

Innovative design & development of multifunctional green & blue infrastructure in Flanders, grey peri-urban landscapes

Project background

In Europe, approximately 75% of the population lives in urban areas and this is expected to increase to around 80% by 2020. Every day, open space continues to be converted into housing, commercial and industrial buildings, and infrastructure such as roads, railways and airports. In Flanders, open space loss amounts to seven hectares/day, one of the highest rates in the European Union. These grey infrastructure elements have made Flanders the most fragmented and the second-most sealed EU region (after Malta).

The impacts of urban sprawl on peri-urban landscapes in Flanders and Europe include:

- a) Loss of natural habitats for species;
- b) Lack of natural water retention areas;
- c) Negative impacts on water quality;
- d) Negative impacts on human health, mental/physical wellbeing, recreation, social interaction; and
- e) Impacts in terms of climate adaptation.

Project objectives

The project will demonstrate the innovative development and design of multifunctional green and blue infrastructure (GI&BI) elements in peri-urban areas. These elements will deliver multiple ecosystem services and functions for many different interested parties. The seven densely populated pilot areas covered by the project are part of the peri-urban areas of Brussels and Hasselt-Genk. The investment in GI&BI in these areas will stimulate an integrated and multifunctional approach to the environmental and health problems linked to unsustainable urban sprawl and the greying of artificial peri-urban landscapes.

This integrated, multifunctional method of building GI&BI in densely populated peri-urban areas (such as Flanders) will be a major contribution to the implementation of the EU's Green Infrastructure Strategy in EU peri-urban areas.

Expected results

- Increased/optimised water levels and improved conditions for tree frogs and other amphibians;
- Seven ponds and six pools restored and three ecological transformations of artificial basins;
- Three restored water courses, six natural retention zones and one natural stream valley;
- 4 ha peri-urban forest and four ha natural grassland created, 100 trees and bushes planted, 1 km hedge-rows/tree rows planted, 3 ha of orchards created on former agricultural land;

LIFE13 ENV/BE/000212

LIFE-GREEN4GREY



Beneficiary:

Type of beneficiary

Regional authority

Name of beneficiary

Vlaamse Landmaatschappij

Postal address

Gulden Vlieslaan, 72

B - 1060 Brussels

BELGIUM

Phone +32 1665276

Fax N/A

Email pieter.decorte@vlm.be

Name of contact person

Pieter DE CORTE

Duration of project:

60 months (01/07/2014 – 30/06/2019)

Total budget in euro:

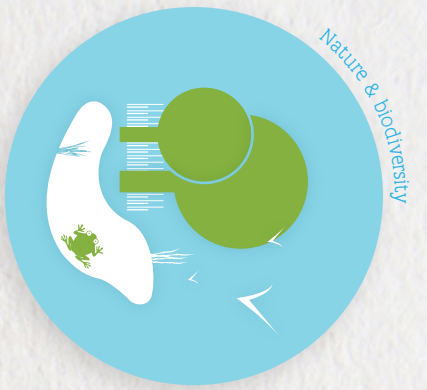
4,352,355.00

EC contribution in euro:

1,671,415.00

Themes: Biodiversity issues: Urban biodiversity / Information-Communication: Public and Stakeholder participation / Land-use and Planning: Urban design

- An 11 ha upgraded habitat area (including private gardens) for tree frogs;
- Several housing districts protected from flooding;
- 3 km of new natural meandering water course/valley and six natural water retention areas;
- Up to 7 km of hiking paths established and six meeting areas in attractive and green landscapes;
- One greener neighbourhood and five greener living environments;
- Two improved ecological areas surrounding business sites;
- Improved environmental performance in 10% of the business areas tackled;
- 3 ha of sustainably cultivated orchards for local beer production;
- Two action plans for larger peri-urban valley systems; and
- An expert group to promote new GI&BI initiatives in other EU peri-urban regions.



Nature & biodiversity



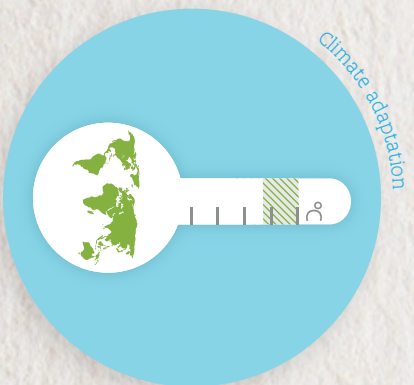
Green living environment



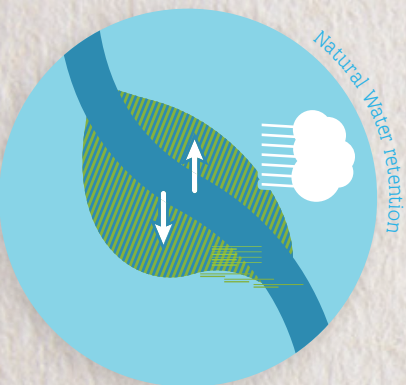
Water quality improvement



Learning about our environment



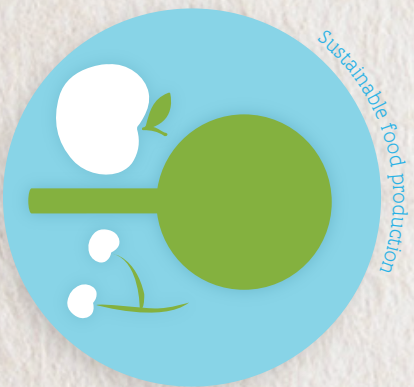
Climate adaptation



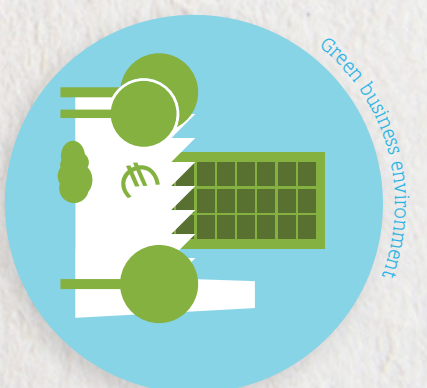
Natural Water retention



Health, well-being & relaxation



Sustainable food production



Green business environment



Outdoor recreation & social interaction



VLAAMSE
LAND
MAATSCHAPPIJ

