

PRESS RELEASE

Launch of the Sustainable & Accessible Urban Landscapes transnational development project Tuesday 24 June 2003

Today (24 June) saw the launch of the Sustainable & Accessible Urban Landscapes project (SAUL) at the Barbican, London. SAUL has been developed by partners from six regions¹ in North West Europe to address the role of socially inclusive urban spaces on the sustainable development of metropolitan regions.

With a budget of 16.3 million euros, SAUL is one of the largest of a series of major transnational action/research and development projects funded by the European Union's Interreg III programme for North West Europe. It is also one of the first UK-led projects. Interreg encourages closer European co-operation and integration through transnational spatial development initiatives.

Between now and 2006, SAUL will see the innovative planning and design of urban spaces across London and five other metropolitan regions in Amsterdam, Germany and Luxembourg. Each region will plan, design and implement demonstration projects in which the other partner regions will be actively involved. The projects include the Virtual Reality Landscape Design and Visioning Pilot Project for the Heathrow Airport Corridor Forum, London; the Regional Park Rhein-Main, Frankfurt; and the Social Change Project, Amsterdam Central Park North.

The SAUL Transnational Planning Laboratory Programme (TransPlanLab) will draw together the results of the projects and SAUL will produce Joint Good Practice Guidance on planning through transnational partnerships. In London, its findings could have impact on future spatial planning initiatives, such as London's 2012 Olympic bid or the regeneration of the Thames Gateway.

This transnational partnership approach is the starting point for promoting a radical new planning culture in North West Europe, one which acknowledges that people, not planners, hold the key to the socially compatible design, use and management of sustainable landscapes.

Clive Fox, SAUL Project Manager (and the London Development Manager of lead-partner, Groundwork UK), said: "SAUL is responding to the fact that dramatic economic

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and social changes over the past few decades have permanently altered Europe's metropolitan regions and their landscapes. The future lies in socially inclusive urban spaces which will balance the economic, environmental and social needs of our metropolitan regions. I believe fundamentally in the renewal of the public role in planning and that the route to achieving this lies in a partnership approach between planners and local people, which is being increasingly recognised at Government level throughout Europe."

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References

1 The six regions are: London; Saarland; Frankfurt/Rhein-Main; Nordrhein-Westfalen (the Rhein-Ruhr region, with two partners); the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; and the Municipality of Amsterdam. The partner organisations are Groundwork UK and the Greater London Authority (GLA), London; The Ministry of the Environment, Saarland, the Planungsverband Ballungsraum Frankfurt/Rhein-Main, the Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development of the Federal State of North Rhein-Westfalia and EmscherGenossenschaft, Germany; Direction de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Urbanisme, Luxembourg; Staatsbosbeheer and the City of Amsterdam Physical Planning Department, Amsterdam.

Notes to editors

1 SAUL is the development phase of a successful Interreg IIC pilot project, New Urban Landscapes.

2 INTERREG III is an EC Community Initiative to promote transnational co-operation on spatial planning by encouraging harmonious and balanced development of European territory. It aims to ensure that national borders are not a barrier to European integration and to strengthen co-operation of areas to their mutual advantage.

3 Details of the projects are available on request.

4 Quotes from the other SAUL partners available on request.

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