

MP4 WP2.1
Peer Review of
Model Agreements for
Place-keeping

**Analysis of existing
model agreements**

**Flemish Land Agency
(VLM)**

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February 2011



SUMMARY

This report presents an analysis of model agreements used by the Flemish Land Agency (Vlaamse Landmaatschappij – VLM) in the place-keeping activities it undertakes in partnership with other stakeholders. Model agreements for place-keeping are understood here in a broad way, not necessarily only as legal written documents signed by a number of parties (formal), but can be tacit arrangements between parties (informal).

Information for this analysis was collected via interviews carried out with representatives of VLM (head of the section of agro-environmental measures and project leaders) as well as with important stakeholders involved in partnerships with VLM.

The **Flemish Land Agency (VLM)** is part of the pool of organisations working within the Environment, Nature and Energy policy area (see Figure 1) within the Flemish Government in Belgium (see socio-cultural context in Appendix 1). VLM is responsible for the organisation and management of open space as well as for shaping rural policy within the rural and peri-urban areas in Flanders. Land development, manure bank and rural development are its core divisions. Its head office is in Brussels, and in each of the five Flemish provinces it has an executive department which is responsible for the implementation of projects. VLM works in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders. Some of the main stakeholders VLM deals with are the Agency for Nature and Forestry, Regional Landscape organisations as well as farmers and municipalities.

Rural development approaches in Flanders a few decades ago were more concerned with the productivity of rural areas. These have gradually become more related to supporting care for nature and landscape within an increasingly environmentally conscious approach. This is reflected in the range of projects that VLM is involved in, going from “Land Consolidation” to “Land Development for Nature”. The key projects/activities they are involved with which include model agreements (see summary tables in pages 6, 7, 8 and 9) in relation to place-keeping are:

1. **Land Consolidation projects:** improvement of farming through consolidation of land parcels, currently including landscape development, nature conservation, recreation, heritage conservation and village restoration.
2. **Land Development projects:** development of open spaces (occasionally within urbanised areas) for recreation, landscape, agriculture, environmental issues, etc. In these projects partners are encouraged to execute and finance parts of the project and they can receive subsidies, depending on the measures and partners involved.
3. **Land Development for Nature projects:** development/conservation of natural areas as defined in regional plans or recognised through international protection (e.g. Natura 2000); these can also take place in agricultural areas, but with limitations.
4. **Agro-environmental management agreements** (also called agri-environment management agreements): developed between VLM and farmers, these agreements allow VLM to organise environmental and landscape measures on farmers’ land. These agreements are based on the EU agreement programme pillar 22

Evaluating this model, a couple of issues which influence (or may influence in the future) the effectiveness of these partnership models were identified. These range from financial to management and attitude-related issues, with the complexity of partnerships seeming to be the source of both their strength and weakness (see section 5 on evaluation & SWOT analysis on page 11).

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents an analysis of model agreements used by the Flemish Land Agency (Vlaamse Landmaatschappij – VLM) in the place-keeping activities it undertakes in partnership with other stakeholders.

This report is intended as a practical tool to allow practitioners easily to understand the key elements of the model agreements used by VLM. It will thus allow comparison with other types of model agreement and contribute to the peer review of these, as part of WP2 in the MP4 project.

To collect information for this analysis, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were carried out with representatives of VLM (head of the section of agro-environmental measures and project leaders) as well as with important stakeholders involved in partnerships with VLM. Interviewees were members of the following organisations: Regional Landscape (head of IJzer& Polder Regional Landscape), Agency for Nature and Forestry (ANB) (head of the maintenance section for West Flanders), Municipality of Gemeente Lo-Reninge (local farmer & “alderman” with responsibility for environmental issues and the local mayor). Analysis of documents and observation when visiting Belgium complemented the methods employed in data collection.

The report covers the following aspects:

- **Organisational context** for the model agreements.
- **Types of projects/activities** which model agreements are used in.
- **Model agreements** – a systematic presentation of these to allow cross-comparison.
- **Evaluation**, including a brief overview of key ideas & mental models influencing the model agreements, and a SWOT analysis based on stakeholder perceptions.
- Appendices describing some aspects of the **socio-cultural context** and providing further **detail on relevant organisations**.

2. ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

Model agreements for place-keeping are understood here in a broad way, not necessarily only as legal written documents signed by a number of parties. Model agreements may range from formal documents to tacit arrangements between parties. It is therefore crucial to understand the context in which each model agreement operates. Relevant aspects of the socio-cultural (and political) context are described in an Appendix 1 at the end of the report. This section focuses on key organisations involved, as explained below.

The **Flemish Land Agency (VLM)**¹ is part of the pool of organisations working within the Environment, Nature and Energy policy area (see Figure 1) within the Flemish Government in Belgium (see socio-cultural context in Appendix 1). VLM is responsible for the organisation and management of open space as well as for shaping rural policy within the rural and peri-urban areas in Flanders. Land development, manure bank and rural development are its core divisions. Its head office is in Brussels, and in each of the five Flemish provinces it has an executive department which is responsible for the implementation of projects.

¹ <http://www.vlm.be>

VLM works in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders. Some of the main stakeholders VLM deals with are the Agency for Nature and Forestry, Regional Landscape organisations as well as farmers and municipalities.

The **Agency for Nature and Forest (ANB)** of the Flemish Government is responsible for management and maintenance of 40,000 ha of land in the whole of Flanders, mainly nature and forest areas. ANB has representatives and staff in each of the Flemish provinces. The province of West Flanders, for example, has three regions with one regional manager each and a total of 17 rangers and 50 workers doing maintenance work. ANB manages and maintains their own land, but also enters agreements with other landowners (mostly governmental organisations, e.g. army) to maintain their land. They also provide technical support to municipalities and provinces where they have public forests and woods. They deal with policy, land maintenance and enforcement, working in close collaboration with VLM in policy development.

Regional Landscape (RL) organisations were established in 2006 by the Flemish Government in areas with natural beauty, coherence, and potential for biodiversity. Their aim is to work directly with the local population in educational as well as small elements of “place-making” (e.g. hedge planting) & “place-keeping” activities in these nature areas, making nature, landscape and biodiversity known among residents. There are around 13 Regional Landscape organisations in Flanders, three of which are in West Flanders province, and they work closely with the municipalities in their region. Each Regional Landscape organisation has a board of directors which consists of: (a) 1/3 politicians, members of the government, (b) 1/3 from nature and environmental organisations, and (c) 1/3 from hunting, agriculture, recreation and tourism organisations. RLs are financed by different organisations, such as in the case of the Ijzer & Polder Regional Landscape organisation, which is financed by the Agency for Nature and Forest of the Flemish government, the Agency for Monuments and Landscape of the Flemish government, and the municipalities they work with. These municipalities contribute structurally and also with an amount per head per year, plus co-financing projects (around 30%, although larger communities pay more).

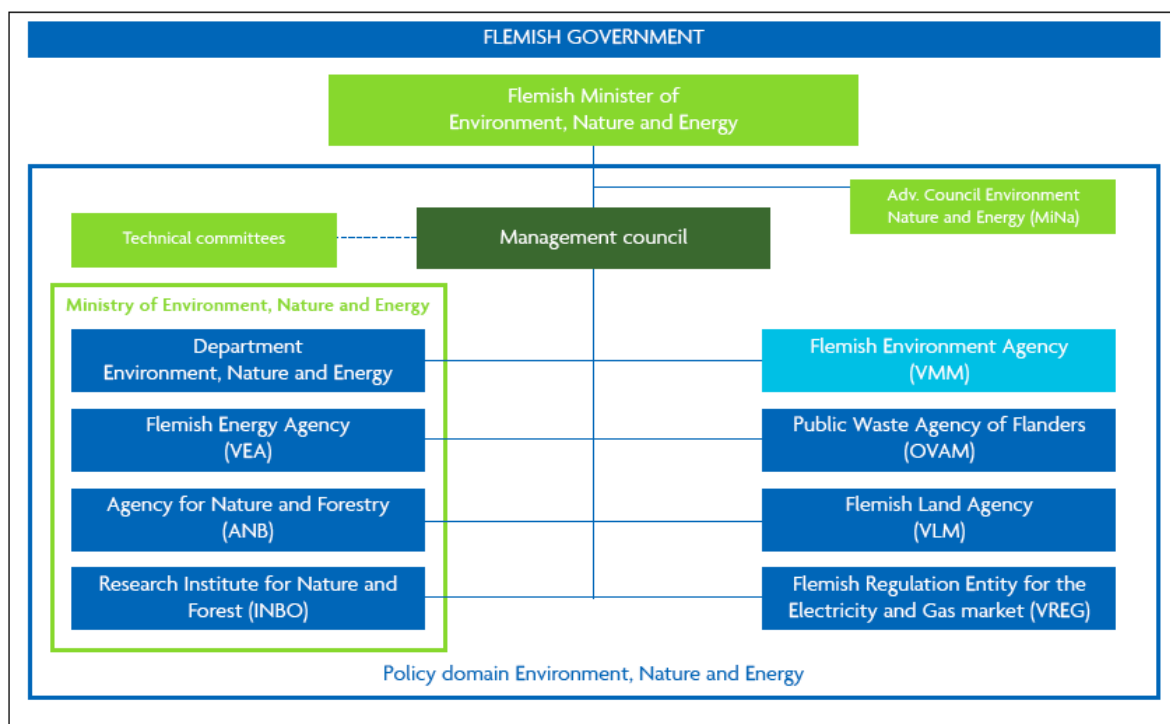


Figure 1 - Flemish Environmental Policy organisation (Source: Flemish Environment Agency website: http://www.vmm.be/english/Folder_VMM_ENG_LR_TOEWEB.pdf)

VLM and ANB report directly to the Management Council of the Flemish Minister of Environment, Nature and Energy, as shown in Figure 1, and the two organisations work closely together. Regional Landscape organisations (RLs) are also directly linked to the VLM and ANB, being financed by the latter and monitored by the former. RLs also take over maintenance of areas where VLM has worked in place-making activities, working in collaboration with local citizens and municipalities.

3. TYPES OF PROJECT/ACTIVITY

Rural development approaches in Flanders a few decades ago were more concerned with the productivity of rural areas. These have gradually become more related to supporting care for nature and landscape within an increasingly environmentally conscious approach. This is reflected in the range of projects that VLM is involved in, going from “Land Consolidation” to “Land Development for Nature”. The key projects/activities they are involved with which include model agreements in relation to place-keeping are:

5. **Land Consolidation projects:** improvement of farming through consolidation of land parcels, currently including landscape development, nature conservation, recreation, heritage conservation and village restoration.
6. **Land Development projects:** development of open spaces (occasionally within urbanised areas) for recreation, landscape, agriculture, environmental issues, etc. In these projects partners are encouraged to execute and finance parts of the project and they can receive subsidies, depending on the measures and partners involved.
7. **Land Development for Nature projects:** development/conservation of natural areas as defined in regional plans or recognised through international protection (e.g. Natura 2000); these can also take place in agricultural areas, but with limitations.
8. **Agro-environmental management agreements** (also called agri-environment management agreements): developed between VLM and farmers, these agreements allow VLM to organise environmental and landscape measures on farmers’ land. These agreements are based on the EU agreement programme pillar 2².

For each of the above types of project/activity, model agreements between stakeholders in relation to place-keeping are structured as is presented in the tables in the following section.

4. MODEL AGREEMENTS

The following tables present, in a summarised format, the key elements in model agreements used by VLM, as well as the process which these form part of. One table is presented for each of the types of project/activity listed above.

² Axis 2 article 39.3 of Regulation N. 1698/2005. European Commission / Agriculture and Rural Development website: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/measures/index_en.htm (last accessed: 03 March 2010)

VLM Model – Land Consolidation Projects

Improvement of farming through re-devision and consolidation of land parcels, on the principle of cross-compensation among landowners. They currently include: landscape development & conservation, recreation, heritage conservation and village restoration.

Purpose of PK: general maintenance e.g. grass/tree cutting, mowing verges, etc.

Actors		Place-Making	Place-Keeping (management plan)	Monitoring	Redress
VLM		Sets up Land Development Project Committee (stops after project execution); prepares plan.	Responsible for maintenance first 2-3 years (often sub-contracted to RL). Agreement w/ farmers subsidising maintenance for further 5 years.	Visits owners 2-3 years later. Monitors via Maintenance Filling Card . Often subcontracts monitoring	Execution of management plan not legally enforceable .
Ministry Env.Nat.Energy	initiate	Provides capital investment for infrastructure (specific agency providing this varies according to infrastructure)			
Provincial Gov.			State sector agencies take ownership of infrastructure management/maintenance from VLM. Voluntary agreement for maintenance subsidy. Organised w/other organisations(e.g.NGOs, farmers, RL) via contract.		
Municipality					
Other NGOs (e.g. nature & hunting associations)			Can provide maintenance via contract		
Regional Landscape			Can provide maintenance via contract (w/ private&public org.) - also education, training, liaison w/volunteers.		
Private landowners, farmers	request	Provide % of land with no compensation for infrastructure & provide capital investment if measures on their properties.	Are responsible for long-term maintenance of any improvements in their land, e.g. tree planting. Can get involved in maintenance of public space (eg mowing grass & collecting this for their animals) & have access to education/training provided by Reg.Landscape.		Maybe required to pay back capital investments subsidies if PK responsibilities not met.

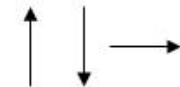
VLM Model – Land Development Projects Development of open spaces for recreation, landscape, agriculture, environmental issues, etc.					
Purpose of PK: general maintenance e.g. grass/tree cutting, mowing, verges, paths, bridges, ponds, water treatment ponds, etc.					
Actors		Place-Making	Place-Keeping (management plan)	Monitoring	Redress
VLM		Sets up Steering Committee; leads plan preparation; provides subsidies	Responsible for maintenance first 2-3 years (often sub-contracted to RL). Agreement w/ landowners next 20 years.	Visits owners 2-3 years later. Monitors via Maintenance Filling Card . Often subcontracts monitoring	Execution of management plan not legally enforceable – it is not compulsory.
Ministry Env.Nat.Energy		Provides capital investment			
Provincial Gov.			State sector agencies take ownership of infrastructure management/maintenance from VLM. Voluntary agreement for maintenance subsidy. Organised w/other organisations(e.g.NGOs, farmers, RL) via contract.		Maybe required to pay back capital investments subsidies if PK responsibilities not met.
Municipality					
Other state sector agents					
Regional Landscape			Provides maintenance via contract (w/ private&public org.) - also education, training, liaison w/volunteers.		
Private landowners, farmers		Provide land & capital investment if measures on their properties.	Provide land & capital investment if measures on their properties.		

VLM Model – Land Development for Nature Projects Development/conservation of natural areas as defined in regional plans or international protection (eg Natura 2000). Mostly large projects on public land, but can also be on private/agricultural land.					
Purpose of PK: general maintenance linked to specific nature protection measures (types of planting, etc)					
Actors		Place-Making	Place-Keeping (management plan)	Monitoring	Redress
VLM	<div> prospection ↓ Initiates ↓ prospection </div>	Contributes staff & equipment to production of plan and implementation of project. Secretary of project steering committee. Sometimes buys the land.	Transfers land to government or non-profit agencies, who then take on "place-keeping" responsibilities.	Has a monitoring role. Has to produce a report after 10 years.	No formal means of redress with ANB.
Ministry Env.Nat.Energy		Initiates compulsory project			
Agency for Nature & Forest ANB		Provides investment & makes decisions on project. President of steering committee. Often provides land.	Aim: 80% own land covered by manag.plan. Own land maintenance can be undertaken: (1) directly by ANB; (2) by companies contracted via tendering; (3) by farmers contracted annually. Also uses verbal agreements for small investments (pond or planting a tree), often related to enforceable projects.		In theory redress can involve claiming investment back, but does not really happen. Legislation protects continuity of new environmental conditions in nature areas, with penalties attached. In practice expensive work tends to focus on publicly owned land, with more basic work taking place on private land. In practice enforcement takes place only for water elevation projects.
Municipality			Public landowners are obliged to make management plans for woods, though this is not strict. Properties > 5 Ha are required to have a manag.plan. In large project ANB offers to prepare the man plan in exchange for part-payment. ANB also offers maintenance services to public sector landowners.		
Polder organisation					
Natuurpunt					
Private landowners, farmers			Less control over private landowners. Farmers can be contracted by ANB on annual basis for maintenance (often on land formerly owned by farmer).		Maybe required to pay back capital investment subsidies if place-keeping responsibilities not met.

VLM Model – Agro-environmental agreements

Provide payments to farmers who subscribe, on a voluntary basis, to environmental commitments. Based on EU regulation on Agriculture & Rural Development, within the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP).

Purpose of PK: adoption by farmers of environmentally friendly farming techniques and/or maintenance of landscape feature beyond legal obligations, in return for compensation for additional costs and income loss resulted from such practices: e.g. Protection of species, land parcel border management, management of small landscape elements, botanical management, erosion control, improvement of ground and surface water quality, etc.

Actors		Place-Making	Monitoring	Redress
Flemish Government		Pays compensation for additional costs and income loss resulting from application of environmentally friendly practices. Co-financed by EU Member States.		
VLM	may initiate	Acts as intermediary between farmers & funding, either (a) responding to request from farmers or (b) preparing plans for specific areas they want to preserve (e.g. with impt. species fauna/flora). VLM fieldworkers help farmers find the best way to achieve their aims as well as providing relevant information.	Sometimes monitors work, mainly where there is a need for instructions & training (e.g. preserving species in lakes & ponds). VLM connects farmers to appropriate organisations that can help such as ANB.	VLM inspectors visit farmers. If they are not complying with contractual agreement annual payment is withheld.
Farmers	 may initiate	Farmers voluntarily commit themselves to adopt environmentally-friendly farming techniques for a minimum period of at least 5 years. Formal contract with Flemish Government.	Farmers have to provide information on everything they produce and report to government periodically.	

5. EVALUATION

A series of issues which influence (or may influence in the future) the effectiveness of these partnership models were identified. These range from financial to attitude-related issues. The ways in which different stakeholders and organisations perceive their roles within these partnerships are also fundamental.

4.1 Ideas and mental models

Model agreements are forms of organisational co-operation which are based both on the nature and capacity of the organisations involved, and on the expectations that given societies have of such organisations. From this point of view it is important to understand mental models (in the form of traditions, habits, ideas and ideologies) in order to understand organisational arrangements. This subsection describes key ideas and mental models put across by interviewees (representing farmers, municipalities, as well as the environmental organisations).

Although diversification in use of rural land is happening in Flanders, the main mental model for rural land use among **farmers** seem still to be agricultural/farming production, with a large proportion of farmers being unhappy with changes in use towards leisure activities and nature protection. The latter are still a niche activity. Some **farmers** are more open to different ideas, such as developing partnership work with other organisations such as **VLM** and **municipalities** though. The impression is that younger generations are more receptive to such type of work and value nature, landscape and ecology more. There is a high competition for land and **farmers** are very protective of theirs. Normally, however, **farmers** are against environmental projects which result in reduction of their farming area, though they can be less opposed when they have some form of “win-win agreement”. In general they see these projects as a loss of agricultural production.

Change is nevertheless taking place. The process of developing interest is slowly growing momentum, with some individuals learning from others’ experiences. An example is the increased interest of **farmers** in protecting Marsh Harrier birds that come to breed in their land, with **farmers** being instructed to plant at a certain distance from their nests, and being paid to preserve and protect them.

Regional Landscape organisations take on a role as educators and facilitators, working more closely with landowners and municipalities, attempting to change attitudes. Their perception is that their work is not a top priority for **local politicians**, but they accept this.

Municipalities tend to defend their interests, depending on their key economic activities and, in consequence, how they value their land. The larger the number of **farmers** within the **municipality**, the lower the openness appears to be to Land Development for Nature projects. On the other hand, **municipalities** on the coast are in favour of such projects because land has a higher value for tourism than for farming. Some municipalities recognise the need for more urban forest, following the realisation that more than 90% of residents are in favour of these. In places where Land Development for Nature projects have been implemented (such as Lo-Reninge) there has been a **change in attitudes**, with **farmers** and **municipality** seeing the benefits in terms of increased ecological value of the land, which may generate a shift in economic activities such as towards agro-tourism.

EU policies have an important role within this web of interests. They provide funding supporting farmers who adopt more environmentally friendly activities, but farmers resent the fact that they can receive less EU funding if their farming area is reduced.

4.2 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis	
strengths	weaknesses
<p>Several partners: the involvement of several partners provides richness and flexibility.</p> <p>Agri-environment agreements - partners' freedom to join these agreements promotes a more positive attitude than when they are forced to join projects.</p> <p>On the other hand, compulsory actions within land consolidation and land development for nature can result in a "quick change in land use".</p> <p>Municipalities have an advisory role in the early decision-making, but VLM is independent from local politics.</p>	<p>VLM is not responsible for long-term management.</p> <p>Participation of farmers in the maintenance of areas used for Land Development for Nature projects are linked to the continuous provision of EU subsidies, as these are related to the area of land farmers work on.</p> <p>There are many organisations involved and they all have different organisational approaches (<i>"every organisation has their view of coordination and they think they do it best (...) therefore, the need for an umbrella organisation"</i>).</p> <p>Partners' freedom to join agri-environment agreements also means that developments are slow.</p> <p>Pricing policy: the same "price" is paid for the whole area despite different "values" for nature preservation.</p>
opportunities	threats
<p>Several partners bring new opportunities for different types of cooperation.</p> <p>Beginning of change in farmers' view of natural environment.</p> <p>EU funds – e.g. agri-environment agreements Some farmers use these agreements to promote their products as a marketing strategy (good connection between ecology+nature+marketing strategy) – help promote attitude change as well as understanding of the environmental agencies work.</p>	<p>High competition for land.</p> <p>Farmers' view of natural environment as competition.</p> <p>VLM position in between farmers and "green" environmentalists, who do not believe in the use of farmers as a tool to promote sustainability.</p> <p>Financial difficulties faced by smaller farmers.</p> <p>Funding availability – funds for agri-environmental agreements are secured only until 2013.</p> <p>Reduction of funds due to economic crisis <i>"If EU funds were to become no longer available, Land Development for Nature Projects would need to go to tender, which might push out the small farmer, with consequent loss of the social aspects of the projects."</i></p> <p>The growth in the number of Regional Landscape organisations may be a threat due to the absence of matching growth in overall funding for these.</p> <p>The involvement of many partners can make the coordination of approaches more difficult.</p> <p>Competition in land management with other environmental organisations such as NGOs (eg. Natuurpunt - a large environmental Belgian NGO).</p>

The need for a large amount of funding required for maintenance of open spaces is seen as an important issue. The overall opinion is that the work goes well when done in public space and funds are guaranteed, but there is a need to acquire funds from different sources (public, private, tourism). Public organisations such as ANB are increasingly put under pressure regarding accountability and competition. Forests are not economically exploitable, and ANB is expected to provide the most expert management and therefore the most economically efficient operation, given that “it is being paid for by the taxpayer”. There is also competition to maintain other owners’ land, as other organisations such as Natuurpunt (a large environmental Belgian NGO) can bid for such contracts.

Work with farmers and local wood-cutters are seen as good to increase the relationship between government and local people, which in addition provides an opportunity to make people aware of the work developed by these environmental organisations as well as to promote environmental education and attitude change. EU subsidies have also an important role as motivation for farmers to maintain natural areas.

Competition for land is seen as a highly relevant aspect of all negotiations: while VLM and other partner organisations want to use land for environmental protection, the reduction of land owned by a farmer means that the EU subsidies the farmer receives will be less, as they are proportional to farmland size. Equally, some factories may lose interest in the products of a farm if their quantities are reduced due to land reduction.

Finally the complexity of partnerships seems to be the source of both their strength and weakness. The cooperation with many partners is the strength of the existing models and brings many opportunities. However, it brings also organisational problems, which need to be tackled. There is a view that improved coordination amongst partner organisations would be beneficial. Some see the need for an umbrella organisation which would facilitate this coordination.

References:

Albrechts, L. (2001) “Devolution, Regional Governance and Planning Systems in Belgium”. In: *International Planning Studies*, Volume 6, Issue 2 May 2001, pages 167 – 182

European Commission – Agriculture and Rural Development website:
http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/measures/index_en.htm (last accessed: 03/03/10)

APPENDIX 1: Socio-Cultural Context

Located between the Netherlands, Germany, Luxemburg and France, Belgium is divided into constitutional components known as Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) and Regions (Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Capital).

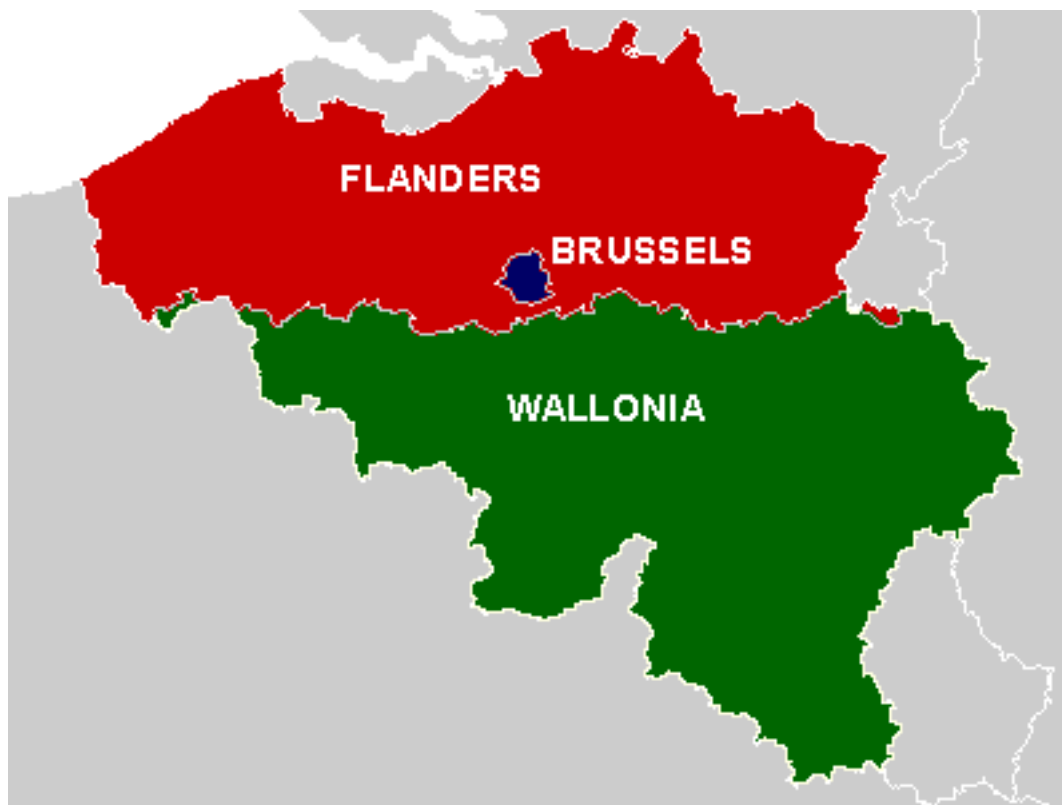


Figure 2 – Three Belgium regions (Source: <http://www.flanders.be/>)

According to Albrechts (2001) the process of federalization in Belgium is a very unique planning experiment and it clearly shows that “a combination of legislative as well as executive powers gives more strength to the regions to tackle their own problems, face their own challenges and decide on their own priorities”. However, the author recognises that there is a struggle to cope with a complexity of policy instruments scattered over different governmental levels.

Belgium is divided into constitutional components known as Communities and Regions:

- Communities, with competences concerning culture, education, certain aspects of healthcare, language matters and co-operation between Regions and Communities
- Regions, competent for economic policies, employment, energy matters, transport, agriculture, local authorities, environment, territorial planning and housing

The three communities set up in 1980 are:

- The Flemish Community (corresponding to the Dutch speaking area – it consists of the inhabitants of Flanders and the Dutch-speaking inhabitants of the bilingual region Brussels-Capital)
- The French Community (inhabitants of the French speaking area and French speaking inhabitants of Brussels)

- The small German-speaking Community (corresponding to the German language area)

The three regions (shown in Figure 2) are:

- The Flemish Region (corresponding to the Dutch language area)
- The Walloon Region (corresponding to the French and German language area)
- The Brussels Capital Region (corresponding to the bilingual area)

The Flemish Region consists of the provinces of West Flanders, East Flanders, Antwerp, Limburg and Flemish Brabant. Originally, responsibilities of the Flemish Region and Flemish Community were distinct: the region was responsible for regional matters such as town and country planning, nature conservation, housing, water policy, environment, economics, energy policy, local authorities, employment policy, public works and transport; while the Community was responsible for personal (health, welfare) and cultural matters, education and training, and co-operation between communities and regions. However, Flanders decided to merge these responsibilities and, consequently, there is now one Flemish Parliament, one Flemish Government and one public administration which is responsible for community and regional matters.

Overall, Belgium has six Parliaments and six Governments. Apart from the federal Parliament (consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate) and the federal Government, there are the different Parliaments and Governments for each of the three Communities and for two of the three Regions.

APPENDIX 2: Partner organisations' information

Regional Landscape and the Agency for Nature and Forest are important VLM partners. Further information about them is presented below:

Regional Landscape (RL) organisations were setup in 2006 by the Flemish Government in areas with natural beauty, coherence, and potential for biodiversity, aiming to work directly with the local population in educational and “place-making” & “place-keeping” activities in these nature areas, making nature, landscape and biodiversity known among the residents. There are 13-14 Regional Landscape organisations in Flanders, three of which are in West Flanders province. They work with the municipalities in their region. The Regional Landscape organisation has a board of directors, which consists of: (a) 1/3 politicians, members of the government, (b) 1/3 from nature and environmental organisations, and (c) 1/3 from hunting, agriculture, recreation and tourism organisations. RLs are financed by different organisations, such as in the case of the Ijzer& Polder Regional Landscape organisation, which is financed by the “Agency for Nature and Forest” of the Flemish government, the “Agency for Monuments and Landscape” of the West Flanders province, and by the municipalities they work with. These municipalities contribute structurally and also with an amount per head per year, plus co-financing projects (around 30%, although larger communities pay more).

They work with the province, local municipalities, agricultural organisations, tourism organisations, and schools. Every three years the Regional Landscape organisation has to write a report of activities to be presented to the Flemish Government, more specifically to the Minister of Environment, Nature and Landscape.

The **Agency for Nature and Forest (Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos - ANB)** of the Flemish Government is responsible for management and maintenance of 40'000 ha of land in whole Flanders. It is the result of the fusion of two previously existing agencies respectively responsible for nature, and for forests and water. They also provide technical support to municipalities and provinces where they have public forests. They deal with policy, land maintenance and enforcement, in close collaboration with VLM in policy development.

In the Province of West Flanders 8'000 to 9'000 ha of land is owned by ANB or there is an agreement with owners (mostly governmental organisations) to maintain them. They also sell wood for others. The province of West Flanders has three regions with one regional manager each. Within these regions there are 17 rangers and 50 workers doing maintenance work. There is an overall support team, which organizes tendering processes and work supervision. Another division of the agency is responsible for policy development and they deal with regulation and enforcement, working closely with VLM on this. In summary, there are three key divisions within ANF: (1) policy; (2) maintenance (of own land and working with other landowners); (3) enforcement.

Website: <http://www.natuurenbos.be>