



Sustainable
URBAN FRINGES
SURF

Enschede Reflection Report



R o n d j e E n s c h e d e



Gemeente  Enschede

The Interreg IVB
North Sea Region
Programme 
*Investing in the future by working together
for a sustainable and competitive region*

European Union



European Regional Development Fund

Introduction

The Enschede project within SURF was Rondje Enschede, a concept to design an attractive recreational route along the official border between the rural area and urban area. Because of the fact that the construction of this route would be rather expensive, a strategy was necessary to find new ways of implementing the design. The key to the solution was to enthuse citizens, companies and other groups of interest and try to stimulate the involvement of them at first and to make them responsible at the end.

To enthuse these groups the municipality of Enschede had to make the first move to raise attention and to develop an attractive design for the first part of the Rondje Enschede together with citizens from the surrounding urban area.

Another part of the strategy was the search for new tools to support the idea of designing and constructing this attractive route. A first one was to connect the route to other existing recreational routes within the urban area and within the rural area. This led to a kind of recreational “backbone” or “coat rack” with “rib” or “side-branches”, the project “Enschede Buitensporig”, a website with thematic recreational and tourist routes. This website is now under reconstruction and will become an app.

Important for the attractiveness of the routes is the presence of recreational attraction spots, spots for visitors to rest and recreate as a break during walking or biking. These spots have to be attractive and examples of it are playing grounds, tea gardens, sporting fields, fruit picking, cultural heritage sites, urban farming, landscape art, etc. For most of these spots the investment of companies is necessary. Therefore, existing and new SME's have to be interested in becoming part of Rondje Enschede. The municipality of Enschede has made use of ideas on governance and attracting businesses from other SURF partners. A group of typical urban fringe entrepreneurs is now busy joining forces in order to combine their promotional activities into a collective promotion (“Enschede Buiten”). A student of Saxion has done a study to show the opportunities for leisure in the urban fringe, an inventory and an app.

Another tool is a legal base for the development of new initiatives in the rural area and the urban fringe. In the Netherlands municipalities are obliged to have a legal conservation plan for the rural area. Because of that there is a complicated procedure for legitimate new initiatives and this can sometimes discourage the new positive initiatives of entrepreneurs. In Enschede, a new instrument “Gids Buitenkans” was invented to stimulate new initiatives by giving a transparent way of weighing arguments. This makes the procedure to get permission much easier, especially in the urban fringes.

The maintenance of the public and private space is a problem in urban fringes. In Enschede, large parts of the rural area is owned by farmers and estate owners. They used to get a subsidy to maintain nature and landscape elements, but with a new instrument they are enabled to become an income for 20-30 years for the settling and maintenance of nature and landscape elements, the Green Blue Services. This tool has been made fit to be used in the urban fringe and students of Saxion have done a study to create some

more connection between several types of maintenance in the urban fringe in order to strengthen the spatial quality of the urban fringe.

An important tool for the urban fringes is the treating of Rondje Enschede as a marketing concept, as a brand. The municipality of Enschede was inspired by the ideas of the UK partners on branding, so efforts were made to brand Rondje Enschede as a refreshing, enthusing and innovative project. This has already attracted a group of entrepreneurs who are cooperating on a common promotion. A student from Saxion has made a study on the marketing of cultural heritage sites in the urban fringe and he developed an app for this.

The SURF project brought attention for a common strategy for the Twente Region. Because of the fact that cities within urbanised areas share their urban fringes, the idea of developing a common vision and strategy can arise. So it did in the Twente Region. The cities in this area, with Enschede, Hengelo and Almelo among them, have made a common vision and strategy on urban fringes, together with other authorities like the province Overijssel, the Twente Region and the Waterboard Regge & Dinkel. Cooperation is supporting the sustainable development of the urban fringes in a more effective way.

Finally, the SURF project made use of the existing cooperation between municipalities, knowledge institutes and companies, de "Groene Kennispoort Twente" ("green knowledge portal Twente"). This cooperation encourages innovation by making use of students within projects and products and increases the chances of keeping students in the area (avoiding brain drain). Within this cooperation there is a specific programme on urban fringes, especially on regional food production and urban farming.

SWOT

Strengths

Compared to the first SWOT new strengths arose. The Regional Vision and Strategy on Urban Fringes and the branding of Rondje Enschede are new refreshing strengths.

Weaknesses

Unfortunately the economic situation caused a new weakness. Because of the savings the role of the public authorities will diminish. The existing weaknesses could be aggravated by this.

Opportunities

The cooperation between the urban fringe entrepreneurs, Enschede buiten, can give new impulses to the economic development of Rondje Enschede. Another opportunity is the growing attention to sound and natural regionally produced food. The awareness of climate change can point out that the urban fringes also could be used as an energy provider and the urban fringes could be used for water retention since more and heavier rainfall is expected.

Threats

The biggest threat will be the economic crisis. For governments crises have longer lasting effects and one when there is not even a budget anymore for promotion of urban fringes, then this would be dramatic.

Eye openers and biggest results

Because of the SURF project we have noticed that our ideas and projects are good enough. Therefore we have the confirmation of having the good direction for the development of urban fringes.

We also gained some good ideas from especially UK partners for branding our urban fringe by using Rondje Enschede as the brand. From all other partners we were inspired to make more use of the commitment of citizens and companies.

The presence of Hengelo and Almelo within SURF and the cooperation with all the SURF partners made it possible to start up a process to have a regional vision and strategy on urban fringes, which finally lead to the regional vision and strategy.

Ideas from East and West Flanders and Hamburg on regional production of food and plants influenced Enschede to pay more attention to urban farming and regional food production and making use of the urban fringe for this purpose.

And last but not least, the cooperation with Saxion and all SURF partners influenced the regional cooperation between governments, knowledge institutes and companies and this has lead to a specific urban fringes programme.