

Functions of green and blue infrastructure



Nature and biodiversity: Valleys in a peri-urban context often serve as hotspots for protected fauna and flora, such as the tree frog, the grass snake or rare orchids.



Water retention: Naturally meandering streams not only stimulate biodiversity, but also act as water buffers offering protection against flooding during heavy rainfall events.



Water quality improvement: Enhanced water quality is favorable for people, animals and plants.



Green environments for outdoor activities and as meeting places:

Green spots in a peri-urban context can be designed as attractive places to meet people. By connecting these stepping stones, a green network is developed that stimulates cycling, hiking, jogging....



Health and well-being: Green spots not only provide fresh air but also offer a retreat from urban stress.



Green business sites: Working in a beautiful green landscape enhances productivity and well-being.



Green living environments: Attractive green neighborhoods and green elements between residences increase real estate value.



Sustainable food production: A tree orchard or pesticide-free community garden provides local and sustainable food.



Climate adaptation: Green climate-proof environments can help to cope with climate change impacts, such as alternating periods of drought and heavy rain.



Environmental education: People building their own living environment, learn more about nature and appreciate it more.



Are you interested in the development of green/blue infrastructure? Or do you want to know more about integrated planning for multifunctional land use? Then please let us know!

Besides the local info moments and workshops that are scheduled to design the 6 pilot areas, European networking and several dissemination events are organized during the project (2014-2019).

For more information, check our website
www.green4grey.be

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GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR GREY PERI-URBAN LANDSCAPES

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In Flanders, open space loss amounts to 6 hectares a day, one of the highest rates in the European Union. Grey landscape elements for housing industry, infrastructure, etc. have made Flanders the most fragmented and second most sealed EU region. Moreover, the importance of open space is undervalued.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

This project aims to convert the scarce remaining open space fragments in a greying peri-urban context into ecological stepping stones with a multifunctional character. By upgrading and connecting natural and semi-natural landscape elements, such as pools, orchards and watercourses, the so-called green/blue infrastructure, an ecological framework will be developed throughout built-up areas. These ecological stepping stones have a high social added value, as they fulfill multiple other functions

HOW DO WE WORK?

The Flemish Land Agency (VLM) invests together with partners in upgrading open space fragments in six pilot

areas in a peri-urban context. Three pilot areas are located in the 'Vlaamse Rand', i.e. the Flemish belt around Brussels (Asse, Zaventem, Kraainem, Wezembeek-Oppem and Beersel), and three in De Wijers, a natural system of ponds and valleys under pressure of the peri-urban region Hasselt-Genk (Genk and Diepenbeek). Development visions designed together with the different stakeholders are transformed into land development plans that aim to implement green and blue elements in the pilot areas (construction of pools, hiking paths,...). With this innovative, integrated and multifunctional method of building green/blue infrastructure, the project aims to contribute to the implementation of the EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy in EU peri-urban areas.

The project is based upon 5 cornerstones:

- 1) Natural landscapes in a peri-urban environment
- 2) Integrated planning for multifunctional land use
- 3) Participative design
- 4) Together with private companies
- 5) Towards an innovative blue/green policy



Transformation of a grey dull landscape in the 'Vlaamse Rand' (Kerremanspark, Asse) into a green landscape that combines different functions for inhabitants, visitors and businesses.



Aerial photograph by Dauteweyers (Diepenbeek): Open space fragment in peri-urban context with high ecological potential.

