

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Self-Sufficient and Sustainable Social Housing

Rotterdam, The Netherlands - January 24, 2011- Except Integrated Sustainability has developed a sustainability vision for the post-war social housing area Schiebroek-Zuid in Rotterdam. The project, commissioned by housing corporation Vestia and agricultural research network InnovatieNetwerk, provides a flexible and exemplary roadmap for converting the neighborhood into a self-sufficient and sustainable area.

The plan combines socio-economic programs and proven technologies to create a closed-loop urban metabolism. All energy and water are locally provided and most wastes are handled on site. Local agriculture is the "biological engine" that drives many aspects of the plan, such as energy generation, nutrition, education, recreation, social programs, and local economic activities.

Except drew on its integrated sustainable development approach, Symbiosis in Design (SiD), to develop an extensive set of measures, or 'ingredients', which can be mixed and matched over time to achieve the end vision. These ingredients were designed in cooperation with stakeholders and residents. SiD facilitates and assures the integration of the many elements of sustainability.

The ingredients include many social programs for neighborhood target groups such as the elderly, children, teenagers, immigrants, and entrepreneurs. A marketplace and community center will serve as central hubs for the new neighborhood activities. Meanwhile, flexible ateliers provide spaces for startup companies that can be used as anything from craft workshops to offices, and kitchens to storefronts. A local currency has been suggested as a way of encouraging local trade and as an incentive for energy saving or waste reduction efforts.

Using a combination of biogas-fueled power plants, solar installations, and heat capture from rooftop greenhouses, the area can supply all of its required electricity and heat. Edible landscaping throughout the neighborhood can make use of previously empty lawns while meaningfully connecting residents to their natural surroundings. A key feature of the plan is that it renovates instead of demolishes most of the neighborhood's existing buildings, reducing both the social disruption and environmental impact typically caused by neighborhood renewals that begin with demolition.

Contractor Vestia will start by implementing a number of ingredients from the plan. Except hopes that this project will serve as an example for the numerous social housing areas with similar typologies worldwide.

*The complete project can be viewed on the website of **Except**: <http://www.except.nl>*

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Except is a research, consulting, and design office for sustainable development. With its multidisciplinary team, Except creates strategies and concepts for the future of cities, industries, policy, business, design, and more.

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