









Executive Summary

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project was approved by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme in September 2009.

The project recognises the value of urban fringes and aims to-

- Rationalise the complex and conflicting policy framework for managing spatial planning and for promoting sustainable economic development in urban fringes.
- Unlock the potential of urban fringes and in doing so, enhance the quality of life for EU citizens.
- Work transnationally to develop a common approach for managing the urban fringe.

This report outlines progress on activity during the first year of the project, 1 September 2009 – 31 August 2010.

The SURF project is split into 4 workpackages -

- WP 1 Project Management
- WP 2 Publicity and Communications
- WP 3 Review and Analysis
- WP 4 Testing and Implementation

Who are the partners?



- Aberdeen City Council
- School of the Built Environment at Leeds Metropolitan University
- City of Bradford
- Norfolk County Council
- Province of East Flanders
- Province of West Flanders
- City of Enschede
- Saxion University
- City of Almelo
- City of Hengelo
- City of Hamburg
- Municipality of Harryda
- Province of Antwerp

Workpackage 1

Project Management

The first SURF year has been very busy. Lead partner, Aberdeen, has been active with project management activities to ensure effective planning and progress of the project.

In December 2009, SURF Partners came together for the kick off meeting in Aberdeen, where the ground work for SURF was established. Following this, the SURF project plan was produced.

Between face to face meetings, project management has ensured partners are kept up to date through email, telephone, e-bulletins and regular meetings. To keep the project on track, monthly teleconference meetings are held with work package and theme leaders. Unforseen partnership changes, notably the withdrawl of the Danish partners in the early stages of the project, have had a positive outcome and enabled SURF to welcome a new partner, the Province of Antwerp, to join the project.

Workpackage 1 has completed 2 rounds of SURF claim and activity reporting, which have produced positive feedback from the secretariat and ensured the project is on track to achieving its deliverables and outputs

In June 2010, partners had the opportunity to meet again at the SURF Annual Conference in Enschede, the Netherlands. The event which received press and radio coverage celebrated the SURF partnership, with the signing of a ceremonial partnership document.

Hans van Agteren, Alderman for Enschede and Aberdeen Councillor, Kate Dean, Convener for Aberdeen's Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Committee, led partner representatives in a ceremonial signing of the SURF Partnership Declaration. This was to demonstrate high level commitment to the SURF project and underline political support to the ambition of SURF in raising the plight and importance of the urban fringe on the political agenda. The event demonstrated the progress of SURF, reached an agreement on the SURF Contextual and Analytical Framework and allowed partners to sign up to one of the 4 SURF themes.





The months between the Enschede conference and the next theme based workshop meetings saw partners develop work under the initial 'scoping' phase of theme work within their theme group.

Planning commenced for SURF Theme Workshops to take place in East & West Flanders in November 2010. The event incorporates a review of the hosting region, West Flanders urban fringe.

Looking ahead, the next year for SURF will see the project continue to develop within the phases of work set by the analytical framework and start to develop plans for achieving the final outputs for the project.

		2009			2010												
	S	0	N	D	J	F	М	А	М	J	J	А	J	F	М	Α	S
SURF Kick off Conference																	
Claim & Activity reports																	
SURF Annual Conference																	
Ceremonial Partnership Agreement																	



Publicity & Communications

The SURF Communication Plan sets out a wide range of communication measures to disseminate details on the project and provide a source of information on urban fringes.

Partners have established their own communication plans and there has been a focus on engaging internal and external stakeholders with a range of activities including events, project meetings, briefings, presentations and workshops.

Website

The launch of the SURF project website, in June 2010, has taken the SURF project to a wider audience. This site acts as a communication hub and is updated regularly, information includes –

Details on partners and their projects.

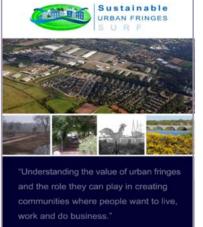
- SURF news and resources.
- Information on urban fringes including a
- glossary on urban fringe terminology.
 - A discussion forum on the website, which
- allows partners to share information and progress work.

The site has continued to show a steady increase in traffic as the project develops.

SURF publications produced this period, include a project leaflet, information sheet and stakeholders newsletter to highlight the work of the project.

The launch of a Sustainable Urban Fringes Discussion Group, in networking site Linkedin, has opened up dialogue on urban fringes and increased

the reach of the project in 2010.



A SURF message "Connecting Urban and Rural" was developed following a communications workshop at the SURF Annual Conference in June.

Partners are informed about SURF progress through a monthly

SURF partner bulletin. This updates on activities carried out over the month and outlines actions and deadlines for the month ahead. Partners are encouraged to provide regular updates for the bulletin to share progress and information with other partners.

2011 will see SURF communications develop their stakeholder contacts, capitalise on previous project findings and continue with the range of communication activities that have proved to successfully promote the SURF aspirations.

	2009			2010													
	S	0	Ν	D	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	Α	J	F	М	Α	S
Communications Plan																	
SURF Brand																	
Website																	
Discussion Group																	

Workpackage 3 Review and Analysis

The SURF Conceptual and Analytical Framework was launched in 2010, ahead of the annual conference in Enschede, Netherlands. The document provides an overarching framework for the SURF project and interprets the bid application into a programme of analytical activities.



This document was designed to guide the partners in their contributions to Workpackage 3 and Workpackage 4, testing and implementation.

Three themes were considered to be central to delivering the overarching concept of sustainable development within urban fringes - Spatial planning, Competitiveness, and Governance.

A fourth theme, 'The Role and Value of Green Space', was added, following partner discussions at the initial SURF conference in Aberdeen and the first SWOT analysis conducted by WP4.

Theme work is led and developed by SURF scientific partner, the Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management (CUDEM) at Leeds Metropolitan University working with Saxion University in the Netherlands.

Partners have signed up to a primary and secondary focus out of the 4 SURF themes, which are –

Governance led by CUDEM

Economy, competitiveness led by Saxion University

Role and Value of Greenspace led by CUDEM

Spatial Planning & Stakeholder Engagement led by Saxion University

2010 progress includes: -

- Web conferencing between scientific partners.
- Face to face meetings of each theme group.
- Information exchange by theme partners, which contributed to theme development commentaries.

Additional face to face discussions and working groups, were coordinated by Saxion University, with some of the partners in Belgium and the Netherlands. Plans were progressed to widen this partner engagement by virtual links and partner visits.

Work has commenced collating approaches to urban fringes for a database of previous and current Interreg projects, such as SOSII, and other initiatives. This is to ensure that previous work can be capitalised on and not unnecessarily replicated. It will help inform SURF and provide a context to reflect upon the SURF project work and findings.

2011 will see the SURF theme work continue within each work phase and an increase in transnational working through peer review visits which will filter back into the theme work analysis.

	2009				2010												
	S	0	N	D	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	Α	J	F	М	Α	S
Conceptual & Analytical Framework																	
Appoint theme workgroups																	
Theme Scoping Phase																	
Paper at																	



Testing & Implementation

Workpackage 4, is led by Enschede in the Netherlands and works closely with Workpackage 3, Review and Analysis. The aim is to develop policy guidelines and a toolkit for green space management.

An initial SURF SWOT analysis was carried out in late 2009. The process was used to –

- Build a picture of the issues and priorities of SURF's partners.
- Inform the SURF Contextual and Analytical framework.
- Develop the 4 key themes for the SURF project.



Findings from the SWOT process were compiled into a report which was presented to partners in June 2010.

This SWOT process is expected to be repeated at a further stage in the project. The tool is seen as an important element in the SURF project and is being used to gather opinions and

responses from all of the partners as the project progresses.

Work has commenced planning and coordinating a project peer review process to enhance transnational

partner learning and information sharing. The peer review approach will offer partners an innovative method of transnational exchange through the option of face to face meeting or virtual interaction.

Presentation opportunities have been grasped to promote the SURF message through regional, national and international opportunities and have raised awareness of the project and the potential for urban fringes.

Work package 4 has made excellent links with other Interreg projects including DC Noise, Plurel and VASAB (Vision and Strategies Around the Baltic Sea). This is to share the SURF message and the findings of the project to date. It also enables learning from other projects to be disseminated back to the SURF partnership.

The planning process for the outputs managed by Workpackage 4 has commenced with discussions on the potential structure and content of the SURF urban fringe toolkit, the end report for the project and the format for recommendations. Within these considerations, links will be made with Workpackage 2 on the best approaches to the distribution and communication of the SURF outputs.

	2009			2010													
	S	0	Ν	D	J	F	М	Α	М	J	J	А	J	F	М	Α	S
SWOT 1																	
Planning for SWOT 2																	
Peer Review Planning																	
presentations on SURF																	

What have SURF Partners Achieved

Aberdeen City Council

Primary theme focus – Spatial Planning & Stakeholder Engagement

Project aims to:

Develop and promote new methods for assessing and managing open spaces along the Aberdeen's River Don "corridor".



Progress...

- Established a multi-stakeholder Strategic Steering Group, which has met regularly to share information and expertise and direct the project.
- Conducted additional stakeholder meetings and presentations, including to the board of a key local stakeholder; Aberdeen Greenspace Trust – 18 June.
- Supported an Open Space Audit which has documented baseline information on open spaces in the area. This information has been recorded in a Geographical Information System (GIS).
- Supported community consultations on an Open Space Strategy that includes the project area.
- Contributed to the development of local open space planning policy guidance.

City of Bradford

Primary theme focus – Governance



Project aims to:

Engage communities in the urban/rural fringe of Airedale, in particular the Worth Valley so that they understand and develop their contribution to the competitiveness of the Leeds City Region and the Yorkshire Region through local action.

Progress...

- Agreed a local plan of action to engage local organisations, businesses, funders, policy makers and residents through a series of workshops/conferences.
- 40 people attended, "Whoyano", a rural business networking event in June 2010. The event was designed to bring change and growth to the Worth Valley.
- Hosted an International MSC Student from the University of Saxion for two weeks in June 2010. The student assisted with local research for the project.
- Met with local neighbourhood forum to address gaps between local knowledge and perception in planning.
- Commenced planning for a local conference in February 2011.

Province of East Flanders

Theme focus –Spatial Planning & Stakeholder Engagement

Project aims to:

Develop an integrated view for an area of the urban fringe. This will involve testing and implementing transnational approaches on planning and public policy making in spatial quality.

Progress...

- Held regular meetings with the Provincial Quality Chamber in 2010.
- Carried out study work and meetings with stakeholders.
- Planning for the SURF Theme Workshop in East Flanders, November 2010.

Norfolk County Council

Primary theme focus – Role & Value of Green Spaces

Project aims to:

Unlock the potential of the River Gaywood valley to the east of King's Lynn in Norfolk as a natural environmental amenity.



Progress...

 Held two stakeholders events, one in November 2009 and the other in July 2010. Firstly to introduce them to the area and the latter to celebrate the start of the project. Stakeholders were taken on local tours to talk about the issues of sustainable urban fringes in a local context.

- A press release about the project was submitted along with a Radio Norfolk interview with the Gaywood Valley Project Officer.
- Ran presentations on the project at a Heritage Conference in Norwich Castle Museum as well as to King's Lynn Borough Council elected members and the Internal Drainage Board. Letters were also sent out to all the Parish Councils in the project area to inform them about the project.
- Worked on production of an Engagement Plan and formulated a basis for a Vision and Delivery Plan which will be developed by project consultants and project team.
- Procured a consultancy to trial the use of alternative energy pump.
- Developed a strong local Advisory Group and wider partnership that involves relevant stakeholders. Held 2 stakeholder Advisory (Officer) Group meetings and 2 Joint Advisory Panel meetings.
- Procured a consultancy to engage with decision makers and local government officers through a set of Masterclasses, to be held in Summer 2011.
- Employed a full time (temporary) Project Officer to co-ordinate the project at a local level. Contract runs until August 2012.

Province of West Flanders

Primary theme focus – Governance

Project aims to:

Increase the overall spatial quality of the landscape in the urban area of the city Roeselare, in connection with the surrounding municipalities. This should lead to a better interaction and link between urban areas and countryside, enhancing the

attractiveness, recreational potential and landscape of the region.

West Flanders is also preparing new initiatives for the urban fringe, such as the reconversion of an old railway track into a cycle track.



Progress...

- Communicating project ambitions to political stakeholders in their region.
- Founded Stad-Land-Schap, an interlocal cooperation of 9 municipalities and the province of West Flanders, which has started lobbying for structural support from the Flemish Government.
- Hosted a delegation of EU commissioners to the province of West-Flanders in April 2010. The delegation was introduced to the SURF-project and the partner project, Stad-Landschap 't West-Vlaamse hart.
- Distributed 72,000 copies of the West Flanders project magazine "t West-Vlaamse hart"
- Created a West Flanders project website with information about the Stad-Lap-schaap urban fringe development. www.westvlaamsehart.be
- Created e-zines to 500 subscribers about the project and progress made.

City of Enschede

Primary theme focus –Competitiveness, Economy,
Enterprise

Project aims to:

Create a distinct and sustainable urban fringe around the city of Enschede.

The activities focus on the south, north and west of the city where nature development and water are important elements in the reconstruction of this zone.



Progress...

- Working to influence Dutch policy on urban fringes. A delegation from the landscape team of the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment toured the Enschede urban fringe area in September 2010. This was to gain inspiration for a new national policy on urban fringes.
- Launched a project to create a regional vision, strategy and programme, on urban fringes in the Region Twente, in the Netherlands.
- Presentation to the cross border commission of the Euregio, in September 2010. Mayors, City Councillors and Aldermen of municipalities in the Dutch German border region attended to learn more about the SURF project and challenges and opportunities for urban fringes.
- Completed a pilot project to take over some authority from the province for the management of the rural area around the city.

City of Hengelo

Primary theme focus – Competitiveness, Economy, Enterprise

Project aims to:

Develop and enhance 'Weusthag' a greenspace area in the heart of the city. This is to protect and improve its qualities and unlock the potential of the area for sport and recreation.



Progress...

- Organised a public discussion in the council committee about the action plan for the project in spring 2010.
- Organised a bike tour of the Westaug urban fringe for SURF partners to allow transnational information sharing. This assisted Hengelo to develop their project plan for the area and allowed SURF Dutch partners, Enschede, Almelo and Hengelo to further strengthen their partnership and develop a regional approach to urban fringes.
- Developed an action plan and new development plan for the area.
- Produced a new communication strategy for the project area 'Het Weusthag', which is now known as 'The Public Park of Connection'.
- A delegation from the landscape team of the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment toured the Hengelo urban fringe area in September 2010.

City of Almelo

Primary theme focus – Role & Value of Green Spaces

Project aims to:

Use the urban fringes to create connecting routes to greenspace areas. This is to provide valuable recreational and tourist potential for the city.

Progress...

- Drafted and sent out a tender for the project work.
- Looked at ways to apply art to public spaces to enhance the attractiveness of an area.

Harryda

Primary theme focus – Role & Value of Green Spaces

Project aims to:

Investigate conditions for restoring walking trails to make them more convenient and attractive for people.



Progress...

- Studied the 25km of trail that runs through the municipality.
- Compiled a list of landowners and properties along the trail.
- Invited local landowners to an information meeting regarding restoring the trail.
- Established contact with a consultant to negotiate with landowners.

Hamburg

Primary theme focus – Governance

Project aims to:

Raise awareness of the challenges facing the urban fringe. Support activities targeting elements of a joint strategy which identify the potential, the demands and areas of intervention required.

Enable stakeholders to react, stabilise and improve the quality of life in suburbia to develop suburbia's contribution to regional competitiveness.

Progress...

- Held regular communication with representatives from regional and local government stakeholders, representatives and agencies and voluntary private bodies in the region in relation to SURF.
- Building on this network in planning for a series of colloqium events due to take place in November and December 2010. The "Approaches to Suburbia" events aim to build up a common understanding of challenges, potential and perspective of the suburban fringe and allow an exchange of experiences on suburban matters.

Leeds Metropolitan university

Theme Leader –Role & Value of Green Spaces

Theme Leader – Governance

Project aims to:

Provide a body of knowledge on the present state of academic and practical knowledge concerning the planning and development of urban fringes. This will be used to construct a conceptual framework to steer the project and show the relevant themes, issues, processes and their relationship. Provide leadership of 2 SURF themes.

Progress...

- Held regular communication with representatives from regional and local government level stakeholders, representatives and agencies and voluntary and private bodies in the region in relation to SURF. They are building on this network with SURF partner Bradford in preparation for a regional event 2011.
- Delivered a presentation on behalf of SURF to a conference organised by The Flemish Land Agency (VLM) in Bruges, designed to open dialogue between scientists, policy makers, administrators and stakeholders on the challenges of developing green investments and their value in peri-urban regions.

SURF partners Kevin Thomas and Steve Littlewood had an academic journal article published on 'green belts and green infrastructure'.

Saxion University

Theme Leader – Spatial planning & Stakeholder Engagement

Theme Leader – Economy, Competitiveness & Enterprise

Project aims to:

Provide a body of academic knowledge concerning spatial planning and sustainable development. The Centre for Urban and Environmental Development at the University is mainly involved in SURF Workpackage 3 and is providing leadership of 2 SURF themes.

Progress...

 Signed a "Knowledge Agreement" on urban fringes with the Dutch Ministry of the Housing, Environmental Planning & Environment. This

- will allow Saxion to harvest new knowledge from projects that the Ministry is facilitating in urban fringes throughout the country. In return Saxion will make the knowledge from SURF available to those projects.
- Supervised a project of one of the University MSc students in Nature Conservation. The student investigated
- opportunities to improve multifunctionality and ecological quality in urban fringes.
 Research work was carried out in Twente and in the Leeds Bradford region in the UK.

Held workshops in Twente and Flanders regions to facilitate knowledge transfer between different regions.

Planning for the SURF Theme Conference November 2010.

Province of Antwerp

Primary theme focus - Role & Value of Green Spaces

Project aims to:

improve the quality of the urban fringe in the north east of the city of Antwerp to create accessible green spaces.

Progress...

- Antwerp attended SURF meetings in Aberdeen and Enschede in 2009 and 2010.
 Approval from the secretariat endorsing Antwerp as an official partner is expected in December 2010 when the Province will be able to start their project work.
- Planning commenced for 2 workshops on slow roads scheduled for November 2010.
- The workshops, aimed at civil servants, combined theoretical insights with practical visits, with an aim to increase accessibility in the urban fringes. At the same time a website was launched enabling municipalities to find

- technical information on slow roads, how to find financial support, inspirational examples from other municipalities and much more. For more details log onto www.provant.be/tragewegen
- An external consultant who will help to design a playable fish stair for the river Laarse Beek was officially chosen on the 19 August 2010.
 The first step is a measurement of groundwater levels in the area.
- A management plan is being developed for the valley of the Koude Beek, located in the urban fringe in the southeast of the city of Antwerp. This management plan incorporates the vision of the different stakeholders that are currently managing the valley (municipality, province of Antwerp, the landscape association Kempens Landschap)