

## COMMON FORUM & NICOLE

LAND: A VALUABLE RESOURCE



*Cover photo:*

Northumberlandia is a unique piece of public art set in a 19-hectare community park. The park's centerpiece is 'The Lady of the North', a human landform sculpture in female form. This £3 million project, privately funded by the Banks Group and the Blagdon Estate, was a 'restoration first' approach. This is taking an extra piece of land to create a new landscape for the community to enjoy while the mine is still operational. As such it provides a lasting legacy for the area. The Land Trust was brought in to ensure that Northumberlandia provides social and health benefits to the local community and as a tourist attraction, brings economic prosperity to the wider region.

*Courtesy of The Land Trust, UK...*

*For more information: [www.northumberlandia.com](http://www.northumberlandia.com)*

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## PREFACE (by SG and CF chairs)

The Common Forum and NICOLE joined forces to write this booklet on land as a resource. Why?

- Explanation on both organisations and their goals (*CF sees the importance of connecting land and soil services to societal challenges. Soil is essential, restoration has value because of its need for society: from protection towards sustainable use and management of the total system; CF underlines that such an approach needs cooperation*). Value creation by connecting industrial land management to societal, economic and ecological challenges
- Importance of soil and sustainable land management in a changing context (*The cover photo is an illustrative example that industrial sites, even when still operational, can bring social, ecological and economic benefits to the community with the community (compare the 4 returns of Common Land). Surely they can do so after functional industrial use and site closure*)
- Link to SDGs and EU priority objectives; resource efficiency, circular economy, healthy environment, biodiversity
- Sustainable management always incorporates the 3 Ps
- Examples in this booklet
- A world of opportunities lying ahead

## LAND AS A VALUABLE RESOURCE

### **Introduction to explain why land is considered a valuable resource and why sustainable land management is needed:**

- Land is scarce in some countries
- Land is a source of geo and ecosystem services contributing to private and public welfare; it supplies resources, it is the basis for food, energy supply, building and construction and production of drinking water, etc. In fact it is a resource in itself.
- Sustainable land management is value creation!

### **Introduction to sustainable land management:**

- Sustainable land management contributes to wealth and welfare;
- Land stewardship will focus on sustainable use, management and thus protection of land value.

- For industrial areas this includes managing and monitoring contaminated land to ensure the land can be effectively and efficiently used and/or returned to another long-term use.
- Not contaminated land of an industrial site can be used for societal benefits as storing water, storing energy or production of biomass or contribution to biodiversity goals.
- This also entails a continued effort to prevent new contamination. Taking nature as an example, the circular economy, is a guiding principle for operating in an effective and environmental friendly way.

### 3. GREENING OF INDUSTRIAL SITES: Practical examples of ecological benefit

Industrial land management can contribute positively to biodiversity, climate adaptation and health and environmental perception, when a focus is put on sustainable use of natural capital and resources, such as the geo and ecosystem services of the soil-sediment-water system. In other words: The way in which industrial sites are used and managed can affect nature and the ability to sustain biodiversity and provide ecosystem services in a positive way. Site exploitation and nature conservation can go hand in hand, as is demonstrated by 'temporary' nature at industrial sites.

#### *Examples:*

- How Nature and industry can share habitats- experiences from the Port of Rotterdam
- Green remediation; Dow Chemical (phytoremediation with trees, removing concrete slabs after demolition so storm water can infiltrate into subsurface and therefore there is a lower load towards the waste water facility)
- Examples in other countries: Stuttgart artesian wells? Biomass production old East European cities/brownfields,.....

#### 4. MULTIPLE USE OF INDUSTRIAL LAND: Practical examples of social benefit

Industrial land, in use as industrial site or (temporary) no longer needed for industrial purposes, can be (re) developed for multipurpose industrial and societal use. The development should be integrated as part of a holistic area approach. A distinction can be made in land still in operation for industrial activities and brownfields. Turning brownfield land into beneficial re-use requires sound asset management whilst the site is still in use. Timely and active involvement of stakeholders is needed to ensure sustainable redevelopment of towns, cities and the countryside.

##### *Examples:*

- Re-using industrial land; Port Sunlight River Park NW England; the Land Trust, UK
- Adaptive reuse and circular economy; Advanced farming systems (indoor hydroponics agriculture) for the redevelopment of contaminated brownfield in rural areas, Golder, Italy
- Applying the circular economy to sustainable mining; Umicore, Belgium
- Transforming industrial legacy (i.c. historic gas work sites) to beneficial use in towns and cities, National Grid, UK

## 5. POWERFUL SOLUTIONS: **Practical examples of economic benefit**

Brownfield and industrial land can be transformed into wind farms or solar parks or be re-used for biofuel production. Wind, solar or geothermal energy can also be used to remediate sites in a sustainable way thus creating multiple benefits.

Examples:

- WKO (thermal storage) remediation system and city redevelopment project at the High Tech Campus Philips, Eindhoven, NL
- Wind and solar driven remediation at railway sites (SBNS/ Prorail), NL
- Examples in other countries?? City Chlor?, Hombre? UK ?

## 6. SUCCESS FACTORS TO SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

What are the benefits and restraints for whom: corporate social responsibility, image, liability, flexibility

Instruments:

Triple A approach; Ambition, Alliance and Action

Public-private partnerships

Overcoming legal bottlenecks; green deals?

Long term funding for managing green open spaces

Joint Knowledge development

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