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Amsterdam Green Campus is a non-profit foundation of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Partners of the board are Clusius College; Wellantcollege; AERES Hogeschool Almere; Inholland Agri, Food and Life Sciences; Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics University of Amsterdam (UvA); Van 't Hoff Institute for Molecular Sciences, UvA; Swammerdam Institute for Life Sciences, UvA; Innovation Exchange Amsterdam, UvA. The foundation works to boost economic growth in the green sector in the north-western Netherlands. "Green" stands for research and education for sustainable development, green growth and transition to a circular economy (in the fields of green genetics, environment, chemistry, food, water, energy).

The Amsterdam Green Campus serves as a regional innovation platform, which links fundamental research with applied science and vocational education. The virtual campus connects research and education with SMEs (the market) in a number of triple-helix cooperation projects (e.g. a project on residual food stream in the northwest of the Netherlands). The main focus of the triple-helix projects is the market valorisation and realization of innovative ideas. Companies from the Metropolitan Region of Amsterdam (MRA) that have an innovation demand or government institutions that have a research question can go to the platform and initiate a joint project. Furthermore, the campus links beta science to alpha and gamma science from the insight that Science & Technology have to be aligned with Social Organizational Science and should have a clear focus on market acceptance. To support this process, the campus developed an innovative co-creation tool that can be used in the initiation phase of project formation. Against this background, the campus is an attractive context for young students and graduates for their start-up project ideas. The young have the future and this new era has to become circular!

1) The project RUMORE aims at strengthening innovation capacities by fostering rural-urban cooperation and partnerships. What is the significance of this topic for the Metropolitan Region of Amsterdam?

The Netherlands is a delta where rivers from all over Europe end up in the Nord Sea. The western part of the country stretching from Rotterdam up until the Amsterdam area can

be considered as a large conglomerate, in which most of the Dutch inhabitants live, commute, work and recreate. The Rotterdam and the Amsterdam harbours as well as Schip-

hol as one of the main European airports are entry and exit gates for raw materials, goods and people for the whole of the European Union. Especially the Zaanstreek, a region with a harbour located to the north of Amsterdam, has been a trade gate for seeds and cocoa beans from all over the globe for ages. Amsterdam is uniquely positioned in between all these gates. It is surrounded by large-scale agricultural areas located in the provinces South-Holland, North-Holland and Flevoland. The diversity and volumes of crops, vegetables, fruits, plants, flowers and seeds produced in green houses and in open agricultural fields is voluminous and with the capability to – in theory – support and feed

most of the MRA. In practice, we import food from all over the globe and have become one of the largest export countries of agricultural products. Still, an important volume of food is grown, processed and traded within the MRA. One could say that while the flow of food has been organized and managed inwards the urban area, the consumption leads to an out flow of waste products into the opposite direction.

This explains the interconnectedness between urban and rural areas in the Region and how important it is to strengthen the cooperation between these areas in order to optimize existing food value chains and to make them more circular.

2) How could improved rural-urban partnerships contribute to fostering circular economy innovations in the Agri-Food sector in the MRA?

The advantages from improved rural-urban partnerships lie in better planning and exploiting the resources in the interest of a circular economy. An economy that is more customer driven and with an eye on optimal food production in the whole food chain, food efficiency (minimization of food waste), food valorisation and food logistics. This requires a food policy for the Region with attention on results definition and consciousness on what needs to be changed and strengthened. This demands cooperation between local governments (the city and the province of Noord-Holland), entrepreneurs (including SMEs), logistics partners, consumers and knowledge institutes. Especially for our Region

the policy setting has been addressed by the so called [Amsterdam Economic Board](#) (AEB) with circularity as one of the main objectives. [Greenports](#) (Locally organized agricultural industries) and knowledge institutes are institutionalized within the Amsterdam Green Campus (AGC). The AGC is cooperation between academia, applied science and vocational education in agri, food, life sciences and chemistry within the northwest Region of the Netherlands. It enables students to keep on developing ideas and reinforces the connection between knowledge institutes and the industry, thus creating opportunity to share ambitions on for instance educational programs for professionals in food.

3) How could the cooperation between stakeholders from urban and rural areas in the MRA be strengthened and what are the main obstacles that hamper current cooperation efforts?

Cooperation between urban and rural areas is particularly important for the optimization of food logistics. In the RUMORE project we

address the food logistics topic by investigating the current state of flows of goods within the whole chain. In this regard a

picture has also been built of the annual volumes of waste streams for vegetables, fruits, cocoa shells, etc. We see conflicting trends with respect to logistic routing, namely laws and regulations that do not yet meet the requirements for a circular economy. We see a lot of promising good ideas and initiatives, but in order to create critical mass and

fundamental change, choices will have to be made and funding is needed to stimulate innovative developments on pilot and production scale at the high end of technology readiness levels. This again reflects the need for a regional ambition and goals setting, which can only be accomplished when stakeholders get organized.

4) Can you name some successful innovation delivery projects from the MRA that are good examples for the integration of rural areas in innovation chains and for the transfer of knowledge between different regional actors?

“Quisquiliae” is a project that I am involved in, and that is one of the five RUMORE Amsterdam stakeholder projects that is currently applying for funding by the Operational Programme Kansen voor West. It is a project focused on the cooperative valorisation of organic ‘waste’ streams from both local agricultural industry and from food processors in north Holland. In this project knowledge and technical innovation go hand in hand with entrepreneurial and social organizational innovation. About 140.000 MT of food waste is annually produced in the MRA. The project aims for a cooperative structure to consolidate waste stream flows as import and a bio refinery for the production of food products (food waste for food, instead of for feed or energy) to be sold at the highest value.

Some successful innovation delivery projects have already been established in the MRA that are good examples for integration of rural areas in innovation chains and for transfer of

knowledge between different regional actors.

Some examples are:

- **“Green Innovation Cluster”**: In this project, 23 companies work together with 3 knowledge institutions to strengthen the economic force of horticulture and the plant breeding industry.
- **“Back bank Wieringermeer”**: In the Wieringermeer (a lake) project, public and private partners are working on a form of innovative water management in combination with the development of new economic carriers.
- **“Evergreen”**: In the Evergreen project, 26 Agri-Food companies work together with six knowledge institutions on sustainable soil management, developing better aboveground cultivation methods and securing the knowledge gained.

All three above mentioned projects were funded by the Kansen voor West Operational Programme.

5) How are innovation delivery projects in Amsterdam and the MRA currently supported by the Kansen voor West Operational Programme and what potentials for future improvement of the funding instrument with regard to the rural-urban thematic do you see?

Kansen voor West supports innovative cooperation projects with a focus on CO₂ reduction, but the topic of circular economy is quite new, and not yet one of the funding criteria. A number of five specific projects from the RUMORE stakeholder group are in the process of doing a preliminary application. At this moment we are discussing these projects with the Managing Authority and

representatives of the province and the city of Amsterdam on how to define and approach the ERDF Kansen voor West Operational Programme. I believe this is the way to go. We start the discussion, help each other out to link the topic to the funding instruments and next learn how to proceed.

6) RUMORE identifies urban-rural areas as new territorial spaces for innovation: what are the innovation needs of the different actors working in the Agri-Food field in Amsterdam and the MRA?

One of the needs is re-addressing food supplies from local producers instead of global import. This means preventing unnecessary CO₂ production and food waste. This requires an optimal connection between demand and supply and involvement of Greenports,

restaurants, retail organizations, etc. And of course such a change is not in the interest of all players, there will be winners and losers. The driver must be our transition to a circular economy, which at the end is of benefit for all.