



RAMSAR CONVENTION

Ramsar National Report to COP15

Help desk

If you have any questions or problems, please contact Secretariat staff at nationalreports@ramsar.org. Use of this email address will facilitate a timely response from the Secretariat.

Link to online tutorials on how to access and use the ORS:

<https://www.ramsar.org/document/ramsar-online-reporting-system-tutorial>

Find previous reports here: <https://www.ramsar.org/search>

Link to sample National Report Submission Letter: <https://www.ramsar.org/document/national-reports-cop15-sample-letter>

Please read the general guidance section before starting to complete the form.

Section 1: Institutional Information

Important note: The responses below will be considered by the Convention on Wetlands Secretariat as the definitive list of your focal points. All individuals listed below agree that the submitted information will be used to update the information in the Secretariat's contact database and will be published on the public website here Contacts on website.

Name of Contracting Party

The completed National Report **must be accompanied by a letter** in the name of the Head of Administrative Authority, confirming that this is the Contracting Party's official submission of its COP15 National Report. It can be attached to this question using the "Manage documents" function (blue symbol below)

Link to sample National Report Submission Letter: <https://www.ramsar.org/document/national-reports-cop15-sample-letter>

>>> Belgium

You have attached the following documents to this answer.

[Submission letter Ramsar National report 2024.pdf](#)

Designated Administrative Authority for the Convention on Wetlands

Name of Administrative Authority

>>> Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)

Head of Administrative Authority - name and title

>>> Hilde Eggermont, Dr.

Mailing address

>>> Hilde Eggermont

Vlaamse Overheid

Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek

Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Telephone

>>> +320473613675

Email

>>> hilde.eggermont@inbo.be

Designated National Focal Point for the Convention on Wetlands

Name and title

>>> Belgium: Dr. Merlijn Jocque (INBO), Regional FPs: Walloon Region : Ir. Catherine Debruyne and Lucy Rivière (Direction générale de l'Agriculture, des Ressources naturelles et de l'Environnement); Flemish Region : Dr. Merlijn Jocque (INBO); Brussels Region : Olivier Beck (Brussels Institute for Environmental Management)

Mailing address

>>> NFP: Havenlaan 88, Brussels, Belgium;

Walloon Region : Avenue Prince de Liège 15, 5100 Jambes, Belgium;

Flemish Region : Havenlaan 88 1000 Brussels, Belgium;

Brussels Region : Tour & Taxis, Aile Ouest, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Telephone

>>> +32489436537

Email

>>> merlijn.jocque@inbo.be

Designated Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) National Focal Point

Name and title

>>> Merlijn Jocque, Dr.

Name of organisation

>>> Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)

Mailing address

>>> Merlijn Jocque
Vlaamse Overheid
Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek
Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Telephone
>>> +32489436537

Email
>>> merlijn.jocque@inbo.be

Designated Government Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Programme National Focal Point

Name and title
>>> Merlijn Jocque, Dr.

Name of organisation
>>> Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)

Mailing address
>>> Merlijn Jocque
Vlaamse Overheid
Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek
Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Telephone
>>> +32489436537

Email
>>> merlijn.jocque@inbo.be

Designated Non-Governmental Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Programme National Focal Point

Name and title
>>> Merlijn Jocque, Dr.

Name of organisation
>>> Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek (INBO)

Mailing address
>>> Merlijn Jocque
Vlaamse Overheid
Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek
Havenlaan 88 bus 73, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Telephone
>>> +32489436537

Email
>>> merlijn.jocque@inbo.be

Section 2: General summary of national implementation progress and challenges

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP14 reporting)

A. What have been the five main achievements of the implementation of the Convention since COP14?

1)

>>> To tackle water scarcity and drought, the Government of Flanders launched the Blue Deal in 2020. The Blue Deal is an ambitious programme that tackles water scarcity and drought in the field through a multitude of campaigns, including measures on restoring and better managing wetlands. In 2022 the Government of Flanders adopted the Flemish climate Adaptation Plan (Vlaams Adaptatieplan). This plan defines that a multiannual programme for the creation and restoration of wetlands has to be elaborated and implemented.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/2023-05/Vlaams%20Klimaatadaptatieplan%202030.pdf>

2)

>>> Demonstrated continuous commitment to the Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Water Framework Directive by developing and implementing river basin management plans in Flanders (Stroomgebiedbeheerplannen) and a Regional Water Resources Scheme (Schéma Régional des Ressources en Eau), ensuring sustainable management and protection of biodiversity and water resources in a long term vision.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicatorsheets/EAU%20Focus%202.html>

<https://www.integraalwaterbeleid.be/nl/stroomgebiedbeheerplannen/stroomgebiedbeheerplannen-2022-2027>

https://natura2000.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/vlaams_natura_2000-programma.pdf

3)

>>> Successfully expanded the Ramsar site 'Schorren van de Beneden Schelde' (site 327) by creating 1.7 km² of new brackish intertidal wetland in Belgium and 3 km² in the Netherlands. This extension connected 13 km² of Belgian and 30 km² of Dutch nature reserves, forming the cross-border national park 'Groot-Saeftinghe' through the European Interreg Project (Grenspark Groot Saeftinghe).

4)

>>> The ongoing implementation of the Sigmaplan along the Scheldt river created new wetlands and improved the quality of existing wetlands.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.sigmaplan.be/en>

5)

>>> The establishment of the UNESCO Geopark Schelde Delta, covering Ramsar sites Zwin (site 328) and 'Schorren van de Beneden Schelde' (site 327) represents a significant step forwards in preserving these vulnerable ecosystems. The recent recognition by the Flemish Government of four National Parks and five Landscape Parks, with two overlapping Ramsar sites—Scheldevallei National Park and Zwinstreek Landscape Park—reinforces the region's commitment to biodiversity conservation and sustainable ecosystem management. In the Water-Land-Schap 1.0 and 2.0 initiative, regional coalitions collaborate on area-specific strategies, where local governments, associations, researchers, and farmers work together to implement measures that combine sustainable agriculture with climate-resilient landscapes and waterways.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vlm.be/nl/projecten/vlm-projecten/waterlandschap/Water-Land-Schap2.0/Paginas/default.aspx>

<https://www.natuurenbos.be/dossiers/nationale-parken-vlaanderen>

<https://www.scheldedelta.eu/en>

B. What have been the five main challenges in implementing the Convention since COP14?

1)

>>> Improving water quality.

2)

>>> Coping with external pressures that negatively impact the environmental quality of wetlands such as

nitrogen deposition.

3)

>>> FL: A major challenge is the ongoing structural drought in Flanders, which extends far beyond the acute drought in the summer of 2022. Structural desiccation remains the most significant issue, with hydrological restoration needed in 193 of the 221 subzones of the Special Protection Zone under the Habitat Directive (SPZ-H) (Speciale Beschermingszone - Habitatrichtlijn), primarily through rewetting efforts. This challenge is further compounded by the broader demands outside of SPZ-H, such as those addressed by the Blue Deal and the Flemish Adaptation Plan to tackle climate change.

4)

>>> The creation and management (e.g. grazing) of intertidal nature is largely affected by the proliferation of pollutants like PFAS/PFOS and more strict regulations about pollutants and their treatment.

5)

>>> The complex interplay of responsibilities between the Flemish-, Brussels- and Walloon Regions and the Federal State.

C. Please outline five priorities for implementing the Convention in your country during the coming triennium (2026-2028)

1)

>>> FL and WA: adoption and implementation of the LULUCF action plan.

2)

>>> FL: implementation of the Flemish Climate Adaptation Plan and the Nitrogen Remediation Plan as part of the Programmatic Approach to Nitrogen.

3)

>>> FL and WA: implementation of the Nature Restoration Law.

4)

>>> FL: An overview of challenges for wetland management in Flanders is available in the Nature Report 2023 from the Institute of Nature and Forest Research (INBO) (link here, Dutch only).

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/59344>

5)

>>> Evaluating and extracting insights from the Sigma Plan II, and converting and expanding these into an adapted Sigma Plan III, including further expansion of natural flood zones, such as the enlargement of the Beneden Schelde by adding 200 hectares of intertidal nature in the 'Doelpolder Midden' project, while integrating it into an agricultural landscape with enhanced ecological quality.

E. Does the Administrative Authority have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to be developed)?

>>> Cooperation in the evaluation and implementation regarding the agreement between CBD and Ramsar.

F. In accordance with paragraph 21 of Resolution XIII.18 on Gender and wetlands, please provide a short description about the balance between genders participating in wetland-related decisions, programmes and research.

>>> X 50%, Z 50%

K. Please list the names of the organizations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report.

>>> Institute of Nature and Forest Research (Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek, INBO)
Agency for Nature and Forests (Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos, ANB)
Public Service of Wallonia (Service publique de Wallonie, SPW)

Section 3 - all goals: Indicator questions and further implementation information

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

Section 3 - Goal 1. Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15]

Target 1

Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 14]

1.1 Have any actions been taken since COP14 to integrate wetland protection, wise use and restoration, or wetland benefits, into other national strategies and planning processes, including: {1.1}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|---|---|
| a) National policy or strategy for wetland management | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| b) Poverty eradication strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| c) Water resource management and water efficiency plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| d) Coastal and marine resource management plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| e) Integrated coastal zone management plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| f) National forest management plan/strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| g) National policies or measures on agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

| | |
|---|---|
| h) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| i) National policies on energy and mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| j) National policies on tourism | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| k) National policies on urban development | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| l) National policies on infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| m) National policies on industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| n) National policies on aquaculture and fisheries {1.3.3} | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| o) National plans of actions (NPAs) for pollution control and management | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| p) National policies on wastewater management and water quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| q) National policies, strategies or plans on sanitation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| r) National policies, strategies or plans on food security | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Y=Not Relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

1.1 Additional information

>>> FL: Wetlands protection and conservation measures are included in the Integral Water Policy Decree (Decreet integraal waterbeleid), the Nature Decree (Natuurdecreet), nature management plans for specific regions, and key environmental and strategic Frameworks in Flanders and Belgium:

Stroomgebiedbeheerplannen 2022-2027 (River Basin Management Plans)
Blue Deal/VAP (Vlaamse Adaptatieplan - Flemish Adaptation Plan)
Coastal Vision (Kustvisie)
Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (Strategisch Plan GLB)
Belgian Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2030 (Belgische Biodiversiteitsstrategie)

Wetland protection and conservation measures are also included in the integrated Long Term Vision for the Scheldt Estuary (2030), combining sustainable accessibility, flood control and ecosystem functioning, including the updated SIGMA flood control plan. A revision and update of the SIGMA II plan began in 2024, with the SIGMA III plan expected to launch in 2025-2026. This new plan will incorporate nature-based solutions to address the impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to flood risk and environmental preservation.

WA : The aim of the Plans de gestion des districts hydrographiques (PGDH) is to establish measures to improve the quality of surface and groundwater. The aim of the 2022-2027 PGDH is to achieve good status for water bodies by 2027. Plans de gestion des districts hydrographiques - État de l'environnement wallon (wallonie.be). The Regional Water Resources Scheme (SRRE) Schéma régional des ressources en eau - État de l'environnement wallon (wallonie.be) develops an integrated approach to water resources management, taking into account environmental and territorial development issues in a long-term vision for the Walloon region. The EU Water Directive provides a framework for all its regulations to maintain the good status of water bodies.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicatorsheets/EAU%20Focus%202.html>

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicatorsheets/EAU%2021.html>

https://www.biodiv.be/sites/be/files/2023-11/EN-Strat_2020.pdf

<https://lv.vlaanderen.be/beleid/landbouwbeleid-eu/gemeenschappelijk-landbouwbeleid-qlb/2023-2027-algemeen-kader#Wat%20is%20het%20GLB?>

<https://www.kustvisie.be>

https://bluedeal.integraalwaterbeleid.be/over-blue-deal/blue_deal_clean_tw.pdf

<https://sgbp.integraalwaterbeleid.be>

<https://navigator.emis.vito.be/detail?wold=296>

<https://navigator.emis.vito.be/detail?wold=75697>

Target 2

Water users respects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 7, Sustainable Development Goal 6, Indicator 6.3.1]

2.1 Have the Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands and the additional guidance on tools and methodologies been brought to the attention of national ministries and/or agencies at different levels of territorial organizations (Resolutions VIII.1, VIII.2)? {2.1}

☒ C=Partially

2.1 Additional Information

>>> FL: The Ijzer catchment basin management plan is part of the Scheldt and Meuse River Basin Management Plans for the 2022-2027 period. It was formally approved by the Flemish Government on July 1, 2022, as part of the overall 2022-2027 management plans. For the Ramsar Site 'Ijzerbroeken', target water levels have been established for the Blankaart basin and agreed upon through a protocol involving all relevant water managers and stakeholders.

WA : With the PGDH and management agreement with the Société publique de gestion de l'eau (SPGE) Société Publique de la Gestion de l'Eau (spge.be)

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.spge.be/fr/index.html?IDC=1>

<https://sgbp.integraalwaterbeleid.be/bekkens/ijzerbekken>

2.2 Have assessments of environmental flow been undertaken in relation to mitigation of impacts on the ecological character of wetlands? {2.2}

☒ C=Partially

2.2 Additional Information

>>> Environmental flow refers to the quantity, timing, and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater ecosystems and the human livelihoods that depend on them; while this concept is being explored for the Meuse, it has not yet been structurally incorporated into the current management documents.

For the Scheldt estuary minimal discharge was agreed upon and monitored since 2021 on the boundary in Ghent for water quality guarantee. This was implemented in a framework for priority water use; see background also Buysse et al. 2021. Advice on the ecological vulnerability of navigable waterways during drought conditions, with a specific focus on the methodology referenced in this context. Assessments of environmental flow have been undertaken in relation to the mitigation of impacts on the Meuse River. During periods of low flow (<130 m³/s), the distribution of water from the Meuse between the Netherlands and Flanders is regulated by the treaty between the Flemish Region and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, signed in Antwerp on January 17, 1995. This agreement ensures the equitable management of the Meuse's water resources, helping to maintain the ecological character of its wetlands. Additionally, the agreement between the French Republic and the Kingdom of Belgium regarding the Chooz nuclear power plant, signed on September 8, 1998, and incorporated into French law by decree no. 98-1004 on October 30, 1998, further ensured environmental oversight, contributing to the protection of the Meuse River's wetland ecosystems.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vmm.be/water/projecten/afwegingskader-prioritair-watergebruik-tijdens-droogte>

2.3 Have the designation or management of Wetlands of International Importance ("Ramsar Sites") improved the sustainable use of water (e.g. reduced drainage, reduced use of pesticides, controlled pollution etc.) in your country?

☒ B=No

2.3 Additional Information

>>> FL and WA: The designation of Ramsar sites does not confer additional legal status or protection, nor does it ensure enhanced conservation or sustainable use of these areas. Since the Belgian Ramsar sites are predominantly also designated as Natura 2000 sites, their protection is already secured under Flemish and European environmental legislation.

2.4 Have the Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands (Resolutions VIII.1 and XII.12) been used/applied in decision-making processes? {2.3}

☒ C=Partially

2.4 Additional Information

>>> River Basin Management Plans (Stroomgebiedbeheerplannen 2022-2027)

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://sgbp.integraalwaterbeleid.be>

2.5 Have projects that promote and demonstrate good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands been developed {2.4}

☒ A=Yes

2.5 Additional Information

>>> In the context of the Blue Deal/VAP (Vlaamse Adaptatieplan - Flemish Adaptation Plan) a monitoring guidance has been developed. This guide contains signposts for choosing accessible monitoring techniques and shows how we can apply these for some current terrain measures.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

https://bluedeal.integraalwaterbeleid.be/over-blue-deal/blue_deal_clean_tw.pdf

2.6 Does the country use constructed wetlands/ponds as wastewater treatment technology? {2.8}

☒ C=Partially

2.6 Additional Information

>>> Belgium has several practical examples of using constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment. These systems are implemented both for municipal and agricultural wastewater treatment, offering a low-maintenance and cost-effective solution. For example: Rietland Bvba, a Belgium-based company, has implemented over 250 projects across the Benelux region. They specialize in systems like the Forced Bed Aeration system for enhanced wastewater treatment efficiency. One of their notable projects is the Badboot in Antwerp, where they installed an aerated wetland system aboard a floating swimming pool. Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) are used in rural Flanders to treat both domestic wastewater and manure from agricultural operations. These wetlands are found effective in nutrient removal, although certain systems, especially those treating municipal wastewater, face challenges with nitrogen and phosphorus

removal.

Target 3

Public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 7, 10, 15, 16 and 18]

3.1 Has your country put in place policies, including incentives, guidelines or other instruments to encourage the private sector to apply the wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise use of wetlands) in activities and investments related to wetlands? {3.1}

☒ A=Yes

3.1 Additional Information

Please specify if it was applied for policy formulation or in implementation of good practice.

>>> FL: These policies are put in place in the context of the implementation of the Blue Deal.

WA: Improve water quality with farmers | PROTECT'eau (protecteau.be)

PROTECT'eau works with farmers to improve water quality through sustainable agricultural practices, helping reduce the impact of farming on water resources and promoting environmentally friendly farming techniques.

WA: Reduce pressure on water resources (leswallonssadaptent.be). This initiative focuses on reducing water resource pressure, offering strategies and solutions to help Wallonia adapt to climate change and manage water more sustainably, especially in areas facing water scarcity.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

https://leswallonssadaptent.be/les_mesures/reduire-la-pression-sur-la-ressource-en-eau/

<https://www.protecteau.be/fr>

https://bluedeal.integraalwaterbeleid.be/over-blue-deal/blue_deal_clean_tw.pdf

3.2 Has the private sector undertaken any activities or actions for the conservation, wise use, and management of (a) Ramsar Sites or (b) wetlands in general? {3.2}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| a) Ramsar Sites | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| b) Wetlands in general | <input type="checkbox"/> Y=Not relevant <input type="checkbox"/> X=Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

3.2 Additional information

>>> Nature Management Plan (NBP-WV-18-0007) "De Blankaart," approved on May 17, 2021, spans 352.5718 hectares, owned and managed by Natuurpunt NPO.

More small initiatives are likely to have happened, but little centralised information is available on this.

3.3 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {3.3}

☒ A=Yes

3.3 Additional information

Please specify the types of incentive measures (loans, tax breaks, or others).

>>> FL: Within the framework of the Blue Deal, a grant call (Projectsubsidies Natte Natuur) was organised in 2021 by the Agency for Nature and Forest (ANB) launched for the creation of restoration of wetlands by private associations or local authorities.

3.4 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which lead to degradation or loss of wetlands? {3.4}

☒ Z=Not Applicable

Target 4

Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 6]

4.1 Does your country have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands? {4.1}

☒ C=Partially

4.1 Additional information

>>> Belgium maintains a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands. This inventory is documented in the Belgian Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS) checklist (Desmet et al. 2023), which includes species associated with freshwater and estuarine environments. While this checklist may not be entirely comprehensive, it is believed to be nearly complete. Also an invasive species list is available on Harmonia, an information system dedicated to alien species threatening native biodiversity in Belgium and in neighbour areas.

WA: Projet TRIAS

Desmet P, Reyserhove L, Oldoni D, Groom Q, Adriaens T, Vanderhoeven S, Pagad S (2023). Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species - Belgium. Version 1.13. Invasive Species Specialist Group ISSG. Checklist dataset <https://doi.org/10.15468/xoidmd> accessed via GBIF.org on 2024-08-28.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

https://www.belspo.be/belspo/brain-be/projects/TriAS_fr.pdf

<https://ias.biodiversity.be/species/all>

<https://griis.org/>

4.2 Has your country adopted any national policies, strategies, or guidelines on invasive species control and management that are relevant for wetlands? {4.2}

☒ C=En partie

4.2 Additional information

>>> Belgian authorities have set up a collaboration agreement to implement the provisions of the EU IAS Regulation (1143/2014). This includes the drafting and execution of action plans to reduce invasion levels of Union List species in freshwater habitats, as well as the prevention and management of aquatic species listed under this Regulation. More information is available on www.iasregulation.be

FL: Flanders' efforts focus on species from the EU Regulation nr. 1143/2014 on invasive alien species (himalayan balsam, bullfrog, crayfish,...) and some for Flanders relevant species (Asian loach, Canadian goose, Australian swamp crop,...). Given the large, and ever expanding, set of alien species occurring in wetlands, not all species are managed equally intensively, or successful. In 2024 prioritisation guidelines have been set by the Flemish government to allocate means for management actions more efficiently. A management regulation plan has also been implemented for muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) (the PriUS report).
WA : RIPARIAS : Guides, Stratégie de gestion des espèces exotiques envahissantes dans les bassins versants de la Dyle, de la Marcq et de la Senne

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.riparias.be/fr/359/>

<https://pureportal.inbo.be/nl/publications/een-kader-voor-de-aanpak-van-invasieve-uitheemse-soorten-in-vlaan>

<http://www.iasregulation.be>

4.3. Has your country successfully controlled through management actions invasive species of high risk to wetland ecosystems? {4.3}

☒ G=More than #

>>> 30

4.3 Additional Information

>>> As mentioned in 4.2 Flanders focuses mainly on the EU list species, and several others. The PriUS report describes 95 species in total. Besides the Union List, some other relevant species have been determined in the LIFE DUNIAS en LIFE RIPARIAS projects. Furthermore, some additional species are being managed as part of regular nature management (e.g. *Crassula helmsii*) RIPARIAS species list

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.riparias.be/en/4/>

<https://www.riparias.be/nl/4/>

<https://www.natuurenbos.be/projecten/life-dunias#toc-ken-ijj-deze-woekerplant->

4.4 Has the effectiveness of wetland invasive alien species control programmes been assessed? {4.5}

☒ C=Partially

4.4 Additional Information

>>> The effectiveness of control programs for invasive alien species in wetlands has been assessed primarily for certain species under the RIPARIAS project, particularly focusing on aquatic plants. Additionally, past assessments have included species such as Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) (Reyns et al. 2018) and the muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) (Huysentruyt et al. 2022).

FL, Bxl and WA: The population size for some managed bird species is assessed on a yearly basis (e.g. Ruddy duck, greater Canada goose). Also, aquatic invasive rodents (muskrat and coypu) are under systematic management, with innovative management methods and dataflows in support of cross-border management developed under the LIFE MICA (Management of Invasive Coypu and muskrat in Europe, 2019-2023) project, and their population size is monitored in that framework. but for most of the managed species, no formal surveys are performed that allow for assessing management effectiveness. LIFE RIPARIAS (ongoing) is aiming to improve that workflow and includes an assessment of management effectiveness at river basin scale in its KPI's for invasive aquatic and riparian plant species. We are also exploring eDNA monitoring as a way of surveying management effectiveness, specifically for invasive amphibians such as American bullfrog and African clawed frog. Flanders manages the invasive Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*) through the Interreg North Sea Project 'Clancy,' which aims to significantly reduce the population in European rivers. The project involves using specially designed traps that minimise bycatch while effectively capturing the crabs during their migration.

Huysentruyt F, Van Moer K, Adriaens T (2022) Testing the efficacy of different Larson trap designs for trapping Egyptian geese (*Alopochen aegyptiaca* L.) in Flanders (northern Belgium). *Management of Biological Invasions* 13(2): 391–405, <https://doi.org/10.3391/mbi.2022.13.2.08>

Reyns N, Casaer J, De Smet L, Devos K, Huysentruyt F, Robertson PA, Verbeke T, Adriaens T. 2018. Cost-benefit analysis for invasive species control: the case of greater Canada goose *Branta canadensis* in Flanders (northern Belgium) *PeerJ* 6:e4283 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4283>

Section 3 - Goal 2. Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 11, 13, 14, 15]

Target 5

The ecological character of Ramsar Sites is maintained or restored through effective planning and integrated management

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 3 and 5]

5.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List? {5.1}

☒ D=Planned

5.1 Additional information

>>> FL: The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) made an analysis of potential sites for the further designation of Ramsar Sites. No political decision has been made yet so far to designate new Ramsar Sites.

5.2 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {5.3}

☒ E=# Sites

>>> 9

5.3 How many of the Ramsar Sites are actively implementing their management plan? {5.4}

☒ E=# Sites

>>> 9

5.4 How many Ramsar Sites are implementing management actions outside of formal management plans? {5.5}

☒ E=# Sites

>>> 6

5.2 – 5.4 Additional information

>>> FL: All of the 5 Flemish Ramsar Sites are implementing their management plan.

A nature management plan for Natura 2000 has been developed for the Ramsar Site 'Schorren van de Beneden Schelde' (Ramsar Site nr. 327) which is being implemented. This management plan also includes the recent extension of the Beneden Schelde (Hedwige Prosperpolder). This management plan is integrated in the overarching Sigmaplan (www.sigmaplan.be) which approaches management on the system (entire estuary) scale.

The Ramsar Site Zwin (nr. 328) has a management plan set up (Cosyns et al. 2014), which is being implemented by enlarging the tidal inlet (x2) and an extension in 02/2019 of 1.2Km². (Cosyns et al. 2014). There is also a management plan for the Ramsar Site 'Kalmthoutse Heide' (Ramsar site nr. 330) which is being implemented. De Ijzerbroeken (Ramsar site nr. 329) at Diksmuide and Lo-Reninge actively apply a Nature Management Plan (NBP-WV-18-0007) "De Blankaart," approved on May 17, 2021, spans 352.5718 hectares, owned and managed by Natuurpunt NPO and The nature reserve Ijzer- en Handzamevallei (BANR-WV-14-0010) managed by the Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos (ANB). The management plan for the site was approved on August 29, 2014, and the reserve covers an area of 709.3117 hectares.

WA: All of the 4 Walloon Ramsar sites are actively implementing their management plan.

The Hautes-Fagnes site (1405) is included in a natural park with its own management plan. The Nature Park is managed by a Management Commission, which draws up a management plan and oversees its implementation. Many areas have natural reserve status and/or are in the Natura 2000 network. The Hautes-Fagnes Life project has restored almost 2 800 ha of moorland and peat bogs. This life project has enabled the most effective restoration techniques to be identified, and these techniques are still being used today to continue the restoration of these rare habitats.

WA: The Haute-Sure valley (1407) is also included in a natural park with its own management plan. This site is also in the Natura 2000 network and managed according to the EU water directive.

The Grotte des émotions site (1406) is a highly protected cave. As it is totally forbidden to enter the cave in order to preserve the unique and very well-preserved geological structure, the management plan is to leave the cave as it is.

WA: For Marais d'Harchies (1405): The age of the management plan (2005) inevitably leads to the application of management measures that are not included in the management plan. These measures are based on a situation and objectives that have inevitably changed over time. New financial tools such as the PWDR have also enabled work to be carried out that was not provided for in the management plan. Thus, in 2024-2025, various works will be carried out on the marsh, aimed at reopening wooded areas and allowing the reed bed to develop. None of these actions are specifically included in the 2005 management plan.

Cosyns, E., Courtens, C., Lebbe, L., Provoost, S., Van Colen, C., Agten, L., Vincx, M., Verbelen, D., Lambrechts, J. en Zwaenepoel, A. 2014. Gebiedsvisie voor het grensoverschrijdende uitgebreide Zwin en beheerplan voor het uitgebreide Zwin aan Vlaamse zijde. Wvi, INBO & Ghent University, commissioned by Nature & Forest Agency, Brugge, 252 p. + Annexes

5.5 Have all Ramsar Sites been assessed regarding the effectiveness of their management (through formal management plans where they exist or otherwise through existing actions for appropriate wetland management)? {5.6}

If "yes", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites

If "partially", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites

If "planned", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites

☒ C=Partially

>>> 6

5.5 Additional information

Please provide the source links or upload the source documents here indicating the assessment tool used (e.g. Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), Resolution XII.15), and the source of the information.

>>> FL: This is a continuous exercise. All the management plans are being assessed every 6 years, based on the quality of the targets and the implemented management measures.

The evolution of the Scheldt Ramsar Site (nr. 327) continues to be evaluated by a wider Management Commission 'Linker Schelde Oever' as well as by the 'Flemish-Dutch Scheldt Commission' (Vlaam Nederlandse Schelde Commissie). This means that the evaluation of this Ramsar Site forms part of an evaluation of a much wider area (document here, Dutch only). For the Zwin Ramsar Site (nr. 328), a monitoring is set up. The first results have been published in 2015 (Cosyns et al. 2015) and 2022 (Cosyns et al. 2022).

WA : Hautes-fagnes (site 1405): The effectiveness of management work is assessed by monitoring certain biological groups (flora, avifauna, odonates).

For Marais d'Harchies (1405) : No official assessment of the effectiveness of management is carried out on the site. Only 'routine' information - mainly ornithological and entomological - is collected and fed into a standardised database managed by Natagora. Specific additional monitoring (eg breeding ardeids) complements this information. The collected data is sometimes correlated with the management carried out, without being an indicator of its effectiveness.

References

Cosyns E., Jacobs I., Jacobs M., Lambrechts J., Provoost S., Van Braekel A., Van Colen C., Verbelen, D., & Zwaenepoel A. 2015. Monitoring van het natuurherstel in het Zwin 2011-2015. Eindrapport. WVI, INBO,

Natuurpunt & Ghent University, commissioned by Nature & Forest Agency, Brugge, 266 p. + Annexes

Cosyns E., Desaegeer S., Faveyts W., Jacobs M., Jansen J., Lambrechts J., Moens T., Paredis R., Provoost S., Simons T., Van Braeckel A., Van Colen C., Van Oost F., Vanoverbeke J., Vercruysse W., Verhelst P. & Zwaenepoel A. 2022. Monitoring van het natuurherstel in het grensoverschrijdende Zwin 2011 - 2021. Eerste tussentijds rapport WVI, INBO, Natuurpunt Studie & Universiteit Gent i.o.v. WVI, Brugge. i.o.v. Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos, de Vlaams Nederlandse Schelde commissie en de Provincie Zeeland.

5.6 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {5.7}

☒ E=# Sites

>>> 5

5.6 Additional information

>>> FL:

The Scheldt Ramsar Site (nr. 327) has a cross-sectoral management committee and a website with all monitoring data: www.beheercommissienatuurlinkerschedeover.be.

The Zwin Ramsar Site (nr. 328) is being addressed within the Flemish-Dutch Scheldt Commission, linking needs for coastal and estuarine flooding protection and ecological conservation.

For the Blankaart nature development project (part of site 329, De Ijzerbroeken te Diksmuide en Lo-Reninge) there is a commission and committee of involved stakeholders led by the VLM (Flemish Land Agency).

WA : Hautes-Fagnes site (1405) has a cross-sectoral management committee

WA: Marais d'Harchies (1405) : The management committee can be likened to an intersectoral management committee in that it is made up of a majority of local stakeholders (owners [DNF & Natagora], management staff [DNF], researchers [DEMNA], government service staff [DNF & DEMNA], interest groups and non-governmental organisations [Crié d'Harchies, local Aves section]. There is no source document for distribution other than the Ministerial Designation Order establishing this management committee.

5.7 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared (see Resolution X.15)?

☒ E=# Sites

>>> 9

5.7 Additional information

For example give the name and official number of the Site or Sites.

>>> Ecological descriptions are part of the developed management plans and include the 5 Flemish Ramsar Sites (326, 327, 328, 329 and 330) and 4 Walloon Ramsar sites (331, 1405, 1406, 1407).

5.8 Resolution VI.13 urges Parties to give priority to providing the Secretariat with maps and completed Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for all Sites designated for the Ramsar List, and to revise this data at least every six years. If your country has not updated its RIS as required, describe the challenges in updating RIS, particularly descriptions of ecological character.

>>> The updates are in preparation at the moment of reporting and will be uploaded before the end of 2024.

Target 7

Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed {2.6.}.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 3, 4 and 10]

7.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2? {7.1}

☒ A=Yes

7.1 Additional information

If "Yes", please provide the source links or upload the source documents here describing the mechanisms established

>>> FL: At the Scheldt Ramsar Site (nr. 327) this is being implemented by a management commission ('Beheercommissie Linkeroever').

A monitoring programme has been set up for the Zwin Ramsar Site (nr. 328) (also: see under § 5.6) and for the Kalmthoutse Heide Ramsar Site.

7.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2? {7.2}

☒ O=No Negative Change

Section 3 - Goal 3. Wisely Using All Wetlands

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.
[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15]

Target 8

National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 21]

8.1 Does your country have a National Wetland Inventory (NWI)? {8.1}

☒ C=In Progress

8.1 Additional information

For example, if “in progress” or “planned”, by when will it be completed?

>>> Federal: all protected marine areas are included in the Marine Spatial Plan 2020-2026 (Royal Decree dd 22 May 2019).

WA: Walloon Natura 2000 sites are categorised by habitats, which include wetlands.

- Wetlands of biological interest are one of the strict nature conservation protected areas in the Walloon Region. Their listing is kept up to date.

- The Walloon Region has registered all "protected areas" according to the Water Framework Directive. This register includes : Natura 2000 sites, areas designated for the abstraction of water intended for human consumption; recreational waters; nutrient-sensitive areas.

FL: Covered by 'Watervlakken'(all stagnant waters ≥ 1.5 m²), 'Watergangen' in het Grootschalig Referentiebestand Vlaanderen (GRB) and the 'Biological valuation maps (scale of 1/25000)'. These comprise detailed morphological and ecological maps with indication of land use and habitat types, including wetlands. Additional inventories exist on an ad hoc basis or as a contribution to specific plans (restoration, management of a.o. nature reserves). Maps are accessible on: <http://geo-vlaanderen.agiv.be/geo-vlaanderen>
The conservation status of Natura 2000 habitats (incl. wetlands) is monitored in a network representative at regional level. There is also ecological monitoring taking place for the Water Framework Directive (not comprising smaller water bodies). Data on Ramsar Sites are also being updated based on the Natura 2000 reporting.

For the IBAs, see: <http://datazone.birdlife.org/country/belgium/ibas> .

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/inbo/de-biologische-waarderingskaart/wat-is-de-biologische-waarderingskaart/>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/digitaal-vlaanderen/onze-diensten-en-platformen/basiskaart-vlaanderen-grb>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/inbo/datasets/watervlakken/>

8.2 If your country has an NWI, has it been updated in the last decade [2014-2024]? {8.2}

☒ C1=Partially

8.2 Additional information

>>> See 8.1 and links

8.3 How often is the NWI updated?

☒ A=Regular intervals ≤ 6 years

8.3 Additional information

>>> Watervlakken is a georeferenced digital dataset of standing surface waters in Flanders and is updated every two years (available for 2020, 2022, 2024). The file, created through a combination of existing topographic map layers, orthophotos, the Digital Terrain Model of Flanders version II, and limited fieldwork, contains 93,135 polygons ranging in size from 1.45 m² to 2.47 km². It is considered the most comprehensive representation of standing water bodies currently available for the Flemish territory.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/inbo/datasets/watervlakken/>

8.4 Is wetland inventory data and information publicly available? {8.4}

☒ C=Partially

8.6 According to the Convention's definition and classification of wetlands, the disaggregated information on wetland extent is as follows

Note: The minimum information that should be provided is the total area of wetlands for each of the three major categories; “marine/coastal”, “inland” and “human-made”.

If the data on inventories are partial or not complete, use the available information to fill in the form, specifying if it is partial or not complete.

Guidance on information on national wetland extent can be consulted at: <https://www.ramsar.org/document/guidance-on-information-on-national-wetland-extent>.

>>> The total area of wetlands for Wallonia is 170,5 km²

The total area of wetlands (including marine) for Flanders is 751 km²
totalling 921,5km² for Belgium.

8.6 Marine/Coastal Wetlands

| | Square kilometers (km ²) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| A -- Permanent shallow marine waters | 250,2 |
| B -- Marine subtidal aquatic beds | |
| C -- Coral reefs | |
| D -- Rocky marine shores | |
| E -- Sand, shingle or pebble shores | |
| F -- Estuarine waters | 42,8 |
| G -- Intertidal mud, sand or salt flats | 14,4 |
| Ga -- Bivalve (shellfish) reefs | |
| H -- Intertidal marshes | 16,3 |
| I -- Intertidal forested wetlands | |
| J -- Coastal brackish/saline lagoons | |
| K -- Coastal freshwater lagoons | |
| Zk(a) -- Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems | |

8.6 Marine/Coastal Wetlands total (km²)

>>> 323,7

8.6 Inland Wetlands

| | Square kilometers (km ²) |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| L -- Permanent inland deltas | |
| M -- Permanent rivers/streams/creeks; includes waterfalls | 262,5 |
| N -- Seasonal/intermittent/irregular rivers/streams/creeks | |
| O -- Permanent freshwater lakes | 53,9 |
| P -- Seasonal/intermittent freshwater lakes | |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Q -- Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes | |
| R -- Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline lakes and flats | |
| Sp -- Permanent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools | |
| Ss -- Seasonal/intermittent saline/brackish/alkaline marshes/pools | |
| Tp -- Permanent freshwater marshes/pools | 110,9 |
| Ts -- Seasonal/intermittent freshwater marshes/pools on inorganic soils | |
| U -- Non-forested peatlands | |
| Va -- Alpine wetlands | |
| Vt -- Tundra wetlands | |
| W -- Shrub-dominated wetlands | |
| Xf -- Freshwater, tree-dominated wetlands | |
| Xp -- Forested peatlands | |
| Y -- Freshwater springs; oases. | |
| Zg -- Geothermal wetlands | |
| Zk(b) - Karst and other subterranean hydrological systems | |

8.6 Inland Wetlands total (km2)

>>> 427,3

8.7 How has the ecological character of wetlands in your country, overall, changed since COP14 ? {8.5}

Ecological character is the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterize the wetland at a given point in time.

Please select only one per square.

| a) Ramsar Sites | <input type="checkbox"/> P=Status improved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O=No change <input type="checkbox"/> N=Status deteriorated |
|---------------------------------|---|
| b) All wetlands in your country | <input type="checkbox"/> P=Status improved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> O=No change <input type="checkbox"/> N=Status deteriorated |

8.7 Additional Information

>>> No differentiation between natural and man-made wetlands is available. For Wallonia only the total wetland surface is available.

The calculation of inland water covers Flanders only and includes M - Permanent rivers, streams, and creeks, based on the watercourses from the GRB (Grootschalig Referentiebestand, 2024), using a selection of the VHA (Vlaamse Hydrografische Atlas, 2023) watercourses, excluding the canals. O - Permanent freshwater lakes (over 8 ha) and Tp - Permanent freshwater marshes and pools (below 8 ha) cover, both calculated based on

the Water surfaces (Watervlakken) dataset, version 1.3 from 2024.

The calculation of the estuarine wetland areas is based on information gathered from the MONEOS (Monitoring en Evaluatie van het Sigmapijn) habitat monitoring. The Sigma Plan is a flood protection and nature restoration initiative in Flanders, Belgium, designed to manage the Scheldt river and its tributaries to prevent flooding while promoting ecological conservation. MONEOS refers to the ongoing efforts to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of this plan. Additionally, information collected for the WFD is used to supplement the information for Zwin and Yser wetlands (See the link for the ongoing program at INBO here).

The calculation of the marine area is based on the "Extended wetland ecosystem layer" and the category 'Marine waters less than six meters deep at low tide'. This information layer is from 2018 and is based on Corine Land Cover.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/inbo/datasets/watervlakken/>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/inbo/projecten/egr-overgangswateren>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/moneos-geintegreerd-datarapport-inbo-toestand-zeeschelde-monitoringsoverzicht-en-1ste-lijnsrapportage-geomorfologie-diversiteit-habitats-en-diversiteit-soorten>

<https://land.copernicus.eu/en/products/corine-land-cover>

https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/extended-wetland-ecosystem-layer/folder_contents

8.8 On a scale of **1-5** rate the change in the ecological character of wetlands in your country, overall, since last COP

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| a) Marine/coastal | <input type="checkbox"/> 5=major improvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4=improvement <input type="checkbox"/> 3=no change <input type="checkbox"/> 2=deterioration <input type="checkbox"/> 1=major deterioration |
| b) Inland | <input type="checkbox"/> 5=major improvement <input type="checkbox"/> 4=improvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3=no change <input type="checkbox"/> 2=deterioration <input type="checkbox"/> 1=major deterioration |
| c) Human-made | <input type="checkbox"/> 5=major improvement <input type="checkbox"/> 4=improvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3=no change <input type="checkbox"/> 2=deterioration <input type="checkbox"/> 1=major deterioration |

8.8 Additional Information

>>> The expert evaluation of the change in the ecological character of wetlands in Belgium, since COP14, is further supported by the following information:

FI: Online information on the Vlaamse Milieu Maatschappij (VMM) website (Dutch only) based on the WFD (Water Framework Directive) assessments.

Decreasing emissions of oxygen-binding substances and nutrients have led to improved concentrations of oxygen, nitrogen, and phosphates in waterways the last ten years. However this improvement has been leveling off and remained constant the last years. Alongside a slower pace in the development of public water purification infrastructure, the extreme weather conditions of recent years have also had a significant impact. For dissolved oxygen for instance, a crucial parameter in aquatic habitats, in the waterbodies followed for the WFD, in 2022, 51% of Flemish water bodies met the standard for dissolved oxygen. Oxygen concentrations in surface water slowly improved between 2007 and 2013, but this trend has not continued since then. No significant change was observed for major nutrient (nitrates, fosfates, etc) concentrations in the monitored surface waters the last years. The target value for the average nitrate concentration (18 mg nitrate per liter) is achieved in 101 of the 179 assessed drainage zones, which corresponds to 50% of the agricultural area. With regards of the ecological habitat quality, of the 195 Flemish water bodies followed for the WFD, only 1 (0.5%) achieved a good ecological status in the most recent assessment. 36% scored as moderate, indicating these Flemish water bodies are relatively close to the target. However, 64% of Flemish water bodies were rated as poor or inadequate, implying that significant measures are still needed to reach a good ecological status.

The ecological characteristics were studied without distinguishing between natural and artificial wetlands. Taken together, the ecological characteristics of these wetlands have not changed significantly.

In terms of the biological status of surface water bodies, 49% of surface water bodies have a good or very good biological status, compared with 48% in 2015 État biologique des masses d'eau de surface - État de l'environnement wallon.

For eutrophication, the percentage of monitoring sites with good to very good water quality has increased by

an average of 1% per year Eutrophisation des cours d'eau - État de l'environnement wallon.

For nitrogenous matter in watercourses, for the period 2016-2018, 66.9% of sites had a good to very good quality compared with 74.4% of sites for the period 2013-2015 Teneurs en matières azotées dans les cours d'eau - État de l'environnement wallon.

For the content of organic pollutants in watercourses, the percentage of monitoring sites with good to very good water quality has increased by an average of 0.8% per year Teneurs en polluants organiques dans les cours d'eau - État de l'environnement wallon.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.vmm.be/water/kwaliteit-waterlopen/ecologische-toestand>

<https://www.vmm.be/water/kwaliteit-waterlopen/nutrienten-in-oppervlaktewater>

[51% of Flemish water bodies met the standard for dissolved oxygen](#)

[Vlaamse Milieu Maatschappij \(VMM\)](#)

8.9 What are your main needs in developing or updating an NWI to support SDG Indicator 6.6.1 reporting for tracking global wetland status and trends? Please select below. {8.7}

| | Yes |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a) Access to data and data acquisition standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Wetland delineation methods and approaches | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Habitat classifications | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Standardization in data interpretation methods | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Regulatory framework and governance structure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Relevant skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Data collection and mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Others | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8.10 Please select from the list below the main needs of your country in using NWI results to implement COP mandates, e.g. conservation and wise use of all wetlands (Resolutions X.2, XIII.12, XIII.13, XIII.14, XIII.16, XIV.17 and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)) to achieve sustainable development.

| | Yes |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| a) Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Relevant skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Data systems and management | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Application of NWI information for decision making (climate, biodiversity and sectoral planning/reporting) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Regulatory framework and governance structure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Data interpretation and communication | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| g) Collaboration | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Others | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Target 9

The wise use of wetlands is strengthened through integrated resource management at the appropriate scale, inter alia, within a river basin or along a coastal zone {1.3.}.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 9, 10 and 15].

9.1 Is a national wetland policy (or equivalent instrument) that promotes the wise use of wetlands in place? {9.1}

☒ A=Yes

9.1 Additional information

>>> BE: The governance is based on the European Water Framework Directive, therefore, integrated planning and governance is fundamental to water management.

FL: The National Wetland Policy currently consists of river basin management plans that contain several actions for hydrological restoration of wetlands. A more developed wetland policy undoubtedly will be developed in the context of the implementation of the Nature Restoration Law.

The framework of the water policy in Flanders is described in the Decree on Integrated Water Policy (Decreet Integraal Waterbeleid). It distinguishes 4 integrated policy planning levels and plans: the River Basin District (Scheldt and Meuse), the regional level (Flanders), the sub-basin level with the river catchment areas and the groundwater level. It also provides for specific instruments such as the "water check" on the level of individual projects. Through the Decree on Integral Water Policy (managed by the Flemish Environment Agency (June 2018) that includes the Water Division) many programmes have been set up to develop water management plans, improve water quality and quantity and the biological status. Via the Integrated Water Policy Coordination Commission, the Agency coordinates the consultation on the integrated water policy between all the parties concerned at the Flemish level.

There is still ample room for improvement of integrated management of smaller water bodies and their surroundings.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://codex.vlaanderen.be/PrintDocument.ashx?id=1030008&datum=&qeannotteerd=false&print=false#H1089749>

9.2 Since COP14 have any amendments to existing legislation or policies been made to reflect commitments under the Convention on Wetlands? {9.2}

☒ A=Yes

9.2 Additional information

>>> In 2022 the Government of Flanders adopted the Flemish climate Adaptation Plan (VAP). This plan defines that a multiannual programme for the creation and restoration of wetlands has to be elaborated and implemented.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/nl/klimaat-en-milieu/klimaat/vlaams-klimaatadaptatieplan>

9.3 Do your country's water governance and management systems recognize wetlands as natural water infrastructure integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins? {9.3}

☒ A=Yes

9.3 Additional information

>>> BE: See under Section 9.1.

This falls under the European Water Framework Directive. The implementation is carried out by the different regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and the Federal government, whereby the level of 'river basin' is included.

FL : In Flanders, this is coordinated by a commission which coordinates the integrated water policy (CIW : Coördinatiecommissie Integraal Waterbeleid). This commission is responsible for the preparation, planning, control and follow-up of the integrated water policy and implements the decisions taken by the Flemish Government. It is a meeting platform for all agencies involved in water policy, including the water companies. This cooperation results in a well coordinated and integrated implementation of all water policy and-management. This Commission (CIW) is appointed to implement the Water Framework Directive and the Flooding Directive in Flanders.

9.4 Have communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA) expertise and tools been incorporated into catchment/river basin planning and management (see Resolution X.19)?

{9.4}

☒ A=Yes

9.4 Additional information

>>> FL: Measures such as participation, awareness, information etc. are part of the "Program of measures" of the River Basin Management Plans. They may be formulated on a regional, river-basin or local level. Working groups have been established within the framework of individual RAMSAR-sites, such as the extension of Zwin Ramsar Site.

WA : The 11 CRIEs (Centres Régionaux d'Initiation à l'Environnement - Regional Centres for Environmental Initiation) are spread across the country, enabling every Walloon to find activities close to home. The CRIE network strives to offer varied, high-quality environmental education activities that are accessible to all.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.crie.be/?PagePrincipale>

9.5 Has your country established policies or guidelines for enhancing the role of wetlands in mitigating or adapting to climate change? {9.5}

☒ C=Partially

9.5 Additional information

>>> FL:

- A regional climate adaptation strategy was adopted in 2013 (link here, Dutch only) and extended in 2023 (link here) and gives special focus on water management and biodiversity.

- The river basin management plans 2022-2027 integrate the flood risk management plans as well as the drought risk management plans. Both foresee protection and use of wetlands as part of the risk management.

- For the Scheldt river system, strategies have been established, related to the flooding control and are being implemented on a site specific project basis in the Sigmaplan.

- Establishment of the Blue Deal in July 2020: "Minimising risks of water shortage and flooding".

- By the end of 2023 a draft LULUCF action plan was handed over to the minister of environment. In that plan the important role of wetlands in carbon sequestration is emphasised.

WA:

The Walloon government has set up the PLUIES plan (Prevention and Fight against Floods and their Effects on Disaster Victims): a warning system, a flood management plan and actions to reduce vulnerability. This plan was first updated to take account of climate change and is currently being evaluated and revised. (http://environnement.wallonie.be/de/dcenn/plan_pluies/index.htm). Although it was put in place before there was any real talk of adapting to climate change, this plan is a fine example of a concrete measure relating to adaptation.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.sigmaplan.be/nl>

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/veka/energie-en-klimaatbeleid/vlaams-energie-en-klimaatplan-vekp-2021-2030>

<https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/2022-10/Vlaams%20adaptatieplan%202013-2020.pdf>

9.6 Has your country included wetland actions in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and other related national policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation?

☒ C=Partially

9.6 Additional Information

>>> FL: To tackle water scarcity and drought, the Government of Flanders launched the Blue Deal in 2020. The Blue Deal is an ambitious programme that tackles water scarcity and drought in the field through a multitude of campaigns, including measures on restoring and better managing wetlands. In 2022 the Government of Flanders adopted the Flemish climate Adaptation Plan (VAP). This plan defines that a multiannual programme for the creation and restoration of wetlands has to be elaborated and implemented.

9.7 Has your country formulated policies, plans or projects to sustain and enhance the role of wetlands in supporting and maintaining viable farming systems? {9.6}

☒ C=Partially

9.7 Additional information

>>> FL: The European Nature Restoration Regulation was adopted in June 2024 and will come into force in August 2024. One of the goals/targets of this regulation is to restore organic soils in agricultural use constituting drained peatlands.

In the CAP, support is part of the investment support for « non-productive investments », such as management of ditches, erosion measures, infiltration and retention basins.

9.8 Has research to inform wetland policies and plans been undertaken in your country on: {9.7}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| a) agriculture-wetland interactions | <input type="checkbox"/> C=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| b) climate change | <input type="checkbox"/> C=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| c) valuation of ecosystem services | <input type="checkbox"/> C=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

9.8 Additional information

>>> WA : Etude adaptation - Awac - Agence wallonne de l'air et du climat

WA : Nature Value Explorer-Les services écosystémiques en Wallonie

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://services-ecosystemiques.wallonie.be/fr/nature-value-explorer.html?IDD=4102&IDC=5948>

<https://awac.be/2024/05/03/etude-adaptation/>

9.9 Has your country made efforts to conserve and wisely use urban and peri-urban wetlands in line with Resolutions XI.11 and XIV.10? {9.8}

☒ C=Partially

9.9 Additional information

>>> FL:

'Watervlakken' (all stagnant waters ≥ 1.5 m²), 'Watergangen' and the 'Biological valuation maps (scale of 1/25000)'. These comprise detailed morphological and ecological maps with indication of land use and habitat types, including wetlands. Additional inventories exist on an ad hoc basis or as a contribution to specific plans (restoration, management of a.o. nature reserves). (see § 8.1 and 8.2).

Any change to small ponds ('drinking water holes') and streams in the wider (agricultural) landscape is by law subject to prior permission granted by the local authorities. This is part of the wider legal protection of small landscape elements in Flanders, in place since 1998. Compliance and follow-up are, however, quite limited due to insufficient resources.

Within the framework of the Blue Deal, a grant call was organised in 2021 by the Agency for Nature and Forest launched for the creation of restoration of wetlands by private associations or local authorities (Projectsubsidies Natte Natuur).

Uniform Fertilization-, pesticide-, and cultivation-free zones of either 3 or 5 meters, depending on the area type and crop type, along waterways within the nitrate action plan - MAP7 (Report link).

In the Gemeenschappelijk Landbouwbeleid (GLB) (Common Agricultural Policy) 2023-2027, the focus is on addressing the current and future needs of farmers and horticulturists. In the new GLB, the previous greening measures have been replaced by new voluntary initiatives known as "eco-schemes (ecoregelingen)" en agromilieuklimaatmaatregelen (AMKM). The eco-scheme "Buffer Strips" encourages the establishment of various buffer strips along agricultural fields, such as grass strips for erosion control, grass buffer strips along vulnerable landscape features or waterways, and buffer strips with a mix of grasses, herbs, or flowers. These buffer strips help reduce runoff of pesticides or fertilizers into waterways, hedgerows, and wooded edges.

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://lv.vlaanderen.be/subsidies/perceelsgebonden/gemeenschappelijk-landbouwbeleid-2023-2027>

https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/2024-07/PL0316_kennisgeving.pdf

Target 10

The traditional knowledge innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities relevant for the wise use of wetlands and their customary use of wetland resources, are documented, respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with a full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 22]

10.1 Do you have national legislation or equivalent on indigenous and local communities at all relevant levels in wetland management, and/or Site management?

☒ B=No

10.1 Additional Information

>>> Local and traditional practices are integrated into wetland management and restoration projects in Belgium. They may not fall under specific national legislation for indigenous communities, but they reflect a broader commitment to sustaining traditional and cultural practices that have coexisted with wetland ecosystems for centuries. An overview of this information is lacking at the moment.

10.3 Have case studies on the participation of indigenous people in projects or successful experiences on cultural aspects of wetlands been compiled? (Resolutions VIII.19 and IX.21) {10.1}

☒ B=No

10.5 Have traditional knowledge and management practices relevant to the wise use of wetlands been documented and their application encouraged {10.3}

☒ A=Yes

10.5 Additional information

>>> BE: Included in the nature management plans of the sites.

Target 11

Wetland functions, services and benefits are widely demonstrated, documented and disseminated. {1.4.}
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 11, 12 and 13]

11.1 Has an assessment been made of the ecosystem benefits/services provided by Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {11.1}

☒ C1=Partially

11.1 Additional information

If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate how many Ramsar Sites and their names

>>> In 2013 and in 2019 a study has been made that provides insight into the social benefits of European Special Protected Areas (N2000).

Eindrapport Raming van de baten geleverd door het Vlaamse NATURA 2000-netwerk. Broekx Steven, De Nocker Leo, Liekens Inge, Poelmans Lien, Staes Jan, Van der Biest Katrien, Meire Patrick, Verheyen Kris. 2013. Studie uitgevoerd in opdracht van: Agentschap Natuur en Bos (ANB/IHD/11/03) door VITO, Universiteit Antwerpen en Universiteit Gent 2013/RMA/R/87.

Globale Socio-Economische Impactanalyse van de uitvoering van het Vlaams Natura 2000 programma. Broekx Steven, Beckx Carolien, Liekens Inge, Hambsch Lorenz, De Nocker Leo, Desmet Lieven, Patrick Meire, Leone Michael, Jacobs Sander, Vrebois Dirk, Staes Jan. 2019. Studie uitgevoerd in opdracht van: Agentschap Natuur en Bos 2019/RMA/R/2005

11.2 Since COP14, have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to food and water security and hence poverty alleviation been implemented? {11.2}

☒ Y=Not Relevant

11.3 Since COP14 have wetland programmes or projects that contribute to other benefits for human well-being been implemented?

☒ A=Yes

11.4 Have socio-economic values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands? {11.3}

☒ C=Partially

11.4 Additional information

If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate, if known, how many Ramsar Sites and their names

>>> In addition to ecological vision objectives, the economic and social vision and objectives are also part of a nature management plan.

11.5 Have cultural values of wetlands been included in the management planning for Ramsar Sites and other wetlands in general? {11.4}

☒ A=Yes

11.5 Additional information

>>> Yes, cultural values have been integrated into the management plans for Ramsar Sites in Belgium. Specifically, for the Ramsar Sites 'La Vallée de la Haute Sure' and 'Zwin', this is an integral part of their management plans. Furthermore, three out of the four Ramsar Sites in Flanders are also partially protected as heritage landscapes. As a result, the preservation of cultural and historical values is legally mandated and forms a crucial component of the overall management of these areas.

Target 12

Restoration is in progress in degraded wetlands, with priority to wetlands that are relevant for biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and/or climate change mitigation and adaptation.
[Reference Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 2, 8 and 11]

12.1 Have national wetland restoration targets been established?

☒ A=Yes

12.1 Additional Information

>>> FL: priority sites coincide with Natura 2000 areas for which restoration programmes are being developed.
FL: In the Flemish climate Adaptation Plan a target for the creation and restoration of wetlands is incorporated: 20.000 ha by 2030.
WA : Life B4B, Projet LIFE VALLEES ARDENNAISES | La biodiversité en Wallonie

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/life-vallees-ardennaises.html?IDC=6290>

<https://www.lifeb4b.be/fr>

12.2 Have priority sites for wetland restoration been identified? {12.1}

☒ A=Yes

12.2 Additional information

If “yes”, please provide a list of sites, specifying wetland types

>>> FL: Restoration measures are being carried out for the Zwin Ramsar site: 1.2 Km²; the IJzerbroeken partly (sub-area ‘Blankaartbekken’: ca 9 Km²), the River Scheldt area; the coastal zone; the Nete river, and some sites along the river Maas.

12.3 Since COP14 have wetland restoration/rehabilitation programmes, plans or projects been implemented? {12.2}

☒ A=Yes

12.3 Additional information

Explain/clarify the data/statistics presented in the table above

>>> FL: In the context of the Blue Deal and the Nitrogen Remediation Plan as part of the Programmatic Approach to Nitrogen, a wetland restoration programme (without a specific surface target) is implemented.
WA : Peat bogs restauration in Hautes-Fanges, Life B4B

You have attached the following Web links/URLs to this answer.

<https://www.lifeb4b.be/fr>

12.4 Have the Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Resolution VIII.1) and Resolution XII.11 on Peatlands, climate change and wise use: Implications for the Ramsar Convention been implemented? {12.3}

☒ C=Partially

12.4 Additional Information

If “yes” or “partially”, please indicate the progress in implementation

>>> FL: The past two years the Integrated Water Policy Coordination Commission elaborated policy recommendations for a better protection and an effective recovery of peatlands in Flanders. It remains to be seen what the next Flemish government will do with these policy recommendations.

Target 13

Enhanced sustainability of key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture and fisheries when they affect wetlands, contributing to biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods.
[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 10 and 14]

13.1 Additional Information

>>> FL: Within the framework of the Blue Deal, a grant call (Projectsubsidies Natte Natuur) was organised in 2021 by the Agency for Nature and Forest (ANB) launched for the creation of restoration of wetlands by private associations or local authorities.

13.2 Are Strategic Environmental Assessment practices applied when reviewing policies, programmes and plans that may impact wetlands? {13.1}

☒ A=Yes

13.3 Is there a legal requirement in your country to conduct environmental impact assessments for development projects (such as new buildings, new roads, extractive industry) from key sectors (e.g., water, energy, mining and agriculture) that may impact wetlands? {13.2}

☒ A=Yes

13.3 Additional information

>>> RW: Environmental assessments of plans and programmes are included in the Walloon environmental code.
FL: Environmental assessments of plans and programmes are foreseen under the environmental assessment decree in the Flemish law.

Section 3 - Goal 4. Enhancing implementation

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17]

Target 15

Ramsar Regional Initiatives with the active involvement and support of the Parties in each region are reinforced and developed into effective tools to assist in the full implementation of the Convention.

15.1 Has your country been part of the development and implementation of a Ramsar Regional Initiative?? {15.1}

☒ B=No

15.2 Has your country supported or participated in the development of other regional (i.e., covering more than one country) wetland training and research centres? {15.2}

☒ B=No

Target 16

Wetlands conservation and wise use are mainstreamed through communication, capacity development, education, participation and awareness.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 21].

16.1 Has an action plan (or plans) for wetland CEPA been established? {16.1}

Even if no CEPA plans have been developed, if broad CEPA objectives for CEPA actions have been established, please indicate this in the Additional information section below

Please select only one per square.

| a) At the national level | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=In Progress <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
|--------------------------|--|
| b) Sub-national level | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| c) Catchment/basin level | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| d) Local/site level | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

16.1 Additional information

If “yes” or “in progress” to one or more of the four categories above

>>> BE: Through implementation of the Birds and Water Framework Directives.

16.2 How many centres (visitor centres, interpretation centres, education centres) that focus on wetlands have been established? {16.2}

a) at Ramsar Sites

☒ E=# centres

>>> 6

b) at other wetlands

☒ X=Unknown

16.2 Additional information

>>> FL: Ramsar-sites: at the 'Blankaart, at the 'Zwin' and at the 'Kalmthoutse Heide' (3 in total).

Other wetlands: e.g. Uitkerkse Polders, Buitengoor-Molse Meren, Hageven, Molsbroek, Nationaal Park Hoge Kempen, Zwarte Beek, Grote Netewoud, Grensmaas - De Wissen, Limburgs Vijvergebied - De Wijers, Bourgoyen, Liereman, Mechels Broek (12 in total).

RW: information centres in 3 of the 4 Walloon Ramsar Sites (3 in total).

Furthermore, there are 11 regional centres for environmental education (CRIE), several of them are oriented on wetlands such as the one of Harchies: <http://www.crie.be/CRIE-d-Harchies.html>

Centre Nature de Botrange <http://www.botrange.be/naccueil/fr/>, Natural parcs have their information centres, several of them have a section on wetlands like for the Haute Sure :

<http://www.parcnaturel.be/fr/accueil.html?IDC=339> ; <http://www.fpnw.be/>

Virelles Nature and its aquascope: <http://www.aquascope.be/>

(11 in total).

16.3 Does the Contracting Party {16.3}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|--|--|
| a) ensure stakeholder participation in decision-making on wetland planning and management | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| b) specifically involve local stakeholders in the selection of new Ramsar Sites and in Ramsar Site management? | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

16.3 Additional information

>>> FL:

- IJzerbroeken - nature development project: committee, steering group framework agreement...
- networking events for Natura 2000-sites.
- Public consultation through the Integrated Water Policy Committee action and processes.

16.4 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral national Ramsar/wetlands committee? {16.4}

☒ B=No

16.5 Do you have an operational cross-sectoral body equivalent to a national Ramsar/wetlands committee? {16.5}

☒ A=Yes

16.5 Additional information

>>> FL: There is a dedicated forum with stakeholders ('Gewestelijke Overleginstantie') for the implementation of Birds Directive (N2000).

16.6 Are other communication mechanisms (apart from a national committee) in place to share the Convention's implementation guidelines and other information between the Administrative Authority and: {16.6}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a) Ramsar Site managers | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
| b) other MEA national focal points | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |

| | |
|---|--|
| c) other ministries, departments and agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> D=Planned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C=Partially <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
|---|--|

16.6 Additional information

>>> Through the implementation of the Birds Directive.

On the Belgian level also communication via the Coordination Committee for International Environment Policy (CCIEP).

16.7 Has your country organized any Convention on Wetlands-branded World Wetlands Day events, whether led by government or NGOs, since COP14? {16.7}

☒ B=No

16.7 Additional information

>>> FL: In the Flemish Ramsar regions there are several events (such as guided tours) organised (sometimes by NGO's) about waterbirds.

WA: The Crié of Marais d'Harchies organised a guided tour of the area (on reservation) on World Wetlands Day.

16.8 Did your country undertake any campaigns, programmes or projects to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife during the World Wetlands Days since COP14? {16.8}

☒ A=Yes

16.8 Additional information

>>> FL: Since there are more drought problems, there is more media coverage about the importance of wetlands.

16.9 Has information about your country's wetlands and/or Ramsar Sites and their status been made public (e.g., through publications or a website)? {18.5}

☒ C=Partially

16.9 Additional Information

>>> Wa : For Hautes-Fagnes site (1405) There is a large amount of information available on the Hautes-Fagnes nature reserve, but not specifically on the Ramsar site.

Target 17

Financial and other resources for effectively implementing the Convention's fourth Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 from all sources are made available.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 19]

17.1 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency ("donor countries")] Since COP14, has the agency provided funding to support wetland conservation and management efforts in other countries? {17.3}

☒ A=Yes

17.1 Additional information

>>> A subsidy of 247500 EURO was provided to the Ramsar headquarters in Gland, Switzerland to support Contracting Parties in Africa to initiate or complete their national wetland inventories in line with Target 8 of the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2016 to 2024, as a key tool for effective management of wetlands on their territories.

17.2 [For Contracting Parties with a development assistance agency ("donor countries")] Have environmental safeguards and assessments been included in development proposals proposed the development of projects by the agency? {17.4}

☒ Z=Not Applicable

17.3 [For Contracting Parties that have received development assistance since COP14] Has your country received financial support specifically for national wetland conservation and management: {17.5}

Please select only one per square.

| | |
|---|---|
| a) from development assistance agencies of another country? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Z=Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| b) from non-national or multilateral development assistance agencies? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Z=Not applicable <input type="checkbox"/> B=No <input type="checkbox"/> A=Yes |
|---|---|

17.4 Has any financial support from the national budget been provided by your country to facilitate the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands? {17.6}

☒ A=Yes

Target 18

International cooperation is strengthened at all levels

18.1 Are the national focal points of other MEAs invited to participate in the national Ramsar /wetland committee? {18.1}

☒ A=Yes

18.1 Additional information

>>> The role of "Ramsar national committee" is taken up by the Coordination Committee for International Environmental Policy (CCIEP) Working group on Nature which ensures that Belgium brings well-argued opinions on environmental policy to the international scene. These coordinated point of views require a preceding debate both at technical and political level. Representatives from all regions and the federal level for all international or European nature related agreements are present (CMS (and its daughter agreements), CITES, Ramsar, CBD, ...).

18.2 Are mechanisms in place at the national level for collaboration between the Convention on Wetland's Administrative Authority and the focal points of UN and other global and regional bodies and agencies (e.g. UNEP, UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNECE, ITTO)? {18.2}

☒ A=Yes

18.2 Additional information

>>> Same as under 18.1.

18.3 Has your country received assistance from any of the following UN or other global and regional bodies and agencies in implementing the Convention on Wetlands since COP14? {18.3}

| a) UNEP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| b) FAO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) UNECE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) UNFCCC | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Global Environment Facility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) UNDP | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) UNESCO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) World Health Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i) World Meteorological Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j) ITTO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| k) The Convention's IOPs | <input type="checkbox"/> |

18.4 Has your country established international network(s), such as twinning arrangements, to facilitate knowledge sharing and training related to wetlands that share common features? {18.4}

☒ C=Partially

18.5 Have all transboundary wetland systems been identified? {18.6}

☒ A=Yes

18.5 Additional information

>>> Yes , according to the Water framework Directive, BE works on an international hydrological district basis.

18.6 Is effective cooperative management in place for shared wetland systems (for example, in shared river basins and coastal zones)? {18.7}

☒ C=Partially

18.6 Additional information

>>> FL: Flemish-Dutch River Scheldt Commission (Vlaams-Nederlandse Scheldecommissie), management of Zwin (#328) and Schorren van de Beneden Schelde (#327), evenals 'Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide' with management of Kalmthoutse Heide (#330).

WA : management plans are drawn up at international basin level and international plan, compilation of data and each country is responsible at its own level for what happens there with a management plan for each international river basin district.

18.7 Does your country participate in regional networks or initiatives for wetland-dependent migratory species? {18.8}

☒ A=Yes

18.7 Additional information

If "yes", please list which regional networks or initiatives

>>> Belgium is a Party to the CMS convention and the AEWA and Eurobats Agreements

Target 19

Capacity building for implementation of the Convention and its 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2024 is enhanced.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 20]

19.1 Has your country conducted any national needs assessment since COP14 to inform capacity building planning to implement the Convention's Strategic Plan? {19.1}

☒ B=No

19.2 Does your country or institution implement capacity development strategies or actions for the Convention's Strategic Plan?

☒ A=Yes

19.3 Are wetland conservation and wise-use issues included in formal education programmes (Resolution XIV.11)? {19.2}

☒ A=Yes

19.3 Additional information

>>> FL: An education is organised by Inverde ([link here](#))

19.4 How many training events for wetland site managers have occurred since COP14? {19.3}

a) at Ramsar Sites

☒ X=Unknown

19.5 Have you (AA) used your previous National Reports in monitoring implementation of the Convention? {19.4}

☒ B=No

