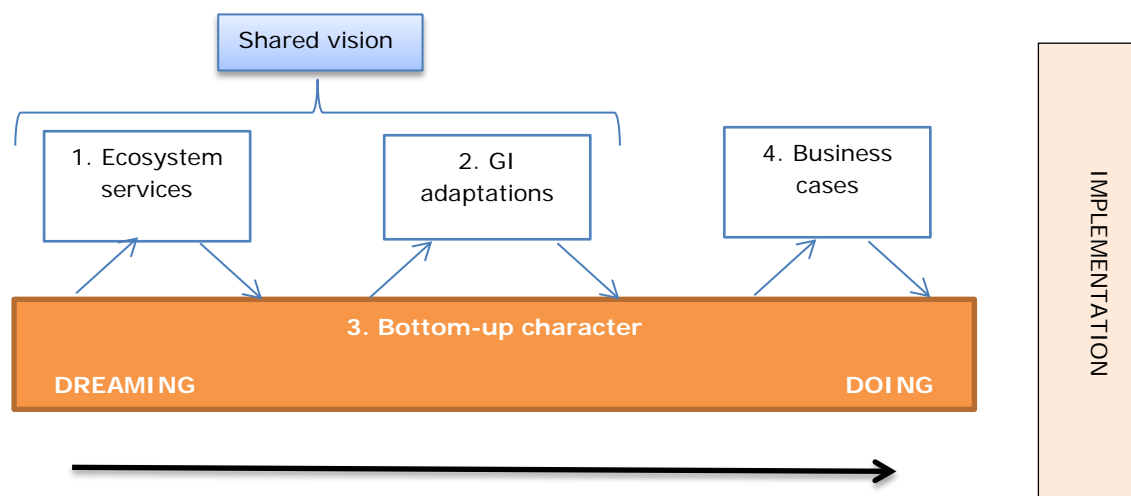
During a 2014 partner meeting, the concept GIBPs were compared, leading to the following conclusions:

1. It is important to fit the GIBP to the regional context of each case study area. A GIBP results from a bottom-up process, or in other words is produced by the developing social network in the case area. This asks for flexibility in use and structure of a GIBP (compared to the fixed content list of the skeleton GIBP).
2. This tailor-made approach called for four essential elements in a GIBP:
  - a. A list with ecosystem services to be delivered;
  - b. A GI design capable of delivering these ecosystem services;
  - c. Business Cases that describe the needed GI adaptations;
  - d. The organisation of a bottom-up process.



**Figure 1. The coherence of a GI Business Plan**

Optimising the delivery of ESs requires strong and coherent relationships between the wished for ESs (a), the designed GI adaptations (b), and the provisioning in Business Cases (c), see figure 1. In order to improve GI quality and ES provisioning, the Business Cases must focus on ESs needed and desired by the stakeholder network in the GIFT-T! visioning phase. Relationship (A) defines ESs into measurable goals for GI adaptations, relationship (B) indicates how each GI Business Case contributes to these goals.



**Figure 2. The continuity in developing a GI Business Plan**

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Continuity is essential for a successful and effective GIBP depends on the quality of the cooperation within the social network (figure 2). The GIFT-T! approach seeks to adapt and implement GI in an active, continuous bottom-up process within the stakeholder network - from the visioning phase, to the diagnosis and design phase, to the GIBP - This bottom-up process helps to develop strong social networks in which stakeholders are behaving as GI shareholders actively realizing GI implementation.



### 3. GIBPs: process, content and lessons learnt

We delivered the following GIBPs:

1. The Mersey Forest Delivery Plan 2014-2019 (TMF)
2. Green Infrastructure Business Plan for The Hoo Peninsula (Medway Council)
3. GIFT-T! Business Plan Woluweveld (VLM)
4. Business plan voor Groene Infrastructuur Landduinenregio (Antwerpen)
5. Uitvoeringsprogramma Leidse Ommelanden 2014-2020 (South-Holland)
6. Toekomstperspectief Landschap Rijn- en Veenstreek (South-Holland)
7. Metropolitaan landschap Zoetermeer (South-Holland)
8. Groene Cirkel Bijenlandschap (South-Holland)

In South-Holland, 4 separate stakeholder networks emerged, making the sub-regional level was the most appropriate for the GIBP. Although each stakeholder network formulated its own GIBP, each was committed to the same regional long-term GI vision.

#### *The role of the GIBP in the partner regions*

At first glance the partner GIBP's seem different: TMF produced a concise GIBP with infographics and key figures; VLM a GIBP with designs, area pictures, and project descriptions; South-Holland (Leidse Ommelanden) and Antwerp an action-oriented GIBP with roles, responsibilities and planning; and Medway Council a GIBP with interactive maps. This variety mainly results from agreements between stakeholders in the visioning phase.

We found that a GIBP can have two characters:

- **Inspirational**, promoting the GI vision, raising awareness on potential initiatives, strengthening and building the social network, clarifying benefits and costs, and informing politicians and the general public;
- **Action-oriented**, specifying roles, responsibilities, and division of costs and benefits between stakeholders in the social network.

The GIBPs of Leidse Ommelanden, Landduinenregio and Groene Cirkel Bijenlandschap are mainly action-oriented; the GIBPs of Hoo Peninsula, Rijn- en Veenstreek and Zoetermeer are mainly inspirational; and the TMF and VLM GIBPs are both inspirational and action-oriented. It is important to realize that:

- An action-oriented GIBP contains fully developed Business Cases – e.g. developed early the GIFT-T! process (such as the 'Bee landscape') -. When Business Cases are not fully developed, a GIBP with a more inspirational character is required to invite new partners and describe potential projects;
- An action-oriented GIBP may involve a limited number of actors, whereas a inspirational GIBP may involve inviting a larger group of actors;
- A inspirational GIBP is required when available budgets of existing actors are not sufficient, and inviting actors with sufficient resources is important.

The GIFT-T! partnership concluded that in practice both types of GIBP's are functional and that the character may change with time. An inspirational phase may be followed by





an action-oriented phase, after which new inspiration may be required to generate new Business Cases.

**Lessons learnt:** A GIBP has a more inspirational or a more action-oriented character.

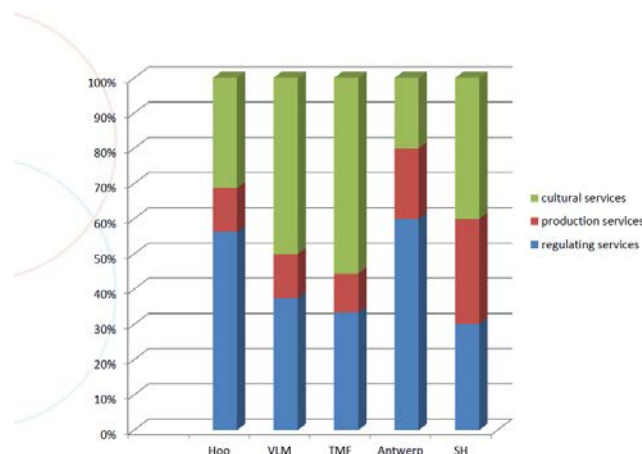
An inspirational GIBP fits best in a situation with underdeveloped Business Cases and low budgets. New partners are invited to participate and invest.

An action-oriented GIBP fits best in a situation with fully developed Business Cases by a limited number of partners that sign a formal agreement or by an enthusiastically cooperating well-developed social network.

### *Ecosystem Services in the GIBP*

Although the percentage varies, all GIBP's contain the three ES types (see figure 3): production services, e.g. food and wood, social services, e.g. recreation, education and identity, and regulating services, e.g. soil fertility, water cleaning and nutrient cycling.

### **Impact: Selected types of ecosystem services**



**Figure 3. Distribution of ecosystem services in the GIBPs**

Antwerp in particular included regulating services (e.g. clean air and drinking water by infiltration). In TMF and VLM demand for cultural services was high (e.g. green recreation areas, nice living environment). In South-Holland the demand for production services was the highest (e.g. artisan products and pick-gardens).

**Lessons learnt.** The demand for ecosystem services depends on:

1. Focus of the process facilitator (e.g. TMF's focus on cultural services of trees and woodland);
2. Regional characteristics (e.g. higher demand for cultural services in peri-urban settings);
3. Amount of information presented to stakeholders about the benefits of ecosystem services.

## Expressing ESs and GI in measurable goals

All GIBP's contain indicators that can be used to measure the rate of GI implementation. Surprisingly, none of the GIBP's contain an indicator for quantifying the level of ES provisioning (table 1).

GIBP	TMF	Medway	VLM	Antwerp	Leidse Ommelanden	Rijn- & Veenstreek	Zoetermeer	Bijenland-schap
Qualitative goals	X	X		X	X		X	X
Quantitative ES goals								
Quantitative GI goals	X				X			X
Other quantitative goals	X	X	X	X		X		X

Table 1. Comparing measurability of goals in GIBP's (indicated by X).

We advise that a GIBP includes an annual monitoring, both of the progress in GI and in the development of the social network.

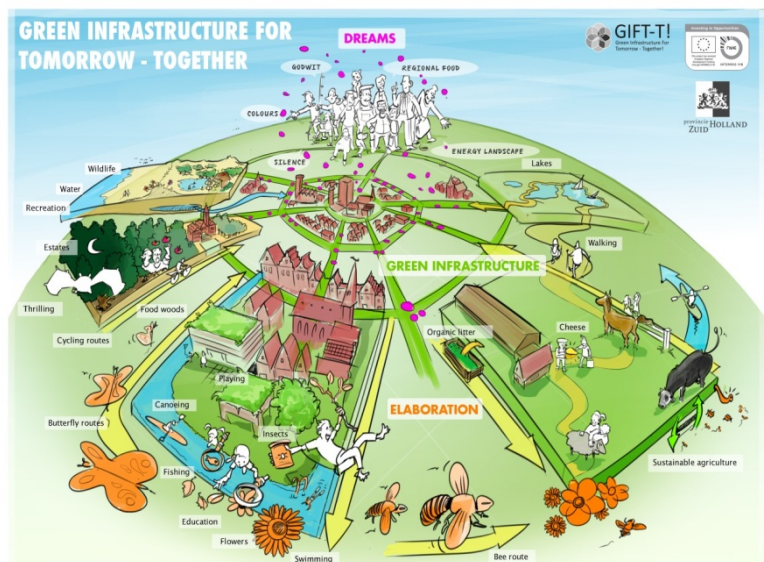
**Lessons learnt.** Monitoring is relevant to analyse, evaluate and speed up GI implementation and social network development. Quantitative monitoring ES and GI at the level of the GIBP is more complicated than at the level of the Business Cases.

Using measurable goals and targets is recommended to:

- Monitor Business Case contribution to the shared vision in terms of ES and GI;
- Keep momentum to empower the social network by demonstrating jointly achieved targets;
- Stop or change activities that do not progress;
- Identify opportunities and constraints.

## A coherent Green Infrastructure network

For many ES's, a coherent higher scale GI network is important (especially for biodiversity, see Final report WP1).



The Leidse Ommelanden GIBP uses the 'spider web' structure to develop regional GI. Business Cases are located along or connected to a recreational infrastructure of cycle and walking paths giving urban and rural citizens the opportunity to experience GI. The GIBP focusses on developing the inner circle, the outward axes and the outer circle (urban border) of the spider web. TMF worked

Figure 4. Spiderweb structure used in Leidse Ommelanden

in a comparable way: using the mapping to create a framework for developing and future Business Cases (BCs).

The Woluweveld GIBP contains two types of Business cases: seven BC's located in the designed GI network (the main structure), and eight BC's originated in the wider network of business partners. These focus on business site development, and are designed to function as ecological stepping stones between the small fragmented relics of green open spaces.

The Landduinenregio GIBP also contains four zones, in which businesses are invited to strengthen GI, using a GI ambition map. GIBP Rijn- en Veenstreek contains a framework aimed at public investments combined with room for private initiatives in the surroundings. The Volsbergenbossen and Bee landscape GIBP developed the GI network and the BCs at the same time: from the start stakeholders contributed to the BCs, and the GI network was designed to integrate as many BCs as possible.



**Figure 5. Designing with Ecosystem Services in the GIBP Woluweveld.**

**Lessons learnt.** The provisioning of Ecosystem Services – e.g. biodiversity – requires a coherent GI network at the regional scale level. This is achieved by:

- Making sure that all BCs are an integral part of the GI network structure;
- Developing BC's additional to the designed GI network structure, but making sure they contribute to it;
- To develop the GI network structure simultaneously with the BCs.

### *Business cases and actor involvement*

In the GIBP's of Antwerp, South-Holland and TMF, the proportion of **local governments** involved is relatively high. These three GIFT-T! partners are key players in regional development and highly dependent on the collaboration of local governments to carry out the GIBP. E.g. South-Holland encouraged three local municipalities to develop a GIBP.

The GIBP's of TMF, Medway and VLM show large involvement of **community groups** and volunteers - nature volunteers as well as business employees - . **Knowledge institutes** were closely involved in all cases, but only in the visioning and design phase. **Professionals** facilitated stakeholder processes, and sometimes assisted in writing up the GIBPs. National and European actors are not actively involved. In some cases they contribute funding, for which the GIFT-T! partner applied in competition. All partners indicated missing certain actors at the moment but expect that the social network, required for GI development, will continue to grow, expand and develop in the near future. (The involvement of **businesses** will be discussed in a section below)



**Lesson learnt.** A variety of actors contribute to GI development and implementation. In the future, GIFT-T! partners will continue to coordinate GI development in close cooperation with the expanding local social network.

*Local actors* showed ownership and responsibility for carrying out GIBP tasks in the VLM, TMF and Leidse Ommelanden cases. In general, the *business sector and private parties* takes ownership for (local) BCs. *Regional and local governments* usually take ownership for the regional GI network structure. Larger *companies* like Heineken and Toyota might be an exception because their scope is regional or even international.

**Lessons learnt.** Actors will show ownership if Business Cases are developed within or together with the social network. Private parties are more willing to own local Business Cases, and regional and local governments are willing to own the regional GI network.

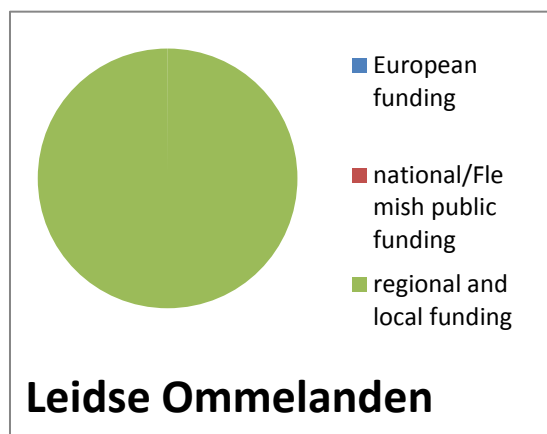
Actors can be involved from start to finish throughout all three phases of the GIFT-T! approach, as was the case in Leidse Ommelanden, Zoetermeer, Hoo Peninsula and Landduinenregio. The level of involvement was not constant however, due to e.g. time pressure or transfer of responsibility. The risk of non-continuity of stakeholder involvement is loss of ownership, e.g. when they were active in formulating the vision, but not involved in the GIBP.

**Lesson learnt.** Aim for continuity in stakeholder involvement. When there is a considerable 'time-gap' between the visioning and the GIBP phase, stakeholders might lose interest and ownership

### *Funding of Business Cases*

The business aspect of a GIBP can involve aiming for mixed funding and expenditure (private and public), generating income from GI benefits like heritage, tourism and increased property value, using information of private involvement to show engagement of the business sector, and/or developing projects together with the private sector.

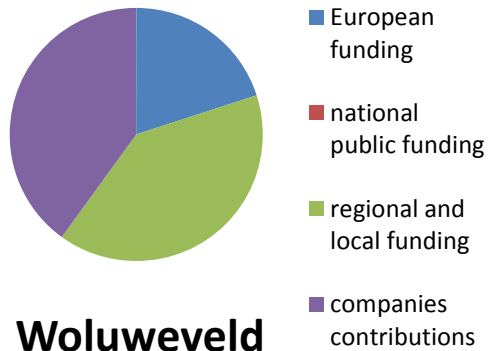
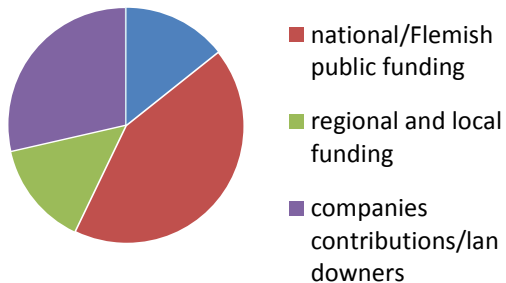
GI implementation was funded by public funding, public-private funding or by mixed funding (multi-sector and multilevel), see the diagrams below.



Leidse Ommelanden (South-Holland) is an example of public funding: a large government budget of 16 million euros to invest in GI is available, so the urgency to find additional (private) funding is low. South-Holland used the co-financing principle, making sure that local governments also invest.



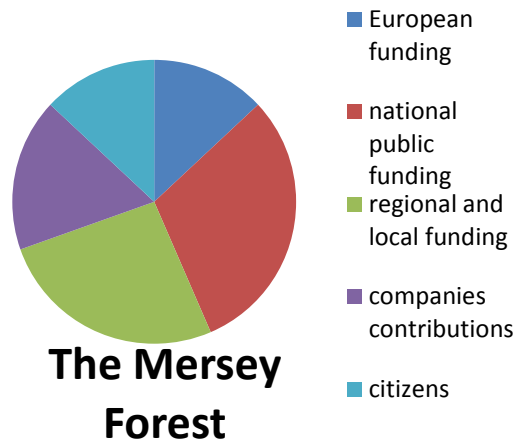
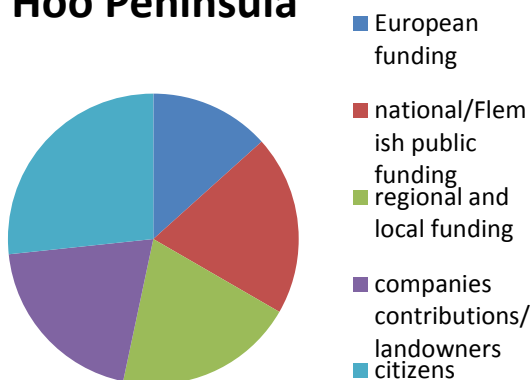
## Landduinen regio



Landduinenregio (Antwerp) is an example of public-private funding by the Flemish government, local municipalities, private landowners and some companies. Woluweveld (VLM) is a typical example of public-private funding by European funding, the VLM and companies. TMF is an example of mixed funding model: multi-sector, multi-level from European, national, local to regional sources. TMF used a tax credit system, the landfill communities fund, paid for by the landfill operators. Volunteers contribute in kind by spending time.

The Hoo Peninsula aims for the mixed funding model, targeting a wide variety of financial sources, such as e.g. biodiversity offsetting, lottery, grants and private sponsorship.

## Hoo Peninsula



### Lessons learnt.

Attracting the right funding is financial engineering and differs with regional and national situations. Different funding models are possible: Public funding, Public-private funding, and Mixed funding: multi-level and multi-sector.

1. The composition of the social network reflects the composition of the funding sources: Public-private networks generate public-private funding. Contributions can also be in kind, e.g. by community groups (via volunteers);
2. Decreasing available public funding leads to diversifying funding;
3. A strong shared vision and an inspiring social network are important factors in attracting public and private funds.



## *Involvement of businesses*

GIFT-T! used two approaches to involve businesses:

- *Focus on business sites owned by companies*  
Specific biodiversity measures on business sites (or direct surrounding) were promoted by using vouchers (VLM) or BIODIVA (Antwerp), which made the companies aware of GI benefits. Possible measures include connecting with local communities and creating a comfortable working place for employees. This approach may lead to quick development of BCs;
- *Focus on the company's long-term vision and dependence upon ES's*  
South-Holland and Alterra liaised with Heineken about their 'dream' or ambition for the future. This resulted in a programme ([www.groenecirkels.nl](http://www.groenecirkels.nl)) with the ambition use GI benefits (focused on 5 themes). Key to this approach is to explore how the company existence and ambition depends upon ESs. E.g. for making beer Heineken needs water, barley and hops, making them dependent upon water purification by the dunes, natural pest control, availability of nutrients, etc.

### **Practical tips to involve businesses:**

- Familiarise yourself with the company's activities, mission and vision;
- Discuss the company's role in the regional GI vision;
- Contact businesses in a direct way (at events, telephone calls, etc.);
- Use successful examples to promote your story;
- Do not assume that they are only interested in earning money;
- Let a front-runner company tell the story to other companies;
- Bring them into contact with nature and landscape networks in the same region;

## *Role of valuation*

The main role of valuation in the GIBP is demonstrate that GI benefits are worth its implementation, as it provides evidence through facts and figures that improving GI delivers multiple benefits for stakeholders. Ultimately, valuation seeks to raise awareness and engage stakeholders by (1) confirming the needs and desires and (2) demonstrating the return on investment.

First, valuation demonstrates that the GIBP responds to stakeholder needs and desires by comparing these to the expected effects of the GI BC's. Second, valuation reveals the hidden values of the proposed GI BC's (GIFT-T! tool 6.6 for more details). We learned the value of tailoring the valuation results to the specific GIBP stakeholder(group)s. Thereby contributing to raised engagement from targeted stakeholders and creating a willingness to contribute to the common ambition to deliver better GI.

Valuation was used differently. TMF calculated some key figures, as e.g. costs of reduction in carbon emission. Whole GIBP Benefits were calculated in euros and separate BC numbers were aggregated, to be easy understood by the general public and to protect the privacy of some actors. VLM and Antwerp conducted valuation during the Diagnosis and Design phase, and the results were used in GIBP and BC in the development.



**Lessons learnt.** Valuation is useful to describe needs and desires of the stakeholders (Visioning) and to select the most effective GI alternative (Diagnosis and Design). Its added value to generate new GI Business Cases is difficult to assess because each partner used a different (and sometimes limited) valuation in the GIBP phase. With the business sector, translation of public values in euros might even be contra-productive, because they do not like to be perceived as only financially interested.



## 4. Conclusions – the way forward

The current GIBP's are the first series, and although they look like finished products, a GIBP is a step in the on-going process of GI implementation.

Our main suggestions for improvement of the GIBPs are:

- Enhance coherence between GI Business Cases by learning by doing, relating BCs to measurable GI and ES goals, and developing BCs to match still unfulfilled needs for ESs;
- Encourage the social network to be fully active in carrying out the GIBP – try to understand what actors can contribute and encourage them to take initiative to join forces;
- Develop BCs related to 'unexplored' ESs – introducing new actors, new knowledge, new inspiration;
- Increase the involvement of private (business) partners.

How is the follow up of the GIFT-T!'s GIBPs ensured? What actions are needed to keep on track in the five case areas?

- Carry out the fully developed and financed BCs and projects plans and demonstrate to the public what has been achieved, inspiring new action, additional vision building and interactive design.
- GIBP implementation needs coordination. Planned BCs and projects are a shared responsibility, agreed upon by all partners. At least one actor should coordinate progress;
- GIBP implementation requires contributing specific roles/tasks to all actors in the social network;
- Make it a joint effort to raise resources (e.g. money, land). Involve actors strongly in new activities and encourage them to contribute;
- Participatory monitoring by involving the social network helps to ensure GIBP implementation and progress. Schedule a yearly evaluation of BCs and projects: are they on track, do they create energy in the network, and which show lack of leverage.

