

## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

► We are looking for partnerships with policy-making institutions and research centers in order to build sustainable agriculture projects.



► We are also looking for institutional or private partners interested in the development of Vert d'Iris our cooperative project of mixed vegetable gardens. We are interested in organisations that could participate in the financial and/or material support of the cooperative (access to agricultural land, seeds, tools etc).

### CONTACT

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**THE PILOT VEGETABLE GARDEN** of La Pépinière in June 2010.

Responsible editor: Frédéric Morand and Isabelle Haynes, design by Nanni Kokko (Eco Innovation). Version of June 2011

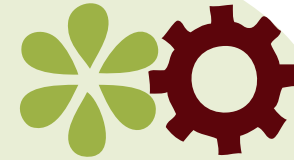
With support from the municipality of Anderlecht and from the Bruxelles Capitale Region (Neighbourhood contracts Quartier Lemmens and Canal Midi), Enterprize, Bruxelles Environnement, Impulcera et la Fondation Roi Baudouin).



Eco Innovation - Association Internationale sans but lucratif

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# Eco Innovation

aisbl

promoting eco-functional agriculture



## WHO ARE WE?

**Eco INNOVATION** is an NGO founded under Belgian law as an international association (aisbl). Eco Innovation aims to promote sustainable food production through eco-innovation and eco-functionality. Our approach stems from the challenges facing the global food production system:

- ▶ **THE LOSS OF AGRO-BIODIVERSITY.**
- ▶ **THE PRESSURE OF URBANISATION ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS.**
- ▶ **THE RISE OF THE FOOD ENERGY CONTENT.**
- ▶ **THE LACK OF INTEGRATION** of agricultural, trade, environmental and innovation policies which results in serious governance issues.

### **Social barriers are major bottlenecks to eco-innovations.**

- ▶ We define **ECO-INNOVATIONS** as product, process or organisational innovations that contribute to the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainability.
- ▶ Today, much emphasis is placed on the environmental and economic pillars of innovation. However, many potential eco-innovations, albeit technically feasible, are not yet implemented because of social, institutional and cognitive barriers. Hence our emphasis on the social pillar of eco-innovations<sup>1</sup>.

### **Intensive and eco-functional agriculture offers promising options for addressing contemporary food production challenges.**

**Eco-FUNCTIONAL INTENSIFICATION** (EFI) in agriculture consists in activating knowledge and achieving a high degree of organisation per land unit which results in efficient production levels.

Eco Innovation focuses on five EFI strands:

- ▶ Hyperproductive biodiverse associations
- ▶ Biostimulation and stress control
- ▶ Intensive recycling of resources (water, biomass, minerals)
- ▶ Higher energy productivity within the food system
- ▶ Innovative information systems

## WHAT ARE WE DOING?

To avail of the options offered by eco-functional intensification, Eco Innovation researches and promotes food systems based on:

▶ **POLICY MAKING:** Eco Innovation collaborates with public institutions, companies and non-profit organisations in projects aiming to promote and develop sustainable agriculture.

▶ **EDUCATION TOOL:** Eco Innovation has developed education materials. It also collaborates with universities and education centres by hosting internships and participating in collaborative projects.

▶ **RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:** We are focusing on sustainable urban agriculture as it tackles important sustainable development issues such as landscaping, recycling, food access, diet improvements, the filtration of aerial pollutants and the creation of habitats that favour biodiversity.

## ▶▶ **CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS:** **Eco INNOVATION** **“MIXED VEGETABLE GARDENS”**

Eco Innovation developed the concept of **MIXED VEGETABLE GARDENS**<sup>2</sup>. Mixed vegetable gardens bring together professional gardeners (for commercial cultivation) and lay gardeners (for self-consumption). This mix encourages the intensification of the eco-functionality of vegetable gardens and the creation of social links both in the neighbourhood and in between gardeners. We tested this idea by creating a pilot mixed vegetable garden called **LA PÉPINIÈRE DE LA ROSÉE**, located in Anderlecht, a Brussels neighbourhood:

### **Outcomes of the project:**

▶ **SOcially:** The common ground provided by the vegetable gardening activity has facilitated the dialogue and the participation of many local residents and civil society organisations in the garden. In 2010 the project created 4,8 full time equivalent jobs.

▶ **ENVIRONMENTALLY:** An urban dump has been rehabilitated. More than 60 varieties of vegetables and 13 species of fruit trees have been planted (280 trees), on top of dozens of berry varieties hence boosting local urban biodiversity.

▶ **ECONOMICALLY:** The garden generates income through the sale of fresh produces and of garden equipment services (seeds, containers etc.). The general aim is to make the vegetable gardens more self-sustaining in the future. The local self-production is growing.

▶▶ We are now building on this success to expand our sustainable urban agriculture projects in the Brussel Capital Region.

**WE WILL DO SO THROUGH A SOCIAL COOPERATIVE “VERT D’IRIS” THAT WILL BE LAUNCHED IN 2011.**



<sup>1</sup> Our concern is not completely alleviated by current developments such as the EU Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP) as, for example, it does not yet include a comprehensive education component.

<sup>2</sup> A video clip introducing the Pépinière de la Rosée is online on our website