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1 Introduction

The aim of the interim report is to give an overview of the progress of the pilot implementation within the framework of the URMA-Project¹ and provide preliminary results and lessons learnt so far. The interim report therefore provides a basis for the final overview study of the pilots as foreseen in the URMA application. Pilot implementations being currently conducted by Hamburg (PP2), Twente/Borne (PP8/10) and Lombardy (PP5) form a central element of the URMA-Project as they develop and test new approaches for the initiation of urban-rural partnerships, still rare on the European level (cf. OECD Study 2013², EDORA 2011³). Therefore, pilots play an important role as examples for other URMA partners and further stakeholders by providing transferable models and best practices.

In this context, PP2 aims to prepare a socio-economic analysis and recommendations for a large-scale cooperation between growth poles and smaller towns and rural areas between Hamburg and North Jutland (DK) in the field of cluster development. PP5 will use the urban-rural approach to reconcile the demand for urbanisation and preservation of non-built-up, rural and agricultural areas in the metropolitan area of Milan, using the example of the EXPO 2015 and related projects such as Parco delle Risaie or Parco delle Groane. PP8/10 intends to develop the regional food chain in the region of Twente which will not only serve to strengthen urban-rural relationships between (rural) producers and (urban) consumers but also increase social integration and citizens' participation by involving farmers, entrepreneurs, local students and people with disabilities in the implementation process.

The results of the interim report are based on pilot descriptions updated by the project partners on a regular basis (at least 4x a year). Moreover, the results are derived from presentations given during workshops, study visits and conferences which took place within the framework of the URMA-Project between August 2012 and December 2013 in Szczecin, Krakow, Florence, Hamburg and Milan, where pilot-responsible persons reported on the current progress. In addition, findings from the study visit in Lombardy (October 2013) have been included. Finally, additional data was collected via the analysis of respective planning documents, projects reports, minutes and interviews with regional planning officials published in URMA-Newsletters.

In the following chapters, the pilots will be presented in more detail. First, regional context, objectives and expected outputs will be presented, followed by the current status of the implementation progress. Preliminary results and lessons learnt will finally

¹ For background information and objectives of the URMA-Project please see: www.urma-project.eu

² "Rural-Urban Partnerships. An Integrated Approach to Economic Development", available at: http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/rural-urban-partnerships_9789264204812-en (02.01.2014)

³ "European Development Opportunities for Rural Areas", Final report 2011, available at: http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/EDORA/EDORA_Final_Report_Parts_A_and_B.pdf (02.01.2014)

be formulated based on the theoretical framework of the URMA-Approach⁴ and summarized to formulate recommendations.

2 Pilot Implementation Hamburg (PP2): “Cooperation along the Jutland route corridor”

2.1 Regional context and rationale behind the pilot

The pilot area represents a cross-border region between Hamburg and Jutland aiming at the creation of large scale urban-rural cooperation. Geographically, the cooperation area covers the corridor of the Jutland Route which stretches from the metropolis of Hamburg up to Aalborg/North Denmark (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: Location of the pilot “Cooperation along the Jutland Route Corridor” (Source: Jacuniak-Suda/Schwämmle 2013)

Hamburg is one of the most relevant metropolises in Northern Europe, but also one of the natural metropolises for Jutland. The city itself as well as the surrounding regional

⁴ More about the URMA-Approach on: http://www.urma-project.eu/upload/files/downloads/URMA_Approach_2013-08-09.pdf

development centres in Northern Germany (Kiel, Schleswig, Lübeck) are interested in strengthening cooperation along the Jutland Route (Fig. 1). In particular, there is a need to bundle different activities and initiatives, especially in the field of cluster cooperation, by identifying relevant regional projects and stakeholders. Existing contacts and cooperation experience gained in the course of the INTERREG IV A Programme “Syddanmark-Schleswig-KERN” (Fig. 2) should be built upon.



Fig. 2: Area covered by the INTERREGs IV A Syddanmark-Schleswig-KERN (Source: www.interreg4a.eu)

Moreover, Danish regions along the E 45 (“Jutland route”), led by the Syddanmark region (Vejle) and the City of Aarhus, for several years have been particularly interested in intensifying cooperation with Hamburg, the Hamburg Metropolitan Region and north Schleswig-Holstein. This is expected to compensate for anticipated deficits in cross-border cooperation compared to the Fehmarn Belt Corridor (following the future completion of the Fehmarn Belt Fixed Link). Thus, the focus of interest is on cooperation in specific projects, identifying potentials and engaging in lobbying activities targeting national governments and the EU. A special attention is dedicated to the strengthening of the role of towns and rural areas which form a relevant bridge between the growth poles along the Jutland corridor and therefore should be actively involved in the

cooperation. In the long-term, closer cooperation links should be established with the Metropolitan Region Hamburg and neighbouring German federal states, the region of Copenhagen, south Norway and Sweden towards a closer territorial cohesion.

2.2 Objectives and expected outputs of the pilot

As a first step towards identifying potentials for closer cooperation along the Jutland Route, Hamburg, the Region Syddanmark and Schleswig-Holstein with the assistance of consultants (Georg Consulting and COWI A/S) are jointly preparing a study to identify opportunities, objectives and tools of intensified cooperation concerning the Jutland Route corridor. The study aims at the achievement of the following pilot objectives:

- Development of a vision and development strategies in different fields of interest (e.g. renewable energy, tourism, agriculture, education)
- Identification of opportunities, objectives and tools for an intensified cooperation
- Elaboration of policy recommendations which will be integrated into the respective regional development plans (e.g. Schleswig-Holstein spatial development plan 2030)
- Elaboration of proposals for specific projects for future cross-border cooperation

Expected outputs of the pilot include:

- Statistical profile of the Jutland Route corridor (April 2014)
- Implementation plan (August 2014) with policy recommendations
- Trilingual promotional “Fact book” (October 2014)
- Two transnational conferences (April 2014 in DK; June or October 2014 in Schleswig-Holstein) with various regional stakeholders
- Three newsletters reporting on the progress of the pilot

2.3 Actors and their involvement

The Ministry of Urban Development and Environment of Hamburg (BSU) is responsible for overall pilot management and acts as a driving force in ensuring that the objectives and output of the pilot are being delivered on time. The consulting team comprised of Georg Consulting and COWI A/S provides assistance to the BSU. Further Pilot Partners stem from the public sector and include the State Chancellery of Schleswig-Holstein, Region Syddanmark as well as Ministry of Economics, Transport and Innovation of Hamburg.

The target group to which the outputs of the pilot will be addressed are various stakeholders (on municipal, regional or federal level, cluster initiatives, etc.), Danish regions, Hamburg Metropolitan Region, the Federal States of Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, Project Partnership North as well as the EU-Commission which might be interested in recommendations developed in the course of the pilot.

2.4 Progress of the pilot

So far, the main achievements of the pilot are the identification of relevant actors on the German and Danish site potentially interested in the closer urban-rural cooperation. In addition, there have been preparatory meetings between representatives of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Danish regions organised to bring together different expectations and objectives which should be addressed in the pilot. The German-Danish workshop held during the URMA conference in Hamburg 2013 can be regarded as an important milestone in the discussion on objectives and contents and economic profile of the pilot study area. As a result, a description of targets, expected contents of the expert's analysis as well as an agreement on joint financial responsibilities have been achieved. Eventually, a tender was developed in order to find an appropriate consultant. In December 2013, a partnership agreement was signed among the involved parties and a contract to Georg Consulting and COWI was awarded.

Next steps (January-March 2014) include the preparation of a statistical analysis, document reviews, interviews and organisation of regional workshops during which the communal level representatives will express their expectations regarding the analysis.

2.5 Challenges

At the beginning of the pilot implementation finding a common understanding on cooperation objectives and especially the content of the study (what need to be analysed, which networks and stakeholders to be involved etc.) was the main challenge. Expectations, motivations, interests and the extent of political support differ between different pilot partners which makes a common steering of the project sometimes difficult. A partnership agreement can help to agree on the role each partner has to play. It is important to ensure that the provided study provides the added value of cooperation for each partner.

2.6 Lessons learnt

Making use of existing cooperation experience and contacts (INTERREG IV A Programme "Syddanmark-Schleswig-KERN"), especially between regional representatives based in the cities of Schleswig and Padborg, is likely to be critical for the establishment of closer urban-rural cooperation in the pilot area.

Moreover, stakeholders from non-metropolitan areas (such as individual counties and towns in Syddanmark) seem to have a stronger belief in the added value and the need for cooperation whereas the activation of stakeholders in the metropolitan areas is more difficult.

The Hamburg-Jutland pilot provides a good example of a large scale, cross-border urban-rural cooperation which can serve as a model, specifically for those URMA partners located on the border (Pleven-Romania, Twente-Germany, Westpomerania-Germany, Lombardia-Switzerland, Małopolska-Slovakia).

3 Pilot Implementation Enschede/Borne (PP8/10): “Restoration of local and regional food chains in the region Twente”

3.1 Regional context and rationale behind the pilot

The spatial scope of the pilot covers the region Twente in the Province Overijssel in the western Netherlands. The pilot is an example of an urban-rural partnership in a predominantly rural area with a polycentric structure of villages and towns (Fig. 3). Since 2001, Enschede, Hengelo, Oldenzaal, Borne and Almelo have worked together in Network City Twente (Netwerkstad Twente) to develop strategic visions and jointly set-up regional flagship projects⁵.

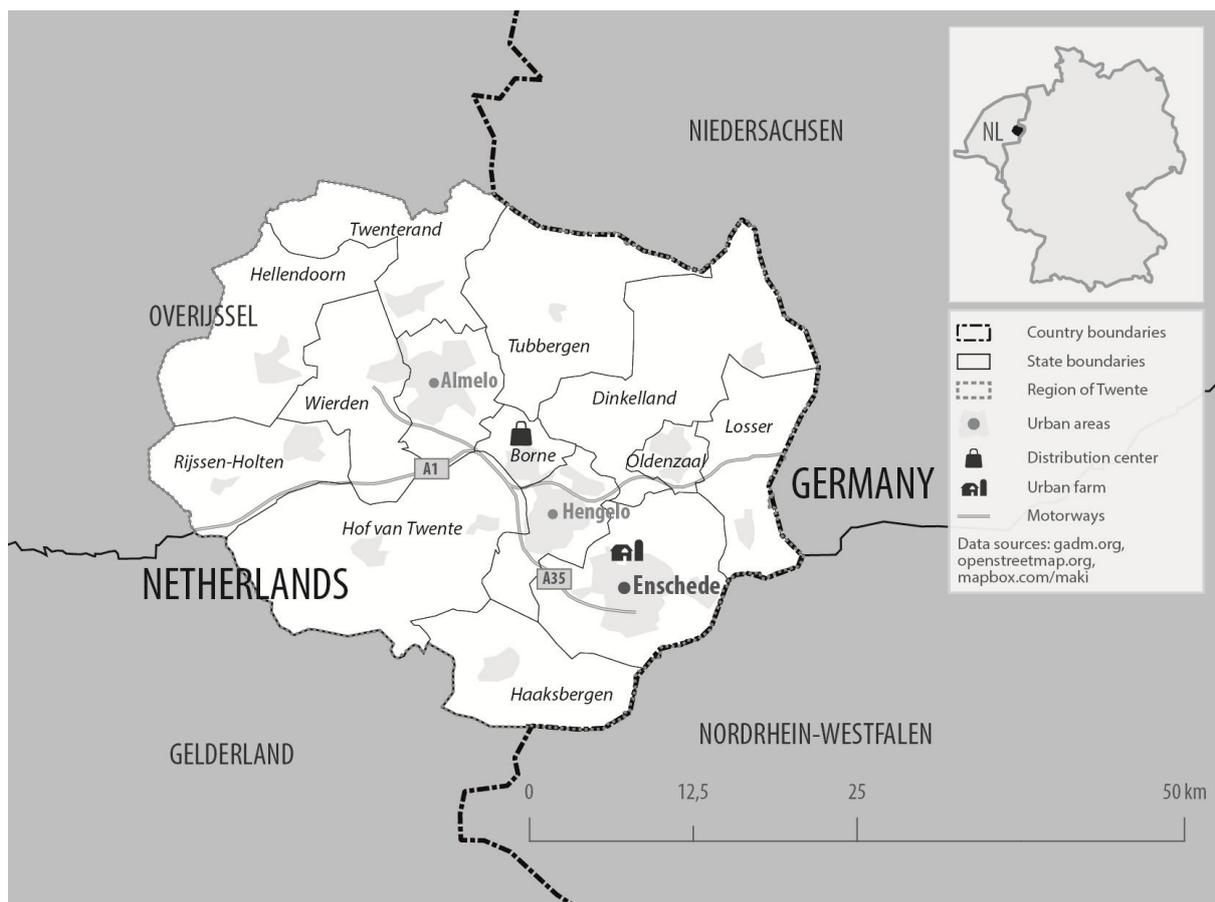


Fig. 3: Location of the pilot “Restoration of local and regional food chains in the region Twente” (Source: Jacuniak-Suda/Schwämmle 2014)

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

⁵ Sijgers, I., Hammer, M., Horst, W., Nieuwenhuis, P., van der Sijde, P. (no year): “Supporting the contribution of Higher Education Institutes to regional development. Self-Evaluation Report of Twente”, p. 8, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/netherlands/35883426.pdf> (02.01.2014)

awareness and the importance of a more sustainable society. The economical crisis has also encouraged a vision to aim for another way of life, which focuses on the quality of life and with that also on the desire for high-quality food.

In addition to the growing distance between producers and consumers, the last decades saw an increasing gap between urban and rural society. As a result of cultural and economic changes due to the economic crisis, the restoration of the food chains will also lead to restoration of urban-rural linkages. Programmes like LEADER have provided a solid base to rediscover the strength of rural economics and have revealed the importance of rural areas for the urban areas and the great value of rural society for urban areas. For example, through the promotion of regional products and the organisation of food markets, regional solidarity could be strengthened by joint decisions and involvement in projects. According to Rolf Oldejans, LEADER improved the relationship between the inhabitants of cities and rural society, as it made cities aware of their urban fringes⁶. So, through the re-establishment of local and regional food chains other linkages can be restored and lead to new partnerships, based upon the acknowledgement of the mutual benefits.

3.2 Objectives and expected outputs of the pilot

The aim of the pilot is to restore local and regional food chains by implementation of the following three projects:

- Regional food strategy - Restoration of the local and regional food chains and the developing of 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.
- Regional food market / distribution centre - The establishment of a regional food distribution centre 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 tourist information centre.
- 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 cooperation between urban and rural areas will be promoted by these three projects. First, it will lead to more urban consciousness about how food is produced and about the importance of reducing the distances and resulting transport costs of food distribution. Second, by attracting more attention to regional food production, people living in urban areas will be more interested in sustainably produced food and also in particular rural areas where this food is produced. Third, when urban citizens become more familiar with rural areas, they will be more interested in supporting farmers, rural entrepreneurs and rural communities with their specific problems and needs. By doing this a new, more sustainable food consumption awareness change will follow and

⁶ "Cooperation with cities from rural perspective", presentation given in Szczecin, 13.09.2012

durable urban-rural partnerships will be established. Last but not least, the pilot aims at better knowledge transfer and know-how flow in the region Twente by the involvement of students from local universities and educational institutes in the development of the pilot activities.

Finally, the implementation plan will be developed at the final stage of pilot implementation providing recommendations on how the regional food strategy, regional food market/distribution centre in Borne and urban farm in Enschede can be continued and can become economically viable in the long term.

3.3 Actors and their involvement

The Green Knowledge Portal Twente is in charge of the pilot management. The organisation was established in 2008 by the towns Borne and Enschede as initiators and the other municipalities in Twente with the knowledge institutes AOC, Van Hall Larenstein, Saxion and Wageningen University and supported by the Ministry of Agricultural Affairs and the Province Overijssel. Pilot partners represent the municipalities of the Region Twente and the Waterboard Vechtstromen plus knowledge institutes as AOC Oost-Nederland (agricultural vocational study institute East Netherlands), Van Hall Larenstein, Stoas and Saxion (universities of applied sciences) and Wageningen University. The activities of the pilot are addressed to local and regional farmers and SMEs interested in regional food production, promotion and distribution in the region Twente. At the moment, activities developed within the pilot are driven by the Green Knowledge Portal Twente, however in the long term they should be taken over by local entrepreneurs.

3.4 Progress of the pilot

During the course of the pilot a number of achievements in the development of the three main outputs (regional food strategy; regional food market/distribution centre, urban farm Enschede) can be noted.

First, regarding the regional food strategy, a working group for its development was formed back in February 2013. This working group, called “Smaakmakers van Twente” consisted of Innofood (a cooperation of big food producers in the East of the Netherlands), Syntens (innovation network for entrepreneurs / SMEs in Twente), Twents Bureau voor Toerisme (Regional Bureau for Tourism) and AOC Oost-Nederland (agricultural vocational study institute East Netherlands). The strategy is currently in progress. The responsibility of the control on the strategy has been passed recently over to the Regional Bureau of Tourism and a group of several entrepreneurs.

Second, a feasibility study undertaken by students of Saxion University came to the conclusion that a regional distribution centre in Borne is feasible. A search has been started to find an entrepreneur to lead the centre. At the same time, a search for a land property to buy has started which is strategically in the middle of the urbanized area of the region Twente and where regional crops using the permaculture technique (integrating economic, social and environmental aspects) can be grown. If the search is successful, this will be the start of the distribution centre. In the meantime, a business

case/plan was completed in September 2013. Currently, a study to determine an efficient logistic system and a professional business case are being elaborated by students of Wageningen University and Saxion University of Applied Sciences. A web-based distribution is also in consideration.

Third, a vision for conversion of an industrial site into a local urban food farm in Enschede has been realised. Several entrepreneurs and educational institutes were contacted between January and September 2013 to draw their attention to the urban farm Enschede. Since November 2013 several urban farming projects in the cities in the region Twente have been launched. A workshop in Enschede with citizens and companies on food and non-used space in the city towards the establishment of an urban farm was organised in December 2013. Two entrepreneurs are currently working on a logistic system between food producers and restaurants. They are examining the possibility to start up a distribution cooperative of food producers.

The next steps of the pilot include signing agreements and the start-up of an urban farm for sheltered jobs in Enschede (January 2014), completion of a logistic concept for distribution (January-March 2014) and the organisation of a regional conference on regional food (February 2014).

3.5 Challenges

The persons in charge for the pilot argue that neither the Green Knowledge Portal Twente nor the public bodies (e.g. municipality of Borne, the city of Enschede) can act as the driving force for the implementation of pilot activities in the long-term. They can provide ideas but the pilot activities have to be conducted by private companies or entrepreneurs in the region. Only this will ensure that the pilot activities can become economically viable and outlast the life time of the URMA project. However, finding an appropriate entrepreneur presents a challenge. As regional products present new, possibly more expensive products compared to the mass products in the supermarkets, they need to be professionally branded, promoted and distributed which leads to higher business costs. Therefore, a convenient system of micro-credits to support the entrepreneurs would be helpful.

3.6 Lessons learnt

A number of lessons learnt can be drawn from the pilot so far. First, the LEADER programme can provide a solid basis for the establishment of urban-rural partnerships by the provision of existing contacts to local and regional administrations, know-how in the formulation of regional development strategies and projects, SWOT analysis, seed funding, etc. Local events (e.g. food markets, conferences) serve as exchange platforms to bring together rural and urban stakeholders and exchange their interests.

Second, urban-rural partnerships can be effectively promoted when students from educational institutes get involved in project development; thus, a sense of belonging, identity and responsibility for the home region can be developed. On the other side the projects can benefit from their knowledge and creativity.

In the long-term, urban-rural partnerships should be driven by entrepreneurs and not solely by public money/bodies as the business with regional products is profitable. However, the development of a system of micro-credits for entrepreneurial activities could be beneficial, especially for those who will start own business (students, graduates, farmers, etc.)

On the one hand, the pilot can benefit from good practices made in Lombardia (e.g. Associazione Buon Mercato) and contributions from contacts available. In particular, the pilot responsible persons are interested in how regional food producers and the logistics are organized in other regions. On the other hand, the URMA-Partner in Krakow is interested in establishing links with producers in Twente with the aim of establishing a similar concept in the Malopolska Region.

4 Pilot Implementation Lombardy (PP5): "Regione Lombardia – EXPO 2015"

4.1 Geographic scope and rationale behind the pilot

The pilot area is located in Lombardy, in the metropolitan area of Milan. It consists of the EXPO area and wider peri-urban pilot area which covers the municipalities of Arese, Rho, Pero, Bollate, Baranzate, Lainate and Milano. The wider peri-urban pilot area reflects relevant territorial aspects such as the water system, land-use, land cover, EXPO-related projects and best practices (Waterways project Via d'Acqua, Parco delle Risaie, Associazione Buon Mercato), system of green areas and agricultural parks (Parco Regionale delle Groane, Parco Agricolo Sud Milano) (Fig. 4). Summing up, the pilot represents urban-rural cooperation within an inner-metropolitan area, in particular between the metropolitan core of Milan and its peri-urban areas.

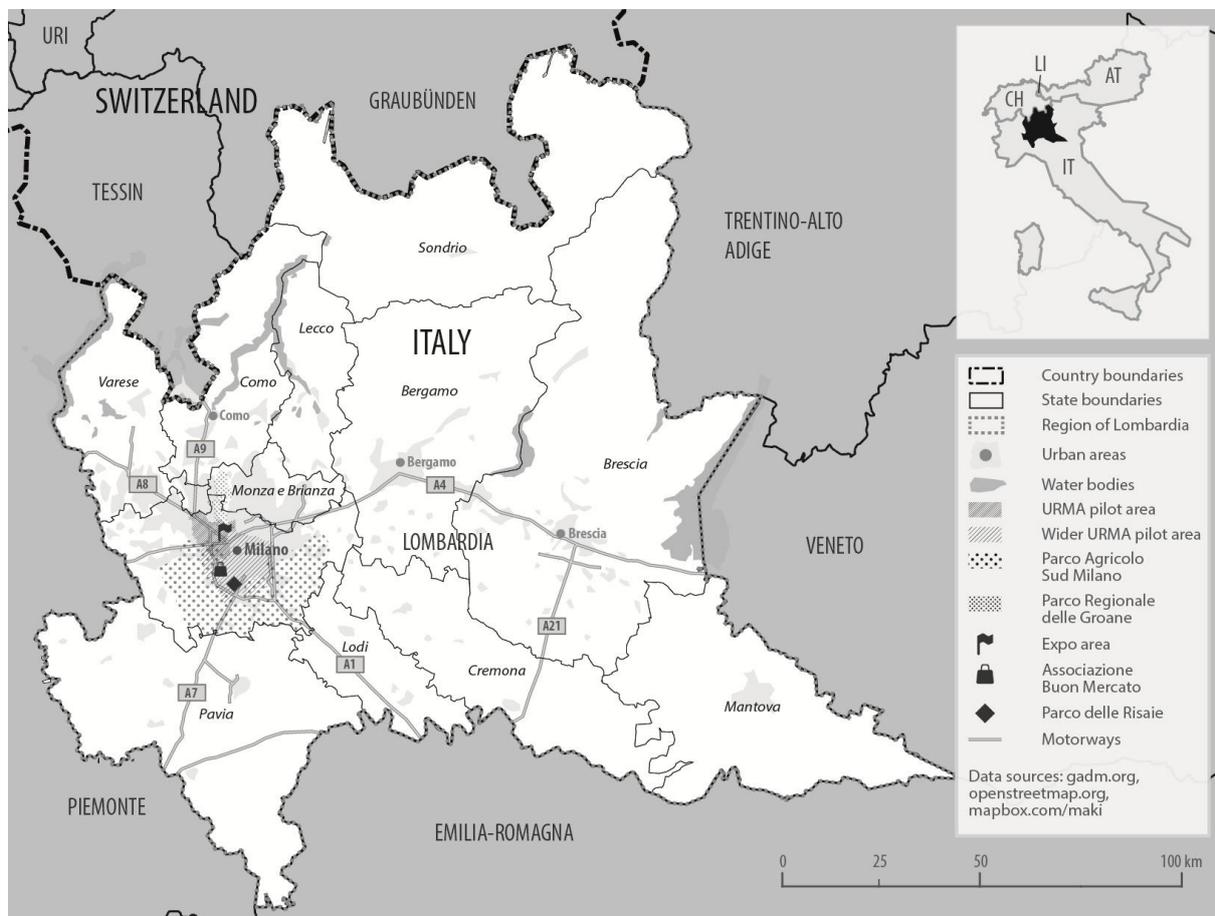


Fig. 4: Location of the pilot "Regione Lombardia – EXPO 2015" (Source: Jacuniak-Suda/Schwämmle 2014)

The main aspects that characterise the pilot area are:

- the proximity of the metropolitan area of Milan (1.35 million inhabitants in 2012) and presence, in the surrounding territories, of medium and large-scale urban centres (with populations of around 128.000 inhabitants);

- the landscape and environmental values: natural river bodies, channels and irrigation systems (well-structured and resulting from historical evolution), the significant presence of historical and architectural values (historical centres and heritage buildings)
- the agricultural landscape and production system: the presence of agricultural parks (Agricultural Park of south of Milan, agricultural production in the areas of other natural Parks), existing agricultural production (high percentage of agricultural areas, numerous farms, a differentiated agricultural production).

Therefore, the pilot area provides an interesting example for an analysis of urban-agricultural relations regarding the management and transformation of peri-urban areas. In particular, in view of the proceeding urban sprawl, the preservation and future management of rural elements in peri-urban-areas presents a challenge and therefore will be brought into focus in the pilot.

4.2 Objectives and expected outputs of the pilot

The overall aim of the pilot is to analyse urban-rural relations with regard to the EXPO 2015 and find innovative approaches to land management and land use practices towards environmental protection and valorisation of metropolitan territories. This will be achieved in the course of the following steps:

- Formulation of a definition of peri-urban areas by the means of case study area characterisation (identification and analysis of territorial characteristics of the EXPO 2015 based on thematic maps via GIS analysis)
- Characterisation of governance of territorial system framework: analysis of policies, plans and programmes at regional, provincial and municipal level will help to identify strategies and actions for the management of peri-urban territories
- Analysis of best practices which will underline factors of success and aspects/actions supporting the management of peri-urban territories towards environmental, social and economical sustainability. Best practices identified are: Vie d'Acqua (Waterways project), Parco delle Risaie (Park of Rice Fields), DESR - Distretto di Economia Solidale Rurale del Parco Agricolo Sud Milano (District of Sustainable Rural Economy of PASM - South Agricultural Park of Milan), Buon Mercato di Corsico (local bio-food market of Corsico municipality) and Distretto Agricolo Milanese (Agricultural District of Milan). The pilot includes also the analysis of informal and bottom-up proposals (related to the urban-rural partnerships / food chain topics) located in the pilot area.
- Elaboration of "Guidelines for the peri-urban areas management". As an output of the pilot two different guidelines will be proposed. The first "guidelines" will be integrated in the planning/programs framework (e.g. Regional Territorial Plan) and will provide a basis for development of respective local bottom-up initiatives. Particularly, the guidelines will be a manual for peri-urban municipalities how to develop in a sustainable way, e.g. how to preserve rural but also urban qualities in the peri-urban areas avoiding further sprawl. The aim of the second "guidelines" will be to develop recommendations and examine further aspects of an effective implementation of rural-urban partnerships (in terms of governance instruments and criteria). These guidelines will form a first proposal aiming at the

determination of drivers and barriers to the urban-rural partnerships identified in the pilot analysis.

In order to disseminate the outputs of the pilot and the overall URMA findings, a number of public initiatives (workshops, seminars) is planned to be held with the involvement of the stakeholders representing institutional, social and economic interests. The public initiatives will be organised in 2014 (February/April).

4.3 Actors and their involvement

The Regione Lombardia (Land, Planning and Risk Prevention Department) and an internal expert consultancy Èupolis Lombardia are jointly responsible for the pilot management. Pilot partners who are already involved or are likely to be involved in the implementation of the pilot are the corporation EXPO 2015 S.p.A.⁷, Province of Milan, DAM / Milano Municipality, municipalities of Arese, Rho, Pero, Bollate, Baranzate, Lainate and Milano, Parco delle Risaie, Associazione Buon Mercato.

The results and activities developed under the pilot should reach the following target groups:

1. Institutions and associations promoting local food production (certified local productions, typical production, local food distribution), Slow food and the solidarity based purchasing groups (GAS);
2. Stakeholders' and actors' representatives of the agricultural production chain (farmers and farmers' associations, chamber of commerce – agriculture sector);
3. Institutions and associations related to environmental protection and improvement (natural/agricultural parks, Italia Nostra Association, Legambiente and other national and local associations).

Furthermore, various actors will be involved in meetings on specific issues organized in the course of the pilot implementation. In meetings, local and regional stakeholders will be involved in the identification of Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT analysis) of peri-urban areas which will be then integrated into the “Guidelines for peri-urban territories”. The involvement of stakeholders has a fundamental role in the identification (and analysis) of best practices and in the process of best practices sharing.

4.4 Progress of the pilot

The first milestone was the finalisation of the contract between Regione Lombardia and the internal expert consultancy Èupolis Lombardia back in February 2013. This was followed by an agreement on the pilot contents, outputs and timetable. Regarding the content of the pilot, a further milestone was the determination of the pilot boundaries.

⁷ Ownership of the Expo 2015 S.p.A. is structured as follows: Government of the Italian Republic (Ministry of the Economy and Finance, 40%), Region of Lombardy (40%), Municipality of Milan (20%), Province of Milan (20%), Milan Chamber of Commerce for Industry, Agriculture and Handicraft (10%) (Source: <http://en.expo2015.org/transparency/about-us> (07.01.2014))

An ongoing activity since May 2013 has been the characterisation of the pilot area (EXPO area and wider pilot area) by means of the elaboration of about 20 various thematic maps using GIS software. These address topics such as land cover, land-use, water system, etc. This step enables the pilot management team to identify homogeneous peri-urban features characterising the peri-urban area of Milan, formulation of the definition of peri-urban area and the identification of main factors of vulnerability and endogenous potentials.

Further, Èupolis is working on an evaluation and comparison of planning documents in Lombardia. The goal is to identify for each instruments/projects/proposal/best practices the positive/negative impacts on peri-urban areas and the actions/instruments proposed (in particular: actions supporting rural-urban partnerships). At the same time Regione Lombardia is working on the content and structure of the Guidelines, a process integrated within the currently running revision of the Regional Territorial Plan.

An important output of the pilot has been the study visit in Milan (October 2013), which allowed the organisers to promote URMA and the Lombardy pilot during a regional conference and therefore initiate a debate on urban-rural cooperation in Lombardy. During the excursion to the Parco delle Risaie, concrete examples of a successful preservation of agricultural areas on the fringe of the Milano metropolis which emerged as a result of an active urban-rural cooperation between various local stakeholders (e.g. farmers, citizens' initiatives, public administration) were shown.

4.5 Challenges

The main challenge perceived by the persons in charge of the pilot is to activate a dialogue among stakeholders that have different competences, objectives, resources and represent different territorial scales (from the regional to the local management of peri-urban territories). Furthermore, understanding of the thematic complexity in the context of the EXPO 2015 such as various projects, proposals, multifaceted experiences as well as identification of strengths/opportunities presents an opportunity, but also difficulty. All in all it is problematic to find the most appropriate compromise between local needs and the URMA project main objectives.

4.6 Lessons learnt

The pilot shows that large international, national or regional events (e.g. EXPO 2015, garden exhibitions, building exhibitions) can serve as a driving force and incentive to establish urban-rural partnerships. At the same time, it is important to pay attention to small local bottom-up projects as they can act as model projects for urban-rural cooperation for the whole region (e.g. Parco delle Risaie, Associazione Buon Mercato).

Moreover, GIS-based analysis proved to be a useful tool to map amenity areas as well as vulnerable and degraded areas to enable the development of measures for preservation of rural areas. In addition, it enables the identification of possible adequate/compatible functions provided by peri-urban areas (e.g. integrating the agricultural production) and prevention of urban sprawl. A similar analysis could be

conducted in the Florence Metropolitan Area, the Westpomeranian Region and the Krakow Metropolitan Area which all struggle with urban sprawl.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Hamburg-Jutland pilot presents a large-scale cross-border urban-rural cooperation, anticipated in the field of cluster cooperation (energy / wind, health care, creative industries, university and research cooperation, food industry, labour market, tourism, green technology, logistics). A stronger urban-rural cooperation along the Jutland route corridor (E 45/A7) should in addition to the Fehmarn belt corridor support development dynamics between Northern Germany and Denmark. The focus of the pilot is on identifying which role rural areas and small/ medium sized towns play along the Jutland Corridor and what cooperation potentials with growth poles like Hamburg, Aarhus and Aalborg in different fields of interest there are. Thus, the evolving urban-rural cooperation in the Jutland Corridor can then serve as a prototype of a transnational functional area. The expected output of the pilot consists of an analysis (statistical profile and identified cooperation potentials) and trilingual "Factbook" for promotional purposes. Furthermore, policy recommendations are to be formulated and included in an "Implementation plan" which will also contain proposals on thematic cooperation projects to be implemented. The output could be useful for the future development of smart specialization strategies for the Jutland corridor as a whole as well as for its sub-regions.

The Twente pilot presents urban-rural cooperation in a predominantly rural area, characterized by a pattern of small and medium towns which is based on the re-establishment of regional and local food chains. In particular the topic of innovation and knowledge transfer will be examined. This is hoped to strengthen the regional economy and preserve the characteristic landscape patterns away from large scale agriculture. The pilot can contribute to a more sustainable regional development through promoting renewed relationships between producers and consumers and thus between farmers, entrepreneurs and urban residents, by improved awareness about food production, by promoting short transport routes and high quality products, by ensuring jobs and by reducing the outmigration of young people. Here, it is important to recognise the role of the LEADER programme which has provided a solid base for the discovery of endogenous potentials of rural areas which now can be better used in urban-rural partnerships based on an acknowledgement of mutual benefit. The anticipated outputs of the pilot include a regional food strategy (development of a common brand), regional food market/distribution centre in Borne (food shop, exhibition room, a tourist information centre) and an urban farm in Enschede (conversion of an industrial site, vision on urban farming). An innovative character of the pilot can be recognised by the involvement of students from regional universities (Van Hall, Saxion, Wageningen University) in the development of the individual pilot activities. The pilot can contribute to a more sustainable regional development: economically by keeping and creating added value in the region; socially by job creation (inclusion of parts of the society, preventing outmigration of young people, involving people with handicaps); culturally by preserving the cultural landscape and therefore recreation areas and regional identity; ecologically by reducing transport and land waste. With its cooperation between public (cities,

region), private (entrepreneurs) and research (universities, schools) sector the pilot is a model for the use of the triple helix concept for the creation of urban-rural partnerships.

The Lombardy pilot presents urban-rural cooperation within an inner-metropolitan, peri-urban area of Milan, but in connection with the wider region (e.g. water systems stretching to the Alps) and its planning framework. The threat of urban sprawl was an incentive to initiate urban-rural partnerships between affected towns and rural areas. The EXPO 2015 area and its surroundings provide an example of the management and transformation of peri-urban areas, though options for the preservation and future management of rural elements in direct proximity to urban areas (e.g. Parco delle Risaie) present a challenge and should be further examined. Peri-urban areas combine urban and rural characteristics, with the support of intelligent spatial management they could become links between the urban and the rural and be used as multi-functional areas. The Parco delle Risaie is an interesting example for a multi-functional used area for agricultural, leisure and ecological (rain and water retention and climate regulation) purpose. Multi-scale holistic methodology (top-down and bottom-up projects, regional and local scale, best practices) is used in the pilot to examine the characteristics of the peri-urban areas of Milan. Besides, the characterisation of peri-urban areas via GIS (“status quo”) will help to recognize the values, strengths and weaknesses of peri-urban areas. The main expected output of the pilot is the “Guidelines on management of peri-urban territories” which will be integrated in the Regional Territorial Plan. In the long term, the guidelines should support the development of local bottom-up initiatives as well as the multi-functional aspects of these areas (agriculture, leisure, ecological functions).

At this stage of pilot implementation, the following lessons learnt and recommendations can be drawn from the analysis of the three pilots:

1. It is important to use the experience from previous and current EU and national programmes (e.g. INTERREG, LEADER, MORO) as a source of contacts and regional know-how for urban-rural partnerships to be established.
2. International, national and regional events (e.g. EXPOs, building exhibitions, garden exhibitions) should be used as an incentive and opportunity to activate urban-rural cooperation.
3. It is important to find out new ways or new stakeholders (NGOs, business) to add value to the existing (sectoral) projects for urban-rural partnerships to be established. There is a need for better cross-sectoral cooperation at all levels.
4. It is crucial to convince local political leaders (mayors, councillors) , entrepreneurs and NGOs to get actively involved and interested in urban-rural partnerships, so they can take over projects in future and act as driving force.
5. There are already existing projects fostering urban-rural partnerships, but often they are little known by regional policy makers/administration. Therefore, there is a need for better information exchange between regional and local planning level (esp. between public officials, civil servants, village mayors, etc.).

6. Involving young people / enabling public participation in the development and implementation of urban-rural partnerships presents a way of achieving innovation in terms of methods, products or topics in the regional context.
7. Development and restoration of local food chains in metropolitan areas should be better promoted. The creation of universal tools promoting single (organic) /family-run farms in metropolitan areas (e.g. regional fund of micro-credits, consulting services, tax incentives, markets for local food producers) should be helpful.
8. The pilot case studies Hamburg-Jutland, Twente and Lombardy have proved effective in activating dialogue and stimulating the spirit of co-responsibility and regional solidarity among the involved actors (citizen groups, NGOs, local and regional administrations, students). When the URMA-Project ends, it is recommended that the pilots should be further be supported by local and regional governments.
9. A flexible cross-sectoral funding should be introduced because of the thematic diversity and complex interlinks which characterize urban-rural partnerships. Therefore, there is a need to raise awareness of the benefits of the ITI (integrated territorial investments) and the CLLD (community-led local development) instruments among regional and local policy makers.
10. There is a need for better legal protection of unbuilt suburban areas. This will help to preserve local identity, maintain functions supporting metropolis, and enhance the metropolitan area through urban-rural partnerships.
11. As the pilots show, functional interrelations between urban and rural areas cross administrative regional and national boundaries. Therefore, cities and countryside should be treated as a common functional spatial entity and introduced as a new type of spatial category in national / regional spatial plans which would include both, urban and rural areas.

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