

HYBRID PARKS

November 2014



Research Reports

INTERREG IVC funding allowed Hybrid Parks to commission research on six economic, environmental and social themes that were identified as common interest for future innovative policies and measures. **All reports are available as downloads on the [project's website](#).**

ECONOMIC FOCUS

Indicative Economic Assessment for Green Infrastructures – A toolkit and a case study

Making the case for investment in parks and gardens is a critical step in ensuring that the wide range of benefits, such as those for health, tourism and employment, are sustained. With strong competing pressures on finance, developing tools to describe the economic value of parks and gardens can support all negotiations for investment.

Through Hybrid Parks the partners in Cheshire West & Chester were able to develop the Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit and to use it to derive monetary values for the social, economic and environmental benefits that Northwich Woodlands – as a case study – provides.

The case study showed €14m growth of GVA, positive impact on property value of €11m and €36m of wider economic benefit. Tourism provides the greatest GVA benefit. The health benefits are increasingly important as the focus on physical activity and the role of green spaces in supporting good mental health strengthens. The toolkit also shows that land and property value will increase as people choose to live in attractive settings. Having an extensive green space on the doorstep will be important in helping to attract new investment, houses, jobs and growth to Northwich itself.

(Study commissioned by Cheshire West & Chester Council and realised by the council's Total Environment Team)

Measuring Economic, Ecological and other Effects of Gardens and Parks

Our society has become more environmentally conscious with changed values and attitudes to nature and sustainability. Gardening and "grow your own" has gained a new lease of life. Increased urbanization has caused a distance between people and nature with the result that they are longing for green spaces. Big efforts have been put into "greening the city". Many historic gardens in rural

areas have been rejuvenated and have become attractions in their own right.

Although there is evidence that gardens and parks benefit our society in a variety of ways it is important to show how such benefits could be measured and used by practitioners. Therefore, the study shows indicators for the benefits of gardens and parks and presents techniques for the measurement of these benefits. While emphasis is placed on the economic contribution, ecological, sociocultural and community effects are also considered. The study presents a toolbox that helps managers to evaluate economic and other impacts of their sites. It also includes some final conclusions and recommendations.

(Study commissioned by Gartenplattform Niederösterreich and realised by IMC University of Applied Sciences (Krösbacher, Okorokoff, Tischler, Kraushofer))

Garden Shows and Festivals as a Business Model – Case studies and innovative approaches

The study provides information to consider the development of some alternative form of garden shows by researching garden shows and festivals and their impact in several categories.

After establishing an overview about existing shows, those shows that are the most compatible with the parks and gardens within Hybrid Parks were selected as case studies, including Philadelphia Flower Show, Giardina in Zurich, Keukenhof, two shows in Germany, Chaumont and "Floralie" in France and the RHS shows at Chelsea, Hampton Court and Tatton Park.

Case studies provide key facts (such as location, origins, theme, and ticket prices), visitor facts (including number and origin of visitors, age groups, professional visitors, reasons for attendance) and exhibitor facts number, main goals, ratings and market positioning). Each case study delivers evaluation on location and facilities, exhibitions and show gardens, associated events, awards, marketing, sponsorship, terms and conditions and ends with conclusions.

Recommendations offer good prospects for new shows if opportunities are used to extend beyond the current norm of visitor profile.

(Study commissioned by Schloss Dyck Foundation and realised by Ed Bennis)

ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

Rain Gardens in Private Gardens as an Element of Sustainable Water Management

The study shows the need for a shift of paradigm from getting rid of rainwater "as securely and quickly as possible" to a sustainable management that keeps rainwater on site as long as possible. Sustainable rainwater management includes all actions to ensure the maximum return of precipitation into the natural water cycle and as close to the site of occurrence as possible. This helps to prevent damages caused by overloading sewage systems.

This study examines the opportunities of the installation of different types of rain gardens in private gardens, with Lower Austria as a pilot area. Rain gardens are made up of native perennial plants with soil designed to absorb and to manage storm water runoff. Rain gardens increase biodiversity, resilience of gardens, aesthetic values, regional identity, recreational qualities and the understanding of natural processes.

As a handbook for garden owners the study includes these six chapters: "Understand site and context"; "Determine size and location"; "Design a space-based shaping"; "Plug the place, secure the topsoil, earth, and substrate"; "Planting" and "Observe and maintain".

(Study commissioned by Natur im Garten and realised by Christine Rottenbacher)

Consideration of Climate Change in the Design of Parks and Open Spaces

In urbanized spaces with their complex structures there is a particular need for strategies to mitigate those climatic extremes which can be influenced (e.g. peak temperatures in urban heat islands) and to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (e.g. damage through flooding, storm and hail, health risks through heat stress). The report analyses studies, plans and projects carried out here in relation to climate change and the design of parks and open spaces. Transformation must be incorporated into larger urban development strategies, and must entail a balance of interests as well as the involvement of civil society.

The study is structured into five chapters: "Overall Context" (including stakeholders, legal principles, research projects, need for new policies), "City / Region as a Level of Intervention" (including open space development and water management), "The City Neighbourhood: The Main Level of Intervention for Enhancing Open Spaces" (including greening of open spaces, retention areas, climate change sensitive design of open spaces, urban agriculture and gardening, local marketing and private action for a green city), "Financial Benefits of Open-Space Measures" and finally "Design Principles".

(Study commissioned by the State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and realised by Lutz Meltzer)

SOCIAL FOCUS

Urban Renewal with Resident Involvement and User Influence: a New District Park in Skäggetorp

Skäggetorp is a suburb of Linköping, with 8.500 inhabitants and an immigrant proportion of 44%.

A strategic plan for Skäggetorp was adopted by the City Council in 2009, when the local park consisted largely of areas that lacked a clear purpose, attractiveness, and accessibility. The new activity park, completed in 2010, provided first spontaneous meeting places and the opportunity for recreation and health-promoting activities. Activities by the residents were encouraged.

It is fundamental that the ongoing process includes the residents. In the recent years members of the municipal staff as well as different associations and organisations, schools and the churches in Skäggetorp worked together to develop an attractive park that unites architecture and design with environmental awareness and horticulture.

The best method to reach the inhabitants and to foster their inclusion is to be out in the park and to get in contact by very open and spontaneous actions. The survey also reports on additional activities to include inhabitants, led by Linköping University and based on their experiences on outdoor learning. Additionally the survey lists examples of other urban gardening projects.

(Study commissioned by the City of Linköping and realised by CLGardens and University of Linköping)



Next Newsletters

The next editions of the newsletter will inform you about the workshop in Poland, the conference in Rhodes (both with an environmental focus) and about the Final Conference in Cologne and will introduce the Final Report of Hybrid Parks.

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The Lead Partner is responsible for this newsletter on behalf of the entire partnership.

Photos by: Ed Bennis, Cecilia Liljedahl, Cheshire West & Chester Council, Christian Guessen (4)



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