

A role for the REP?

Rob Maessen

REP Organising Committee

LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE

Province of Noord-Brabant (the Netherlands)

Boxtel, the Netherlands
24 - 26 October 2007

A role for the REP?



LIFESCAPE

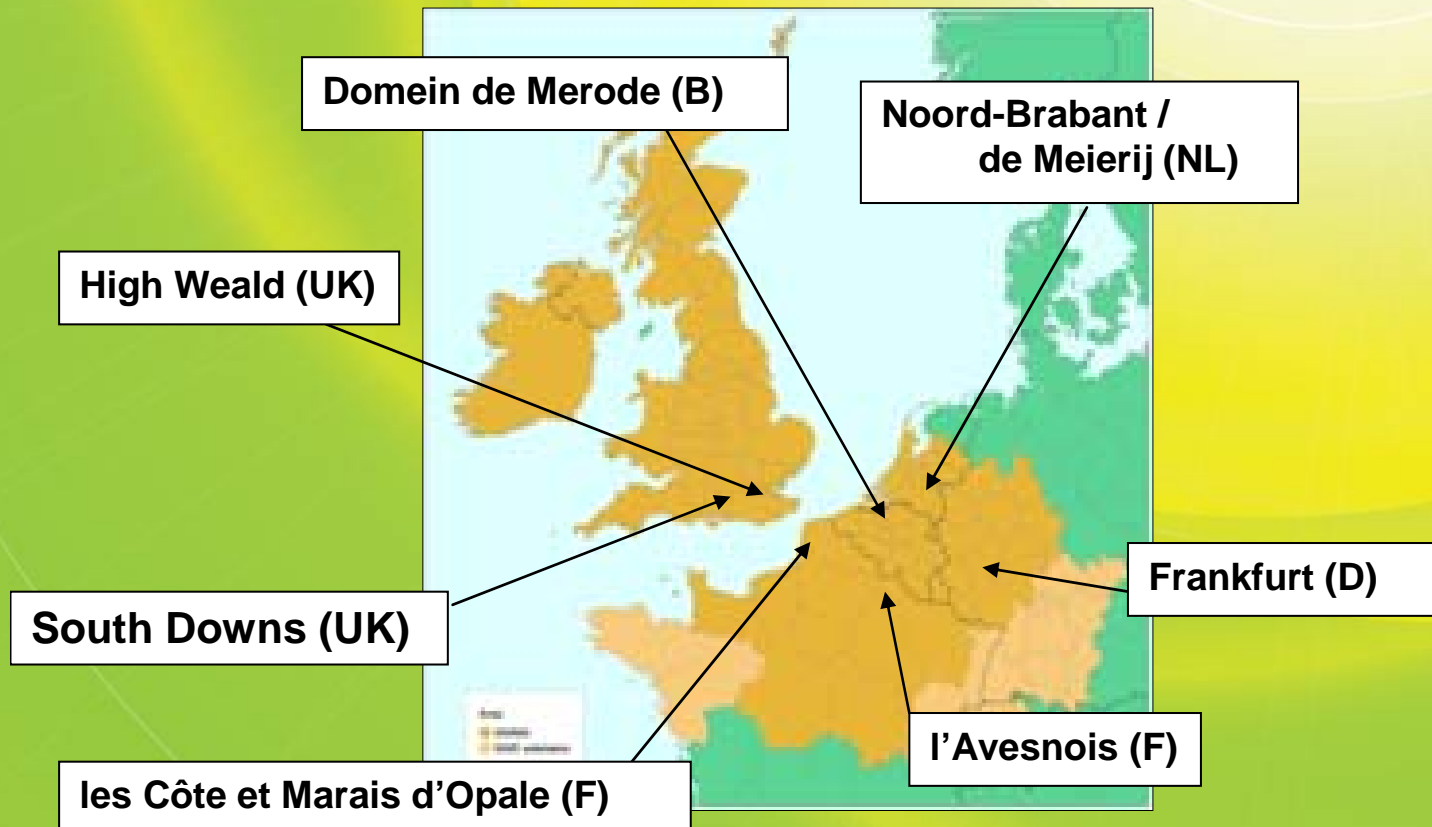
– YOUR LANDSCAPE

- 14 partners, 5 countries, 7 areas
- Noord-Brabant Lead Partner
- ECNC project coordinator
- 20 sub-projects, 3 poles
- mid 2004 – mid 2008
- 6.7 million euro (INTERREG IIIB)



“a project about using our landscape to bring people together to create added value and quality of life”

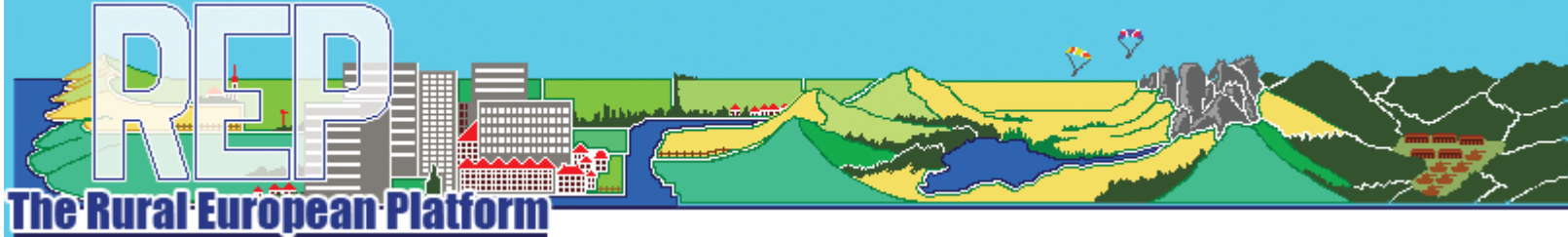
www.lifescapeyourlandscape.org



Trans-national cooperation



- Within each sub-project
- Between sub-projects (the poles)
 - Connecting People
 - Marketing & Branding
 - Mechanisms & Instruments
- Rural European Platform
 - 2006: Falenty, Poland
 - 2007: Boxtel, the Netherlands



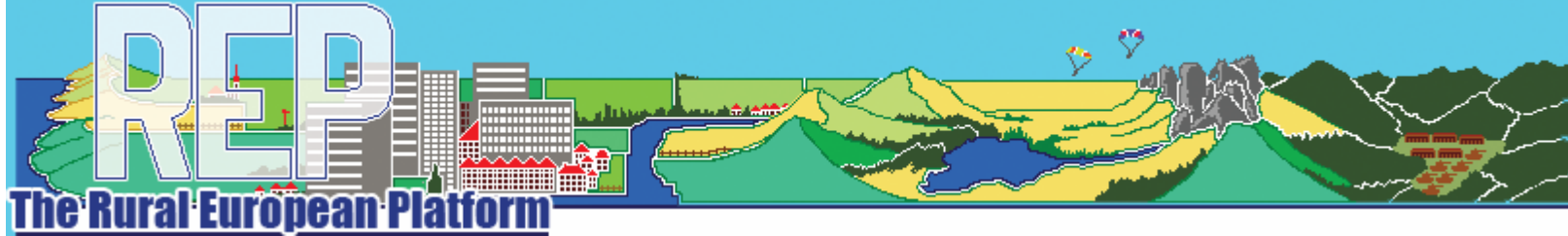
Characteristics

- many examples throughout Europe
- small scale, but large numbers
- bringing them together
- multi-sector partnerships
- public, private and civic

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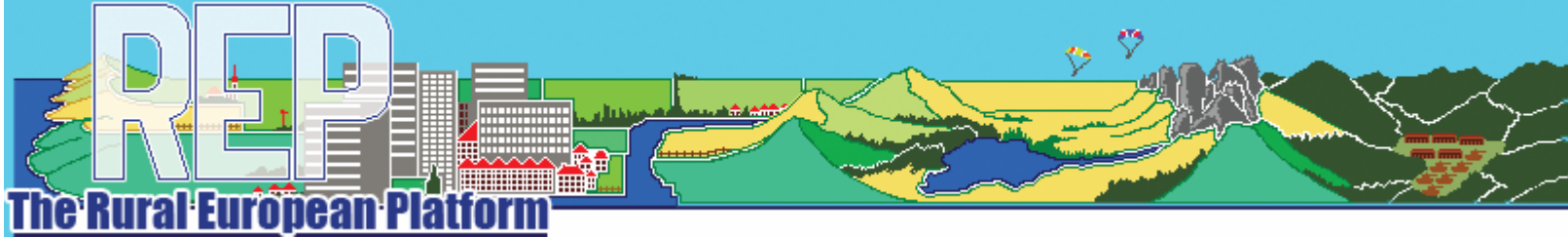
We have seen it and done it

- it works!
- making a difference
- convincing outcomes
 - more jobs
 - secure income
 - saving biodiversity

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the REP perspective

- connecting cities and countryside
- grassroots cooperation using local assets
- regional identity and branding
- combining agriculture with nature development, tourism and social services
- reinventing regional supply chains
- changing consumption patterns



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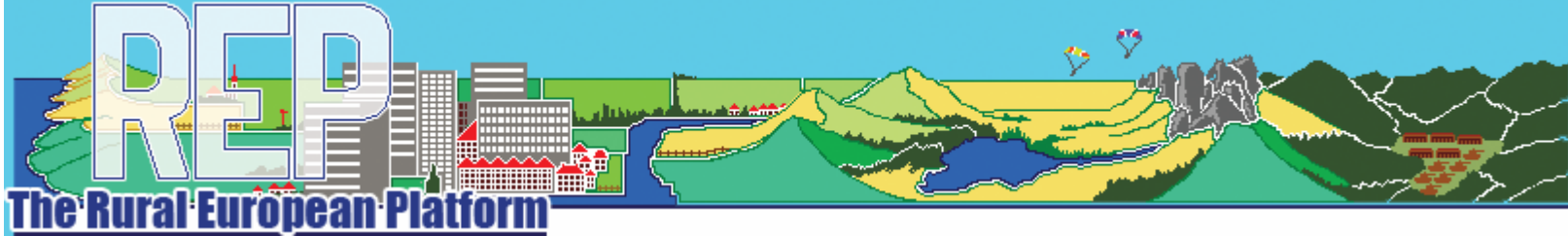
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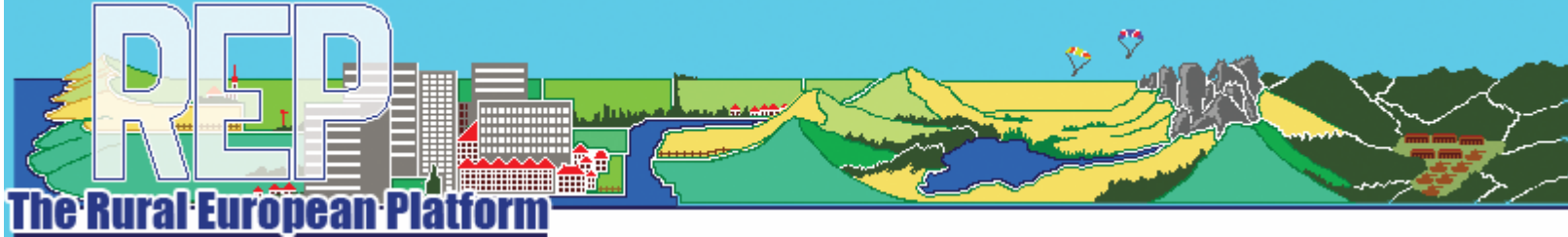


- the problems we are facing may be similar
- however:
- effective solutions depend on regional context and resources
 - personal contacts and creativity
 - new alliances

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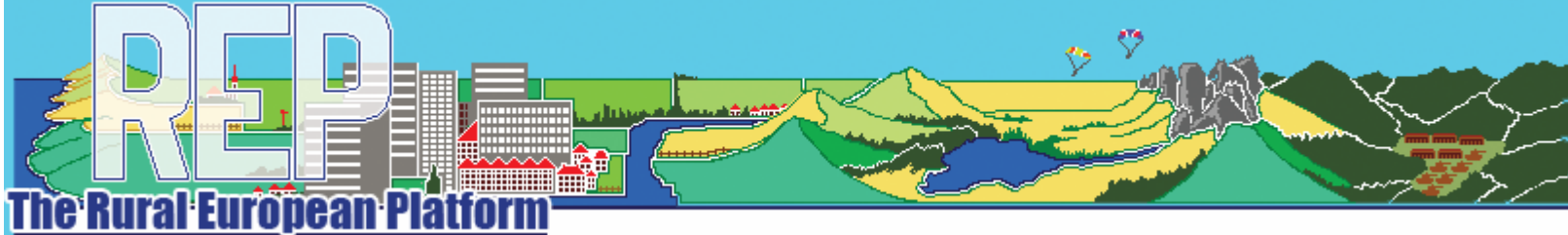
The Boxtel agenda

- be clear about our common vision
- communicate our message effectively
- learn to organize our efforts

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The REP Advisory Board: a firm starting point

- Merrick Denton-Thompson
- Antoon Vermeer
- Mark Thomasin-Foster
- Stein Ivar Mona
- Armin Werner
- ...

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Rob Maessen

Project management LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE

Province of Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands

Our key-note speakers this morning have given a clear message: we are facing rapid changes in a dynamic global environment. How will this be affecting us? It is a challenge we rather not face alone.

Is there a role for the Rural European Platform to be played? I believe that will be the focal question of today. But let me first introduce myself and tell you why I am here.

My name is Rob Maessen. I work for the Provincial Authorities of Noord-Brabant and we re the lead partner of a European co-operative project called LIFESCAPE – YOUR LANDSCAPE.

SHEET 2

We work together with 14 partners from 5 countries in North West Europe on more than 20 different sub-project or transnational key-actions.

It is funded under the INTERREG IIIB programme and will come to an end by the middle of next year. We set out to demonstrate by examples how regional landscape identity can be an incentive for economic innovation. LIFESCAPE combines 'livelihood' and 'landscape' – the individual benefits and the common good – in one concept. Living and landscape are two sides of the same coin.

SHEET 3

The main objective of the LIFESCAPE project is, therefore, to learn how to make use of our landscape to bring people together to create added value and quality of life. There is a great variety of activities, from working with schools, local businesses, and farmers to developing regional branding schemes, new financial mechanisms and instruments, and organizing exchange visits for inspiration and greater awareness of changes taking place. The LIFESCAPE activities are concentrated around 7 regions in Nord-Pas de Calais, Flanders, Southeast England, Frankfurt-am-Main and Noord-Brabant.

SHEET 4

The support of the REP initiative has been one of the three ways for stimulating transnational cooperation: within each sub-project of LIFESCAPE, between sub-projects, and with others outside the LIFESCAPE project and – with special permission of the INTERREG secretariat – even outside the program area of North West Europe.



This project has received
European Regional
Development Funding
through the INTERREG III B
Community Initiative





Last year we were able to organize the seminar in Falenty, Poland: “Who will look after the countryside of Europe?” was our leading question. And now the LIFESCAPE project again is supporting this even here in Boxtel. It has been our intention to bring a group of people together who share our concerns and convictions and could be interested to carry the REP initiative one step further.

Luckily we have had the good fortune to stage this REP meeting within the fantastic and inspiring scenery of the international circus theatre festival Circo Circolo. We will certainly need your support and creativity.

SHEET 5

The various activities within the framework of the LIFESCAPE project are by no means unique. One of the revealing outcomes of our seminar in Falenty was that examples can be found all over Europe.

These examples may be often small in scale, but they are large in numbers. There is a keen interest in bringing different experiences together, often in multi-sector partnerships and with the involvement of public, private and civic parties.

SHEET 6

And it works. People who take regional initiatives *are* making a difference. Co-operating on a regional level is rewarding and is delivering convincing outcomes: jobs, income, and saving biodiversity in the process.

In our program later today we will be talking about some examples.

SHEET 7

Farmers, private landowners, nature managers and public bodies have to combine forces to realize high quality food production, while managing Europe’s rich cultural heritage, biodiversity and landscape scenery. Their co-operation in a multifunctional approach will contribute to the sustainable development of regions in Europe. In view of the upcoming revision of the Common Agricultural Policy the REP takes a fresh perspective:

- connecting cities and countryside
- grassroots cooperation using local assets
- regional identity and branding
- combining agriculture with nature development, tourism and social services
- reinventing regional supply chains
- changing consumption patterns and creating a more tangible regional experience

SHEET 8

Have a look at the map of Europe. Of course, the problems we are facing may be quite similar all over Europe:

- urbanisation and volatile global economy



- intensification of agriculture production and loss of employment
- profound and rapid changes in rural communities and cultural diversity
- disappearance of traditional landscapes
- loss of biodiversity and rising cost for nature conservation

SHEET 9

However, the solutions need to be tailor made. Effective solutions depend on regional context and available resources, on personal contacts and individual creativity, and on the will to enter new alliances.

As we are busy getting organized, we tend to stay on familiar ground and move around in the circles we know. What we need is a new perspective, an additional view from an outsider. We need to build bridges within our own region.

SHEET 10

Is there a role for the Rural European Platform to be played? I believe there is. Joining forces across borders and exchanging views that are built on good practices is an inspiring concept for all of us. That is way we have come together.

For the REP to be successful we need to be clear and have a common vision, look for ways to deliver our message to a wider audience and to the right table, and build the necessary organizational structure to help us do the work.

SHEET 11

I would like to finish this presentation by introducing you to the people who have agreed to play a major role in taking the REP initiative one step further.

- Merrick Denton-Thompson of Natural England
- Antoon Vermeer of the ZLTO
- Mark Thomasin-Foster of the European Landowners' Organization (ELO)
- Stein Ivar Mona, the official representative of the middle region of Norway in Brussels
- Armin Werner of the Institut für Landnutzungssysteme und Landschaftsökologie and the Deutsche Landeskulturgesellschaft
- ...