EGHN
EUROPEAN GARDEN HERITAGE NETWORK

Parks and Gardens within Regional Planning Strategies

Results and analysis of experts' questionnaires

October 2006

This paper is based on work done by the EGHN partnership.
Based on a joint questionnaire
answered by experts in Germany and in the UK

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INTERREG IIIB
NORTH WEST EUROPE

I. Objective of the survey

The action plan for EGHN included the development and use of an expert questionnaire to investigate the views and comments of experts in different European countries about the importance and resources that parks and gardens have or could have within sustainable development strategies on the local, regional and national level.

II. Implementation of the survey

The partnership developed a related questionnaire at a very early stage of the project. It followed a comprehensive approach and was intended to be sent our by mail. First test however showed that it would be impossible to achieve a significant number of replies allowing to create a real database and to gain evidence and transferable guidance.

In a second attempt the questionnaire was modified to serve as a guideline for a limited number of expert interviews. The EGHN working group intended to use Cheshire and NRW as pilot areas for these expert interviews. Again these tests showed that very few experts were ready to give time needed for an interview. This was not due to the fact that they haven't been ready to answer or didn't think that the questions and objectives raised by EGHN are not worthwhile to be further examined and followed up. Instead, all complained about an overall increase of questionnaires etc. that come on the desks. This and the daily work they all have to do, make most experts very restrictive in their readiness to deal with questionnaires or with research topics as a whole.

A third attempt to gain expert's views and comments for EGHN was more successful. This new approach was based on a very short (one page) questionnaire, including a total of 25 multiple choice questions under two major headings and one open question. For a copy of the questionnaire please see Table 1 (English version) and Annex 1 (German version)

Furthermore many copies of the questionnaire were handed out to experts during meetings or seminars, when there is a chance to address them directly and very often some occasions to fill in such a questionnaire.

The following analysis and diagrams are based on the total number of questionnaires filled in properly by September 2006. Thus a total of 72 could be used for the report. The majority (48) of the experts who gave their opinions are working in Germany, while 24 experts from the United Kingdom filled in the questionnaire as well.

As many other surveys this EGHN exercise does not claim to represent the big variety of opinions, to have relevance based on statistic methods or to fully mirror the real situation. It is however a snapshot that reveals some general trends and ways of thinking, but also some variations due to nationality, culture, heritage, policy etc.

Due to this and due to the unbalanced number of experts replying in both countries, the following analysis presents and evaluates the results by putting some additional highlights on national distinctions.

Box 1:

Expert Questionnaire

Parks and gardens within regional development strategies

How to implement the objectives of INTERREG IIIB and EGHN
for innovative planning on the local and regional level?

The European Programme INTERREG IIIB for NorthWestEurope promotes and supports transnational cooperation in sustainable spatial development, among others by its action "Creative Enhancement of the Cultural Heritage". With its six key actions, EGHN is working on the design and the start of innovative concepts and is supporting existing initiatives and ideas. However, EGHN is not limiting its activities on heritage gardens, but also includes contemporary parks and gardens as they are or could be important elements of urban and regional regeneration.

The EGHN partnership is very keen to include the knowledge, expertise and recommendations of "external experts". This questionnaire is a first step towards this, expert interviews will follow.

Your replies and comments will be used for key action 1 of EGHN "Spatial Strategy". It is our objective to work out and to communicate a policy paper promoting the resources, recommendations and demands of parks and gardens in sustainable development strategies and policies on the local, regional, national and European level.

Essentials and Requirements

To enhance parks and gardens and to use their unique resources for innovative development strategies the following factors are:

	very important	important	unimportant
Enhanced attractiveness of the park or garden	⊙	⊙	⊙
Additional offers (infrastructure, events)	⊙	⊙	⊙
More visitors	⊙	⊙	⊙
New visitor groups	⊙	⊙	⊙
Stronger political support	⊙	⊙	⊙
Partners from the economic sector	⊙	⊙	⊙
- and to achieve this:			
Improved information and interpretation	⊙	⊙	⊙
More cross-sector cooperation	⊙	⊙	⊙
Joint marketing and PR	⊙	⊙	⊙
Improved international activities	⊙	⊙	⊙
Education and training	⊙	⊙	⊙
Increased funding possibilities	⊙	⊙	⊙
Generating own income	⊙	⊙	⊙

Partnerships and Alliances

Cooperation between parks and gardens and the following sectors and policy arenas needs to be

	stronger	unchanged	reduced
Culture	⊙	⊙	⊙
Heritage protection	⊙	⊙	⊙
Nature and environment	⊙	⊙	⊙
Education (schools)	⊙	⊙	⊙
Education (training, university), LLL	⊙	⊙	⊙
Urban development and regeneration	⊙	⊙	⊙
Regional development	⊙	⊙	⊙
Economic development	⊙	⊙	⊙
Tourism	⊙	⊙	⊙
Social inclusion	⊙	⊙	⊙
Identity	⊙	⊙	⊙
Image	⊙	⊙	⊙

Hopes and Fears

It would be excellent for parks and gardens, if... It would be disastrous for parks and gardens, if...

III. Questions and answers / Analysis

III a) Methodology of the analysis

The following diagrams and explaining texts show the results of a first analysis of the two major sections of the questionnaire:

"Essentials and Requirements" with its sub-divisions

1) Important factors for parks and gardens to have an active role in development strategies (Diagram 1a and 1b)
2) Important measures to strengthen parks and gardens in development strategies (Diagram 2a and 2 b)

3) "Partnerships and Alliances" (Diagram 3a and 3b).

as well as some major outcomes of the open question on

3) Hopes and Fears

In the Diagrams 1a and 1b as well as in the Diagrams 2a and 2b all answers given by the experts have been multiplied by "1" for "unimportant", by "2" for "important" and by "3" for "very important" allowing identifying priorities and recommendations rather than total figures.

In Diagram 3 each answer "unchanged" received "0" points, each answer "strengthen" "+1" and each answer reduce "-1" points. The columns show the total of points received by following this method.

III b) Analysis

- **1) Essentials and Requirements: Factors**

In **Germany** "Attractiveness" is voted as the essential factor for parks and gardens contributing to development strategies, followed - at almost the same level - by "New Visitor Groups". Both factors received a very high number of "very important" votes.

It is worth mentioning that "New Visitor Groups" has received significant higher total and much more „very important" votes than "More Visitors". Obviously experts want to express that gardens have to be inventive to attract more than their traditional clientele. This will include younger age groups, social and ethnic groups etc. as this will ensure local appreciation and support by inhabitants, administration and politics.

The enhancement or the creation of "Offers" (fairs, concerts, exhibitions, theatre etc.) ranks at number 3 and has a vote comparable to "More Visitors". A higher number of experts said this to be "important" than "very important". Experts' vote seems to reflect the split among the garden visitors: some are frequent visitors of events, while others want to keep "their" park or garden as a quiet place, but understand that new offers help to generate income needed for the maintenance of the site.

In the **UK** "Offers" as number 1 is slightly ahead of "Attractiveness" as number 2 and compared to Germany there is a higher percentage of experts saying that the creation of

new offers is a very important factor to increase the use and benefits of parks and gardens in regional development strategies. "New Visitor Groups" and "More Visitors" follow as number 3 and 4 in the priority list.

Diagram 1.a:

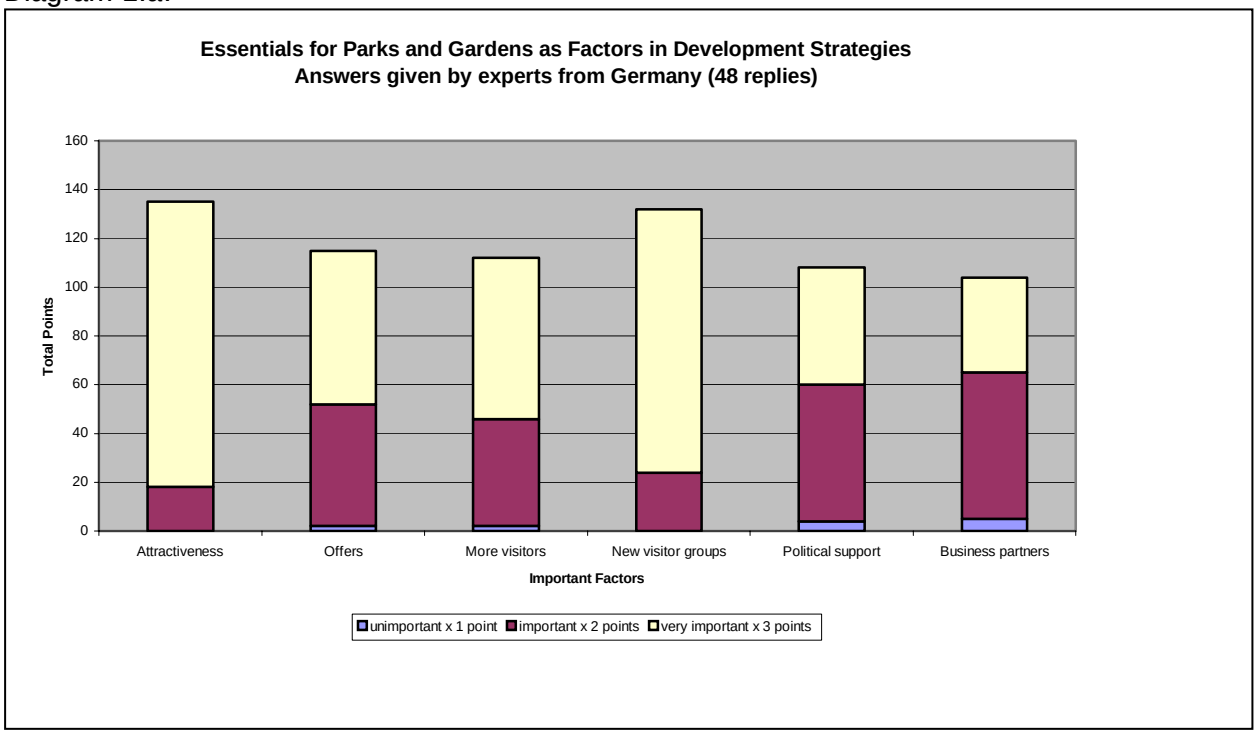
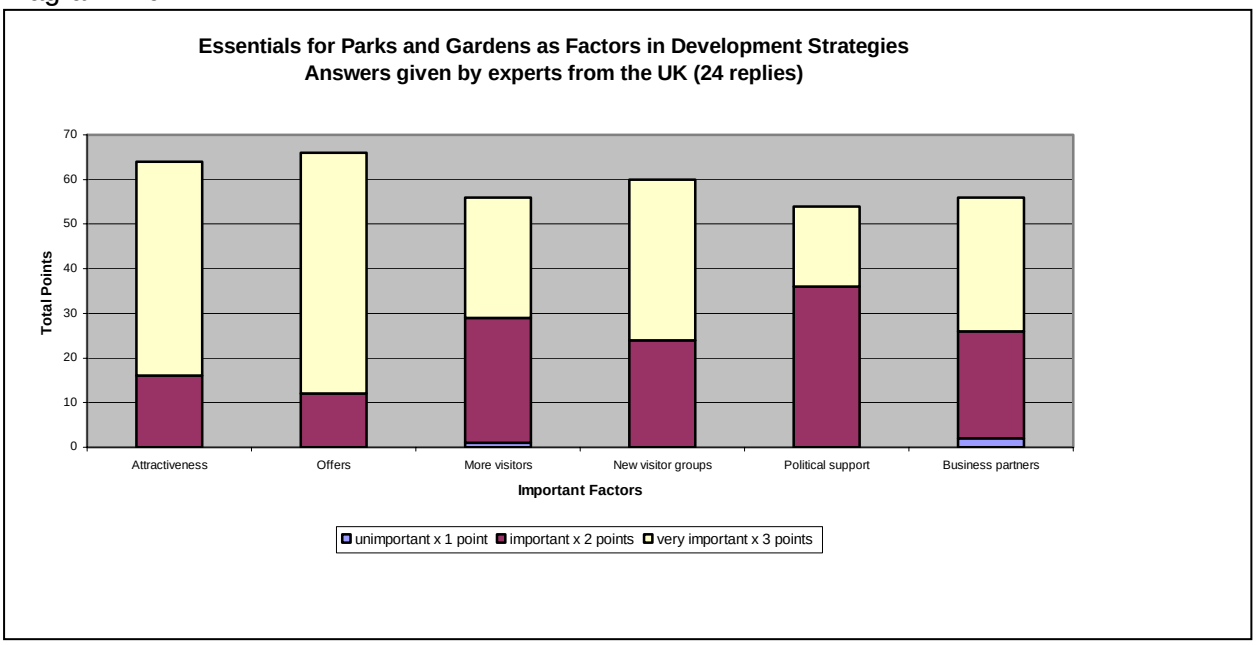


Diagram 1.b:



In the UK and in Germany "Political Support" and "Business Partners" are last on the list, but in the UK "Business Partners" are on 5, while in Germany this factor is last on the list. In both countries "Business Partners" received the highest number of "unimportant" votes (but following the overall trend only very few experts vote "unimportant" at all: 5 in Germany, 2 in the UK). An interesting variation can be seen in the fact that in the UK "Business Partners" received much more "very important" votes than "Political Support", while the situation is more balanced in Germany, with a slightly higher "very important" for "Political Support".

If this means that in the UK there is a greater awareness for economic questions or readiness to cooperate with the economic sectors than in Germany or parks and gardens in Germany are more likely to have political (and thus financial) support, might be subject to further clarification and debate within the EGHN network.

- **2) Essentials and Requirements: Measures**

The analysis of the answers given showed that all measures included into the questionnaire as possible measures to strengthen the resources and effects of parks and gardens within local and/or regional development strategies, received significant experts' votes for their overall relevance. "Funding Possibilities" received 133 points in Germany (highest possible score: 144) and 67 points in the UK (highest possible score: 72)

Among those measures that received some "unimportant" votes "Cross Sector Cooperation" is on top with 6 such votes from Germany and 1 from the UK, followed by "Information and Interpretation" (4 votes from Germany, 2 from the UK) and "Internationality" (4 and 1). Other measures have only bee voted as "unimportant" by some German experts: "Joint Marketing and PR" by 3, "Education and Training" and "Own Income Generation" by 2 each and "Funding Possibilities" by 1 expert only.

"Money counts" - No surprise?! Of course the availability of money, sourced by generation own income and by access to funding possibilities, is essential to maintain the attractiveness of parks and gardens and to enhance many other assets and resources of parks and gardens as well – and attractiveness was designated to be the most important essential factor for gardens to have a key role in development strategies (see above).

But what might be different today from the situation a few years ago is the fact that experts in the UK and in Germany agree that "Funding Possibilities" and "Own Income Generation" do not only have high priorities but also have the same level of importance. "Funding Possibilities" still has a slightly higher total and a higher percentage of "very important" votes than "Income Generation". The results however indicate that experts recommend to understand, to manage and to use (historic and modern) parks and gardens as economic entities or small sized companies and no longer as heritage sites only where protection is the one and only objective.

In **Germany** "Cross-sector Cooperation" is next on the top list of measures (number 5 in the UK), but the high total for this measure is caused by a high number of "very important" votes. Does this reflect the fact that not all experts experienced or considered positive effects of cross-sector cooperation, but those who did, can highly recommend such activities? This is reasonable as additional income can be generated when parks and gardens act as companies in the economic sector, making profits from their assets and investing (their specific resources) into joint activities and business models with other companies etc.

Cross-sector cooperation, in particular if related to regional development, also includes activities with indirect economic effects: parks and gardens need to actively communicate their values, their contribution to the quality of life and to the well being of residents and visitors, to the regional infrastructure, the local and regional image and to the attractiveness of a region for investors. "Information and Interpretation" are key factors for such communication strategies as well as "Joint Promotion and PR", which in the vote of the experts from the **UK** are on number 3 and 4 (number 5 and 6 in Germany) of the recommendation list.

Diagram 2.a:

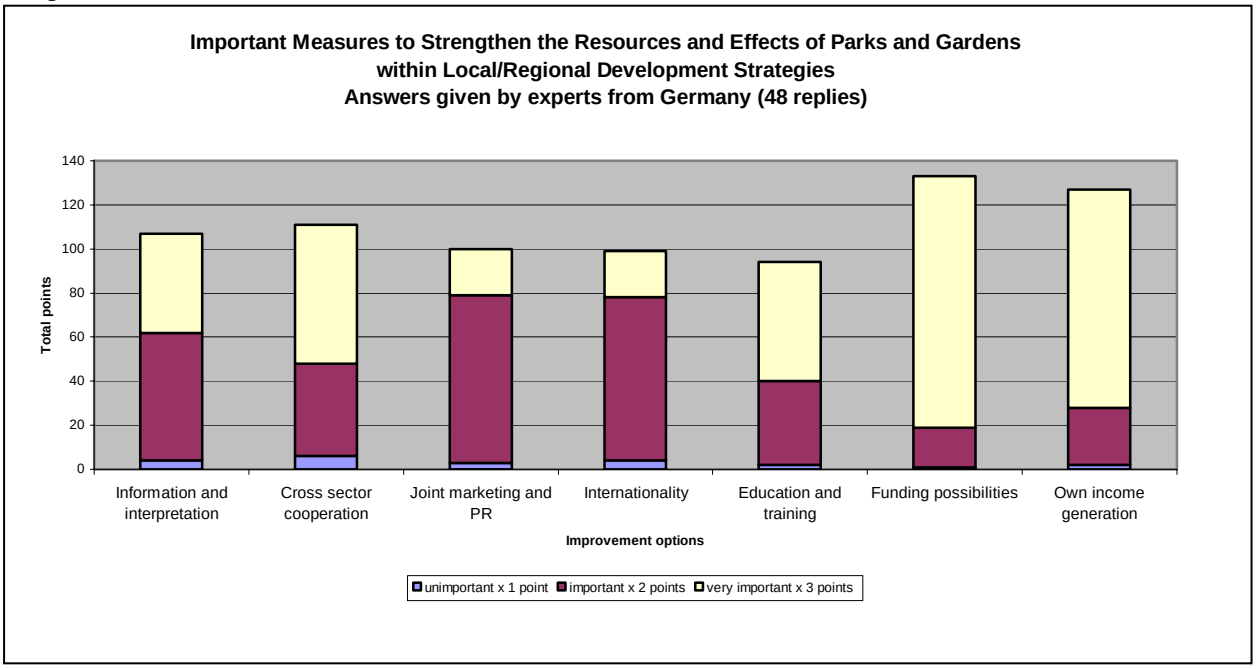
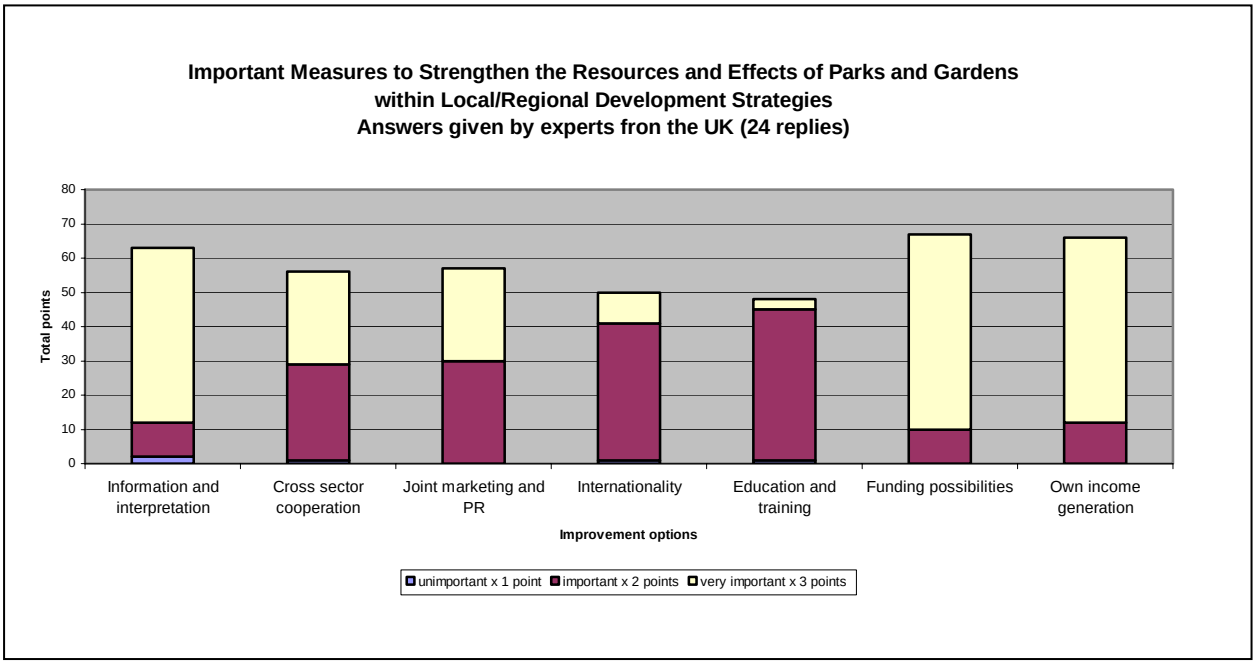


Diagram 2.b:



Improved "Information and Interpretation" available on the sites and based on innovative tools and activities will have a major focus on visitor welcome helping to raise the awareness of visitors, their understanding for the specific values of a garden and the needs and efforts required to maintain and to enhance a garden. It is important that other information tools (brochures, poster, videos, Internet etc.) and "Joint PR and Marketing" will be used to address the public at various locations and occasions (sits of the network, fairs, shopping areas) and to attract new visitor groups. Visitors, who will understand more, will become supporters and will probably come back.

"Internationality" ranks on 6 in both the **UK and Germany** voted by most experts as "important", but with very limited number of "very important". Although internationality, international cooperation, exchange of best practice, sharing resources etc. are essential to support the important measures above, the vote of the experts might reflect the local focus of daily work and regional/national character of existing networks. However the importance of internationality has been recognised and more exchange and transnational networking needs to be done. EGHN has started international cooperation, exchange and joint projects. Future activities of EGHN need to further demonstrate advantages and real benefits for all who are ready to act, to give and to take within this European partnership.

"Education and Training" is last on the list in **Germany** and in the **UK**. However, 18 experts in Germany said "Education and Training" is very important and only 1 in the UK. Was the number of experts who have working relationships to "Education and Training" included into the poll too small? Or is the relationship between education and training on the one side and regional development on the other side underestimated or really not as good as it should be?

- **3) Partnerships and Alliances**

There have always been various reasons for families, organisations and the public sector to create, to maintain and to develop a park and garden. Today - more then ever before – most investments in parks and gardens require partnerships and public support. Such supporting partnerships can easier be obtained if some added value or public gains can be demonstrated that go beyond garden culture or heritage protection. Meanwhile some objectives, policy arenas and alliances are more or less established to deliver such arguments and to raise the likelihood of sustainable support.

How do the experts value such partnerships and their requirements, actions, effects and future relevance? Is there a need to increase or reduce certain cooperation, activities or arguments?

The EGHN questionnaire listed 12 actions and arenas that the partnership had identified as most common or relevant (see Diagram 3).

Again the answers that EGHN received from the experts in the UK and in Germany revealed parallels but also some dissimilarity:

First of all there is a notable contrast in those policy fields and arenas and partnership as well that - according to the votes of our experts – should have less attention or are less promising. In **Germany** experts recommended to reduce activities in the two arenas "Heritage Protection" and "Nature and Environment", while their counterparts from the **UK** argue that all arenas need more attention.

When German experts say that "Heritage Protection" and "Nature and Environment" should be less important or will requiring a reduction of their actual influence, they certainly don not want to say that these "traditional factors" are wrong. It was confirmed that they want to highlight that the existing organisational, administrative and political structures ensure that the relevance of heritage, nature and environment is well considered and included into all major plans and measures and that innovative ideas, support and resources for new parks and garden related measures can be found elsewhere (more easily?). There is some backing for this guess as the experts is the **UK**, even with their more positive overall vote, said that "Heritage Protection" is the area that needs very limited strengthening.

Diagram 3.a:

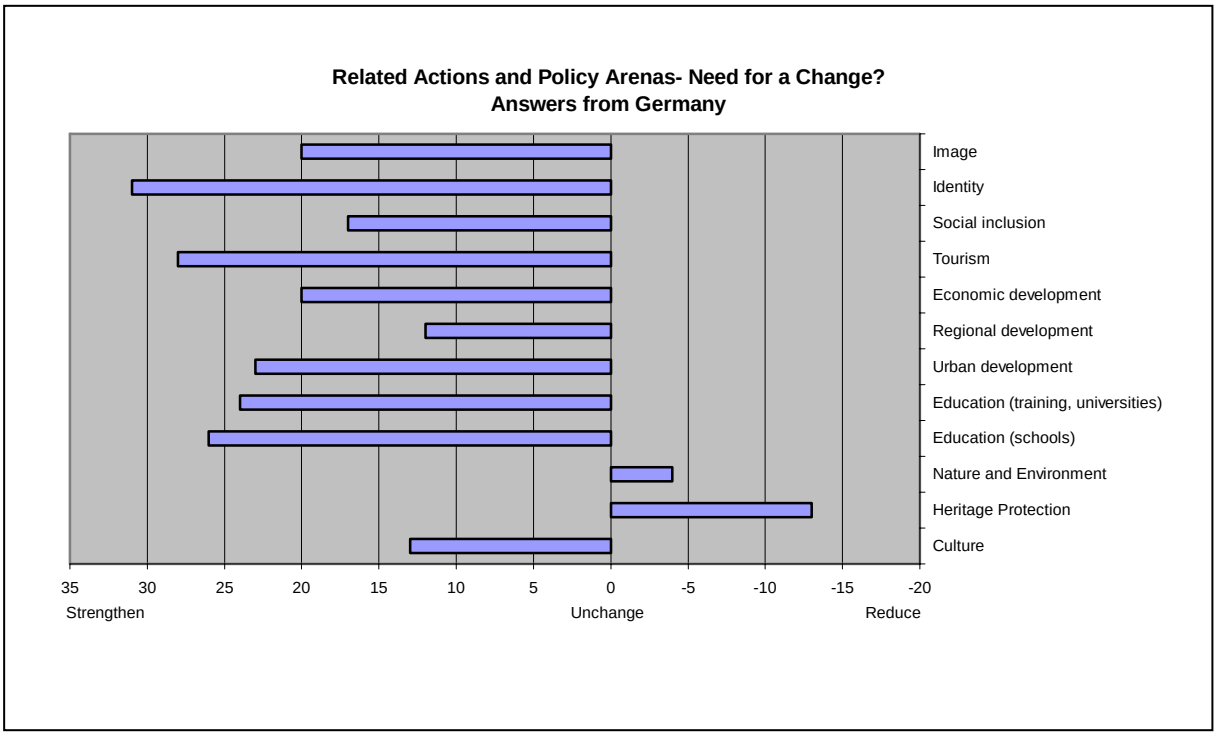
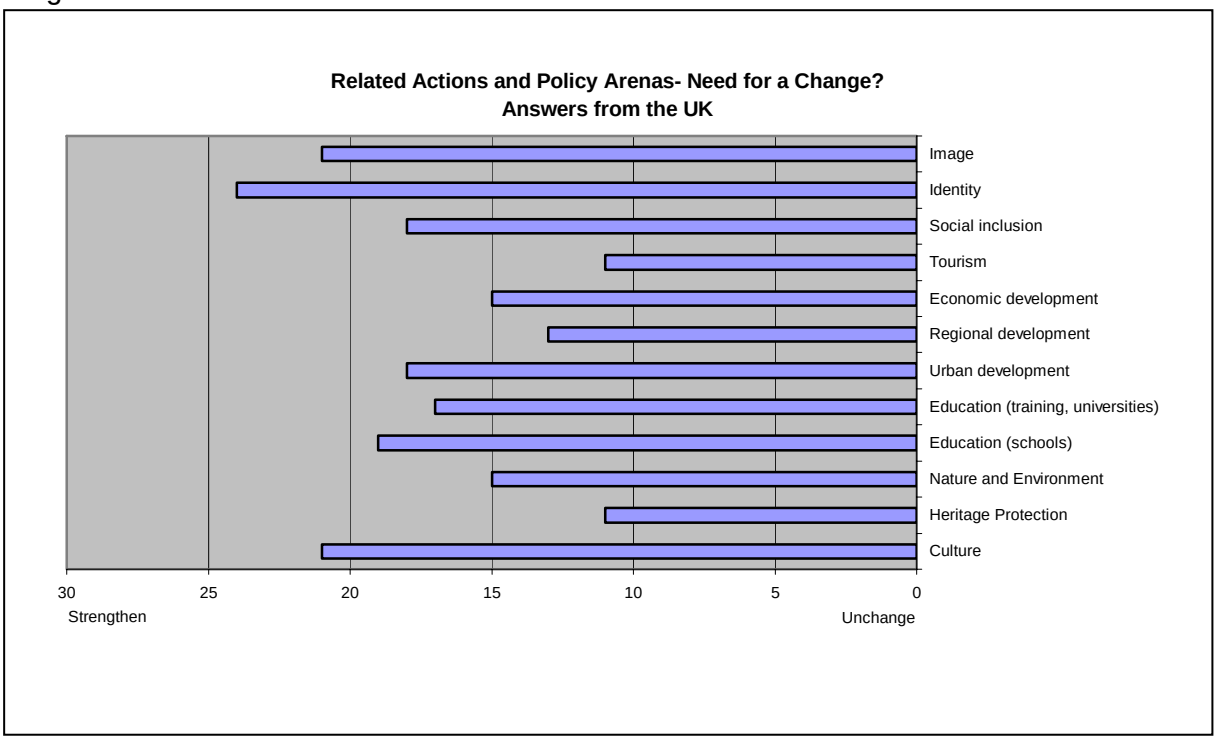


Diagram 3.b:



In **Germany** this need to open up new partnerships and to find new arguments and supporters is supported by the fact that the two arenas voted to need only limited strengthening (rank 10 and 9) are "Regional Development" and "Culture" - again two more traditional factors and common arguments to argue for or to justify investments in parks and gardens. However, the **UK** experts put "Culture" as number 3 on their priority list. The questionnaire does not give sufficient evidence to analyse the reasons behind that. Is "Gardening" in the UK – more than in Germany - an art form of its own, with its own values,

organisations and supporter groups? Does this hinder the inclusion of parks and gardens into concepts and policies that understand elements as landscape, local tradition, local skills, heritage, plastic arts and performing arts all contributing to local and/or regional culture, all benefiting from and supporting each other?

"Social Inclusion" ranks on eight in Germany and on five in the UK. As this theme is relatively new - even in the UK – or has not been mainstream by now it is very likely that its relevance will increase in German too. However, many public parks in Germany are already now widely accepted and used very much by people with a migration background. This might act as a showcase on how social inclusion may work or which (positive and negative) results it may have.

The area with the most significant difference in the experts' votes is "Tourism". In the **UK** the second lowest vote was given to "Tourism", which is on the second top position in Germany. While this difference may surprise at first sight, it can be said that the relation and link between "Tourism" and parks and gardens is much more traditional in the UK than in Germany – and may have come to an end of its growth potentials in the UK?

There is much more positive expectation in "Tourism" in **Germany**, where it ranks on the second top position. Garden tourism in Germany is seen as a future market attracting inland tourism and incoming tourism. With their high aesthetical and historic values gardens add to the unique selling position of a place or region and overnight stays, restaurant visits and shopping activities caused by garden visitors are emphasised when economic benefits are evaluated.

"Economic Development" ranks on six in Germany and on eight in the UK. The votes for the need to strengthen the links to economic development indicate that experts know about the effects parks and gardens have on the local economy, but also know that more needs to be done to prove and to communicate these effects. This includes hard economic relevance as turnover, jobs etc. but also qualitative factors, e.g. the importance of parks and gardens as soft infrastructure, as measures to enhance the quality of restructured or new locations and thus adding to the attractiveness and competitiveness of a region trying to attract new businesses.

"Urban Development" undoubtedly is a policy sector that can benefit very much from parks and gardens (as above) and that helps to promote the enhancement of existing and creation of new parks and gardens. Does the high vote of experts (rank five in both Germany and the UK) indicate that policies and funding priorities do not reflect this sufficiently?

In both countries educational aspects got high rankings. "Education/Schools" is on number 3 in Germany and on number 4 in the UK, "Education/Training and Universities" on position 4 in Germany and on position 7 in the UK. If professionals will be well informed about the resources that parks and gardens do offer and will be well trained to deliver the best management and enhancement of parks and gardens, benefits will be enormous. At schools the awareness and understanding of tomorrow's visitors can be raised easily and efficiently. Learning from parks and learning in parks will require good offers by the parks and proactive cooperation between schools and parks and gardens.

Finally the Number One is "Identity". Our experts may understand identity as the key factor and as the guiding principle that all other measures should respect and develop. Without identity the ideas of sustainability bringing together social and cultural, economic and environmental aspects and creating a balanced growth and synergies could hardly be realised. Identity is what makes a good garden and what the garden offers to those visiting

it and also living close to it. Only if a garden is accepted by the people and part of local/regional consciousness and pride, it will add to the local identity and to a real image of the area.

By setting "Identity" on top of the list, the experts may also try to give a warning: more and more gardens are promoted by using some of their outstanding qualities or elements and if such elements or events are missing "substitutes" are created or "invented" by marketing experts. Even if successful on short term, very often resources are exhausted quickly and effects will not be sustainable. If a garden does not have identity and if there is no gardener to keep this identity a garden will be lost soon.

- **4) Hopes and Fears**

The answers given under the third section "Hopes and Fears", asking what would be excellent or disastrous for parks and gardens, revealed a very broad range, but also some centres of attention:

Some answers from **Germany**:

- Again finance is an important factor, mentioned most often. While most experts fear a shortage of funding, one expert mentioned less funding as a challenge and a chance as it might bring back "quality and visitor needs" into the gardens.

- Other experts warned that too much events might damage the unique qualities of gardens and might repel the traditional garden visitors. Events need to be garden specific as other locations have advantages gardens cannot compete to (e.g. conveniences, accessibility, and shelter).

- Many experts predict a change of leisure and holiday patterns that will increase people's interest in and the use of parks and gardens. As less income will be available for holiday and leisure activities and the use of cars and planes will become more and more expensive, parks and gardens will become important destinations at easy reach and often free or with limited costs.

- The arts are mentioned as a good partner for parks and gardens. Arts add to their values, artists find inspirations and working places in gardens and cultural events increase visitor numbers and attract new target groups.

- Some experts pointed out that parks and gardens need partners and supporters in politics and planning but also in the economy. To get them, parks and gardens have to market their values and resources.

- Very much related to the above, parks and gardens need to identify new themes and - if they want to profit from new themes - to find their roles and unique selling (pro)positions. Health, wellness, food, local economies, sustainability, small scale were mentioned.

- The ageing society might - as some experts mentioned - also be beneficial for parks and gardens, as this will result in a further growth of the traditional visitor group.

- Climate change was another point mentioned as chance and as menace as well. A menace as gardens will suffer from new extremes in both temperature and water. A chance

as people may become more aware for nature and plants and will spend more of their free time outside, but closer to their home.

Some answers from the **UK**:

- Experts hope that the profile established could continue to build upon and to make parks and gardens relevant in the 21st century by innovative and creative ideas. Such relevance lies in their outstanding and unique "quality of life" value, which – when fully identified- will request and very likely ensure their increased use and support.

- Experts confirmed that gardens have the potential to become a focus for the community to enjoy and use but require that their image as a destination and theme for the white, middle class could be changed.

- There also is a fear that their value to society might only be measured by the "income" they make on the gate.

- There also is a strong warning that it would be disastrous if parks and gardens would lose their cultural, historic identity and would become "Theme Pak" type attractions.

- Finally some experts agreed that the resources of parks and gardens for local and regional, social and economic development need to be promoted and actively used in relevant policies. This process was started but will need continued support and lobbying.

ANNEX 1:

Expertenbefragung
Parks und Gärten in der Regionalentwicklung
Wie können die Ziele von INTERREG IIIB und EGHN planungspolitisch umgesetzt werden?

September 2005

Das EU-Programm INTERREG IIIB für Nordwesteuropa fördert die transnationale Zusammenarbeit in der Regionalentwicklung, u.a. zum Thema "Kreative Aufwertung und Inwertsetzung kulturellen Erbes". Mit seinen Aktionsfeldern versucht EGHN, solche kreativen Konzepte zu initiieren bzw. vorhandene Ansätze zu unterstützen. EGHN beschränkt sich dabei nicht auf historische Gärten, sondern bezieht zeitgenössische Anlagen als Teil innovativer Erneuerungsstrategien mit ein.

In diese Arbeit möchten die Partner in England, Frankreich und Deutschland auch die Kreativität, das Wissen und die Erfahrungen sowie die Empfehlungen von externen Fachleuten einbinden. Dieser gemeinsam entwickelte Fragebogen ist ein erster Schritt dazu. Ausführlichere Gespräche sollen folgen. Dies wird in das EGHN-Aktionsfeld 1 "Planungsstrategien" eingehen, um Optionen, Empfehlungen und Forderungen zur Stärkung und Inwertsetzung von Parks und Gärten in Entwicklungskonzepten auf lokaler, regionaler, nationaler und europäischer Ebene zu formulieren.

Notwendigkeiten

Für die Aufwertung von Parks und Gärten und ihre Inwertsetzung für innovative Konzepte der Stadt- und Regionalentwicklung sind

	sehr wichtig	wichtig	unwichtig
Steigerung der Attraktivität des Gartens	⊙	⊙	⊙
Zusätzliche Angebote (Infrastruktur, Events)	⊙	⊙	⊙
Mehr Besucher	⊙	⊙	⊙
Neue Besuchergruppen	⊙	⊙	⊙
Stärkere politische Unterstützung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Partner aus der Wirtschaft	⊙	⊙	⊙
- und um dies zu erreichen			
Besseres Informationsangebot	⊙	⊙	⊙
Verstärkte Zusammenarbeit	⊙	⊙	⊙
Gemeinsames Marketing	⊙	⊙	⊙
Internationalisierung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Neue Aus- und Weiterbildungsangebote	⊙	⊙	⊙
Mehr Fördermittel	⊙	⊙	⊙
Mehr eigene Einnahmen	⊙	⊙	⊙

Verbündete

In diesen Politikbereichen oder Handlungsfeldern sollte die Einbeziehung von Parks und Gärten

	gestärkt werden	gleich bleiben	reduziert werden
Kultur	⊙	⊙	⊙
Denkmalschutz	⊙	⊙	⊙
Umwelt-, Naturschutz	⊙	⊙	⊙
Schule, Erziehung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Studium, Weiterbildung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Stadtentwicklung, Stadterneuerung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Regionalentwicklung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Wirtschaftsentwicklung	⊙	⊙	⊙
Tourismus	⊙	⊙	⊙
Soziale Integration	⊙	⊙	⊙
Identität	⊙	⊙	⊙
Image	⊙	⊙	⊙

Hoffnungen und Befürchtungen

Gut für Parks und Gärten wäre es, wenn ...

Schlecht für Parks und Gärten wäre es, wenn ...

Name: