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Flanders Environment Report

# MIRA-PE 2005

POLICY EVALUATION



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Ochrolepis*

V

Vmm

MIRA - PE 2005 Flanders Environment Report:  
policy evaluation

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Flanders Environment Report:  
policy evaluation

MIRA-PE 2005

Presented on 21 October 2005 to Kris Peeters,

*Flemish minister for Public Works, Energy, the Environment and Nature*

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Vlaamse MilieuMaatschappij

Marleen Van Steertegem (final editing)

FLANDERS ENVIRONMENT REPORT: POLICY EVALUATION

**MIRA-PE 2005**

72 pp., 24.5 cm

D/2006/6871/008

© 2006, Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij, Aalst (Belgium)

*The use of texts from the report with acknowledgement to the source is encouraged.*

*Layout and cover design*

SignBox, Peter De Roy & Betty Reyniers

*Typesetting*

Ourtype Versa

*Linguistic correction*

Stein Pée

*Translation*

Oneliner Language & eBusiness Solutions BVBA (Belgium)

*Printed by*

Sintjoris nv, Merendree (Belgium)

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*Printed on 50% post-consumer recycled paper, chlorine-free and without optic bleach.*

*The illustrations on the cover and dividing pages are adaptations of pages from the Linnean Herbarium at the Swedish Museum for Natural History in Stockholm.*

## FOREWORD

'What can we learn from policy evaluations?' is the title of a new publication of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, in which around twenty environmental policy evaluations are reported and discussed<sup>1</sup>. The title perfectly summarises the purpose of policy evaluations: to learn from them; to discover mechanisms that work or identify problems in order to solve them.

Before you lies the latest policy evaluation report of the Flemish Environment Agency, in short MIRA-PE 2005. The report offers an overview of 24 evaluation studies of the Flemish environmental policy carried out during the past two years. It includes: instruments, policy measures, target groups, effects, side effects, justice, knowledge, power, unwillingness, ambition ... In summary, the report is about (environmental) policy and how this policy works (or does not work).

This is the second MIRA-PE report. It is itself part of a learning process in the shape of a step-by-step plan. MIRA-PE 2003 contained an introduction to policy concepts and four in-depth evaluations of aspects related to the water and waste policy. They were conceived as a basis for a more extensive research programme regarding policy evaluation on the one hand and for the creation of an expertise network in Flanders on the other. MIRA-PE 2005 builds on this: it offers five in-depth evaluations which refer to five components of the policy chain. But this latest report goes even further. An inventory of the key evaluation studies on the Flemish environmental policy provides more insight into the flaws of the system. Moreover, less well-known environmental policy areas are given attention as well.

In addition, the expertise network is further expanded. The MIRA-PE process and (the publications of) the Centre of Expertise on Environmental Policy Sciences, among others, have contributed to a greater familiarity with the activities of researchers from different research centres. Moreover, these researchers were provided with a forum in which to exchange ideas and cooperate. Some experts committed themselves as authors and researchers of a MIRA chapter, others chose to provide the MIRA-PE authors with the essential (quantitative and qualitative) data. In fact, high-quality and objective policy evaluations require the cooperation of people involved in the policy. Their enthusiasm and efforts are extremely valuable, instructive and an example.

We would like to thank everyone: the MIRA team for its coordination of this report, the authors for their research and their compelling synthesis, the revisors for their opinions and suggestions and the MIRA Steering Group for its critical reflection and creativity. Once more, a high-quality report has been produced, thanks to the efforts of many.

<sup>1</sup> Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (2004) 21 evaluations - what do they teach us? Naturvårdsverket, Stockholm ([www.naturvardsverket.se](http://www.naturvardsverket.se))

It is said that experience is the best teacher. This is certainly true for reporting on environmental policy evaluation. In other countries, more and more reports on policy evaluation are published. However, even there the tradition is limited and 'best practices' are scarce. MIRA belongs to the (select) club of leaders in this respect. Unfortunately, leaders often have to search for the right way: not an easy task. We are happy to take on the challenge.



Frank Van Sevenscoten  
*Administrator-general  
of the Flemish Environment Agency (VMM)*



Rudi Verheyen  
*Chairman of the MIRA  
Steering Group*

September 2005

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# Summary

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MIRA-PE is the biannual policy evaluation report of the Flemish Environment Agency (PE standing for 'Policy Evaluation'). Policy evaluation is defined as follows: the scientific analysis of a specific policy theme which is evaluated on the basis of criteria and serves as a starting point for the formulation of recommendations.

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MIRA-PE 2005 offers - after a chapter with more information on the characteristics of this report - an overview of the evaluation studies of (sub)areas of the Flemish environment policy published between 1 July 2003 and 31 May 2005. With this inventory, MIRA-PE 2005 fulfils the objective of being a work of reference with regard to policy evaluating studies in Flanders. After a discussion of the inventory, there is a summary of the 24 policy evaluations structured in files. The summary systematically shows the matter that was researched, the method, the findings and the recommendations of the policy evaluation.

The discussion of the inventory includes, in this order: the type of policy, the type of instrument, the type of evaluation, the environmental themes (linked to the Flemish Region's environmental spending), the evaluation criteria used, the ordering party and the evaluating institutions. One of the findings is that all policy and instrument types are researched more or less equally. Only the coordinating (environmental) policy is researched less. Secondly, attention is paid especially to ex-post and ex-nunc evaluations and process and product evaluations. In general, environmental themes for which a lower budget is available are evaluated less. One of the exceptions is the water policy, which absorbs more than half of the environmental budget, but is evaluated relatively little. Furthermore, only a limited number of evaluations talk about effectiveness. The great majority of the evaluations refer to the mutual coordination, integration, knowledge and capacity among the people involved in the policy etc. Most policy evaluations were ordered by the government. Most of the researchers who carried out the evaluations work for a university.

The discussion also investigates whether there is any correspondence between the inventoried publications with regard to methodology or content, whether they are neutral and independent, whether they are of high quality and which impact they could have on the formulation of a policy. From the inventory, it becomes clear that there are a number of hot topics: several studies researched enforcement, the international environmental policy and the role of the Flemish Region in it and the integration of the various government bodies. The effect of the studies on the policy is variable: we suspect that the evaluations initiated by the government itself could have quite a big impact, providing they are carried out by the people in charge of the policy.



# About MIRA-PE

## 1. What is MIRA-PE?

MIRA-PE is the Flemish Environment Agency's biannual report on the evaluation of the Flemish environment policy (PE stands for 'Policy Evaluation').

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Policy evaluation is defined as follows in this report: the scientific analysis of a specific policy theme which is evaluated on the basis of criteria and serves as a starting point for the formulation of recommendations.

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The content of MIRA-PE is determined by policy themes. A policy theme is (part of a) policy area (e.g. waste policy) and can refer to one or more instruments and/or one or more environmental issues for which a policy is carried out. Moreover, it can be about the agenda-setting, objectives, planning, execution, etc. of that policy. Other areas investigated by MIRA-PE are the consequences of the policy on the behaviour of the target groups (outcome) and/or on the environment (environmental effect).

The coming into being of MIRA-PE is quite a long story. Even though already in 1995 the regional legislator ordered the environmental reporting department to make policy evaluations, it was not until 2000 that this task was really started. Therefore, the first environmental reports did contain critical analyses of the environment policy, but they lacked in-depth evaluations. In May 2000, the then minister of the Environment asked the chairman of the MIRA steering group to report systematically on in-depth policy evaluations. The steering group opted for a step-by-step plan, starting by drawing up an inventory of existing policy evaluations and methods. The step-by-step plan had to lead to the creation of an expertise network (see paragraph 4 Where do we want to go?).

### MIRA

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MIRA stands for Flanders Environment Report ('Milieuraapport Vlaanderen' in Dutch). MIRA is coordinated by the Flemish Environment Agency (VMM) which has hired a project team for this purpose. MIRA's mission has been determined by decree and is threefold:

- a description, analysis and evaluation of the existing state of the environment;
- an evaluation of the environmental policy conducted up to now;
- a description of the developments expected in the environment in case of unchanged as well as amended policy in terms of a number of scenarios that are thought to be relevant.

The study of the state of the environment is presented in the annual MIRA-T reports. In 2000, the first full scenario report (MIRA-S 2000) was published. The first policy evaluation report (MIRA-PE) was published in June 2003.

All publications, figures and indicators from MIRA can be consulted on the website [www.milieuraapport.be](http://www.milieuraapport.be) (available in English).

The results of this inventory and of some in-depth policy evaluations was the subject of the first BE report in 2003.

## THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS INSTRUMENTS

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A steering policy instrument denotes an instrument used by the government to persuade, force or encourage a target group or another authority to implement a measure or to enable itself to take measures.

*Examples: Royal Decrees, decrees, covenants, licences, levies, subsidies, awareness campaigns, prevention ...*

A direct policy instrument denotes an effective activity of the government which intervenes in the physical environment and

is aimed at the creation of a specific situation.

*Examples: the construction of sewers, the collection of waste, the construction of roads, the construction of container parks, the planting of a row of trees ...*

Supporting instruments help with the choice of steering and direct policy instruments.

*Examples: planning, market creation, research and development, monitoring, information management ...*

## 2. What can you find in this report?

This English version of MIRA-PE contains an inventory and analysis of the evaluation studies of the Flemish environment policy published between 1 July 2003 and 30 May 2005. The Dutch version contains an additional part consisting of five in-depth policy evaluations, selected from the inventory and drawn up according to a fixed structure. These chapters have been selected in such a way that each one evaluates a different element in the policy chain.

## 3. What is the function of MIRA-PE?

With MIRA-PE 2005, we want to cover three different objectives: reporting on environment policy studies, following up the environment policy planning and building up expertise.

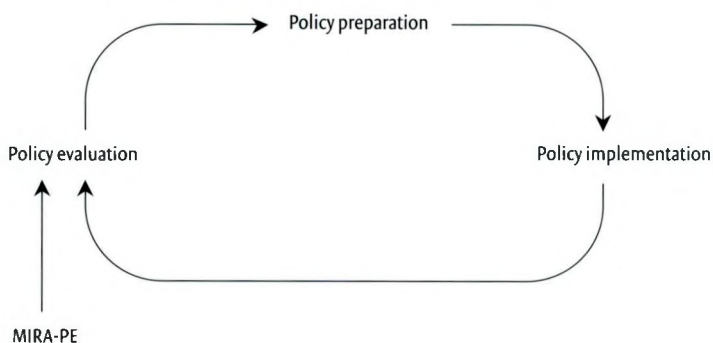
### A WORK OF REFERENCE

MIRA-PE 2005 wants to consolidate its function of a work of reference. More than in MIRA-PE 2003, we offer an overview, a state of affairs of the environmental policy evaluations in the Flemish Region.

## POLICY PLANNING

MIRA-PE aims at offering added value for the follow-up of the environmental Policy Plan by commenting on the measures included in the plan. Therefore, the report must fit the policy makers' knowledge requirements as closely as possible, i.e. it must be as policy-relevant as possible. Among other things, we have adjusted the division of the policy evaluations as much as possible to the latest Environmental Policy Plan (MINA-Plan 3). MIRA-PE wants to help support the management cycle as presented in the MINA-plan, concretely by reporting data for the evaluation of the policy (figure 1).

Figure 1: Management cycle in MINA-Plan 3 and the place of MIRA-PE in it



Source: Environmental Policy Plan 2003-2007, p. 322

## LEARNING PROCESS

MIRA-PE 2005 aims at contributing to the learning process related to policy evaluation. This learning process, which is an upcoming success in the Flemish policy practice and especially in the environment administration, provides reflection on the policy and raises a number of questions. Are we on the right track? What methods are useful? Questions can also be asked regarding the usefulness of the policy evaluations. Can the policy evaluations presented here only be applied to their specific object? Or can conclusions and methods also be used in other policy areas?

Not surprisingly, each policy theme has a number of specific characteristics which make generalisations to other policy areas difficult. For instance, each policy area has its own history, actors, specific institutions, legislation, political sensibilities, etc. However, the methods, evaluation criteria and assumptions in the present report can be applied to other (environmental) policy areas. Lessons we can draw from policy evaluations in a particular policy area may also be valid for other policy areas. Therefore, the information in this report can be used to answer the following 'universal' policy questions:

- How can we determine the effect of a programme on the target group?
- What difficulties can accompany the development of a region-oriented integrated policy and how can we manage them?

- How can we predict whether a reorganisation of services might be useful?
- How can the observance of laws be guaranteed once they have entered into force?
- How can European (international) legislation be transposed successfully into the Flemish context? What are the conditions for success?
- How can the implementation of a programme be optimized? What are the typical problems?
- What are success factors in the integration of policy levels (e.g. from European to Flemish, regional to local level)?
- How can European directives be transposed correctly from a legal point of view?

## 4. Where do we want to go?

For the realisation of its statutory policy evaluation mission, MIRA works with a step-by-step plan. A first step consists of drawing up an inventory of existing research in Flanders and continuing research on certain policy themes. These evaluations provide the basis for the next step, in which more extensive and more general analyses and assessments of environmental policy areas are made. This is possible by mobilising and structuring an expertise network for policy evaluations. This process is currently in progress and MIRA-PE 2005 wants to contribute to it.

By means of a matrix we offer you a visual overview of which policy themes have been treated in MIRA-PE 2003 and MIRA-PE 2005 and, therefore, which themes still need to be covered (table 1). The number of 'empty' cells speaks for itself. We refer you to the inventory (next chapter) of the present report for further comments on this matrix and the corresponding concepts.

Table 1: Matrix of evaluated policy topics in MIRA-PE 2003 and MIRA-PE 2005

environmental topic	policy type*				
	region	international	integration	target group	coordination
general					
climate					
waste					
manure					
nature					
water					
photochemistry					
ozone layer					
acidification					
hazardous substances					
soil					
nuisance					
fragmentation					

\* region = region-oriented policy; international = international policy; integration = integrated government policy; target group = target group policy; coordination = coordinating policy

## TYPES OF POLICY EVALUATION

### POLICY EVALUATION ACCORDING TO THE SUBJECT

- plan evaluation: review of plans and/or goals before or after their implementation
- process evaluation: review of policy processes, what concerns the development of the policy as well as its implementation
- product evaluation: review of the policy results

### POLICY EVALUATION ACCORDING TO TIME

- ex-ante evaluation: evaluation before implementation of the policy
- ex-nunc evaluation: evaluation during implementation of the policy (also called ex-interim)
- ex-post evaluation: evaluation after implementation of the policy

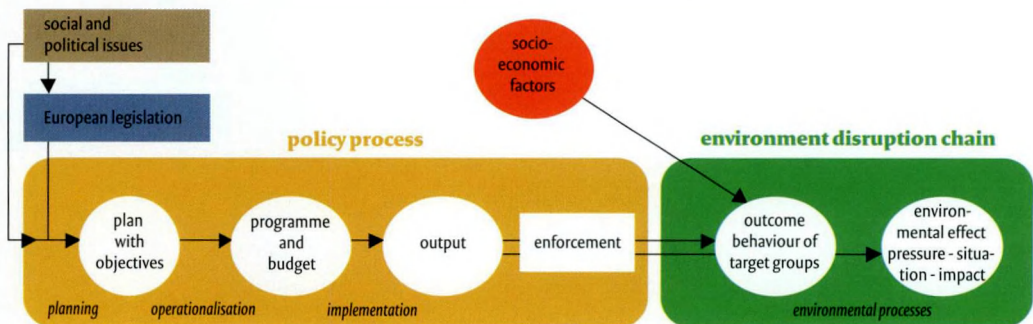
## 5. What are typical elements of MIRA-PE?

The reports on the State of the Environment in the Flemish Region (MIRA-T) are drawn up on the basis of indicators and have a fixed framework for analysis: the disruption chain or DPSIR chain. MIRA-PE also contains such recurring elements, concretely the policy chain as a framework for analysis, the evaluation criteria and the fixed structure. First, we will talk about the policy chain.

### THE POLICY CHAIN AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

The policy chain indicates the policy process (from the start of the policy up to its results). It allows us to unravel the complexity of 'the' policy and serves as a guide for a good understanding of the present report. Figure 2 visualises the policy chain.

Figure 2: The policy chain as a framework for analysis for MIRA-PE



Source: Wilkinson (1999).



## THE PHASES IN THE POLICY CHAIN (FIGURE 2)

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The chain starts with one or more social and political issues which are put on the agenda of the policy makers. This starts a process, the policy process, which consists of three phases. Each phase leads to a concrete result (displayed in a circle). The first phase is the planning phase. Solutions for the social and political issues are designed, compared and discussed. This should normally result in a plan with clear objectives. In the second phase, the operationalisation phase, the plans become more concrete: a programme is drawn up in keeping with the budget in order to ensure optimal implementation with the available human and financial resources. After that, the plan is implemented (phase 3). In the field, we need to see a concrete output of this: e.g. a planted row of trees, a granted licence, a built wind park, an imposed fine ...

By means of arrows, figure 2 shows the causal connections between the components of the policy and disruption chains without describing them explicitly. This approach can only be used when there is a policy theory which shows causal relations (e.g. policy instrument with output  $x$  leads to improvement in the water quality  $y$ , which results in a recovery of the fish population by  $z$  %). However, these policy theories are rarely available because the underlying policy processes (from the policy chain) and the social and environmental processes (from the environmental disruption chain) are insufficiently known or because there are too many uncontrollable external factors.

If a policy evaluation wants to explain the appearance or non-appearance of behavioural, environmental or ecological effects, it normally needs to open and analyse the 'black boxes' of those behavioural, environmental and ecological processes. Therefore, in the area of environmental and nature policy, policy evaluation is nearly always a kind of process evaluation.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

Another typical aspect of policy evaluations and MIRA-PE are *criteria*. It is clear that a mere analysis of a policy theme is not an evaluation. An evaluation requires a judgement and this is made using criteria. The most obvious criterion is effectiveness. This should provide an answer to the question whether the instrument or mix of instruments has contributed to an intended change in behaviour or to an environmental improvement. Other criteria are *efficiency* (was the output obtained with a minimum cost?) and *justice*

This output is related to the environmental disruption chain or DPSIR chain which is also displayed in figure 2. People adjust their behaviour, which contributes indirectly to a decrease in environmental pressure, leading in turn to an improved environmental situation and possibly having a positive impact on people, nature and the economy. The output can also influence the environment directly, without the need for a change in behaviour.

However, apart from the policy chain external factors play a role as well. These are harder to control with a policy but their influence on environmental disruption is just as big - or even (a lot) bigger. These factors must not be forgotten because they demonstrate the government's fallibility when it comes to controlling social processes and therefore the environment.

---

### RESULTS OF THE POLICY

- output: government contributions (e.g. amount of subsidies, granting a licence)
- outcome: change in behaviour in the target groups (e.g. local authorities, citizens, companies)
- environmental effect: improvement / deterioration of the environment (and in a later stage nature) as a result of the policy (sometimes also called environmental impact)

(does the instrument ensure a fair distribution of pleasure and pain?). The criteria especially focus on the products (results) of the policy.

As described, explanations for the results must be sought in the preceding processes.

Those processes have to be evaluated as well, so that an explanation can be found for success and failure. Evaluation criteria include: *capacity* (do the actors have the correct and sufficient resources to carry out their task?), *knowledge* (do the actors know what is expected? has there been enough research into which target groups and/or alternatives are necessary?), *acceptation* (is the objective accepted? are the organisation and the mix of instruments accepted?), *integration* (are the objectives tuned in to each other? are there opposite forces within and outside the administration?).

#### EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria by which policy results are judged: effectiveness, efficiency, justice

Criteria by which policy processes are judged (and its results explained): capacity, knowledge, acceptance, transparency, integration, mutual coordination ...

The Regulatory Management Unit of the Flemish ministry lists eight quality criteria for future legislation (Guide Characteristics of good legislation, 2003):

- necessary and effective;
- appropriate and balanced;
- feasible and enforceable;
- lawful;
- coherent;
- simple, clear and accessible;
- well-founded and negotiated;
- permanently relevant and topical.

The report will refer to the criteria and how they are used at regular times.

## FIXED STRUCTURE

MIRA-PE not only reports on existing policy evaluations, but the MIRA team sometimes also initiates in-depth policy evaluations. These policy evaluations have to be prepared according to a fixed structure (table 2).

Table 2: Structure of an in-depth policy evaluation initiated by MIRA

Introduction	3	Analysis
1 Situation	4	Evaluation
2 Concepts & methods	5	Conclusions & recommendations

## 6. Who is involved in MIRA-PE?

MIRA-PE 2005 is the result of a cooperation between authors, revisors (lecturers) and the MIRA team. 116 experts from universities, research institutes, interest groups, administrations, etc. have put their expertise at the disposal of the present report.

- The **authors** write the chapters. When polishing their texts, they take into account the remarks and suggestions of the readers and the project team.
- At agreed times, the **revisors** undertake a critical revision of the authors' work. They are mentioned at the end by name and affiliation.
- The **MIRA team** of the Flemish Environment Agency is responsible for the follow-up with regard to the content, the coordination and the editing of environmental reports and elaborates contents together with the authors. After edition by the project team, the final text is submitted to the authors and the revisors for approval.
- The statutorily described **MIRA steering group** is responsible for steering the contents of the reporting process.

## 7. Who is MIRA-PE aimed at?

The report is aimed at policy makers (members of parliament, cabinet members, those responsible for planning), policy executors and other people involved in the policy (e.g. target group representatives). They are the ones who have to tackle the problems identified by the report, as well as stimulate the success factors. The report's recommendations can help them with their task.

Moreover, other persons with an interest in the policy (or a critical view on it) may find the report useful as well. After all, a policy has consequences for every company and every citizen.

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An introduction to the concepts, methods and approach of policy evaluations can be found in chapter 1 of MIRA-PE 2003 (downloadable at [www.milieurapport.be](http://www.milieurapport.be)).

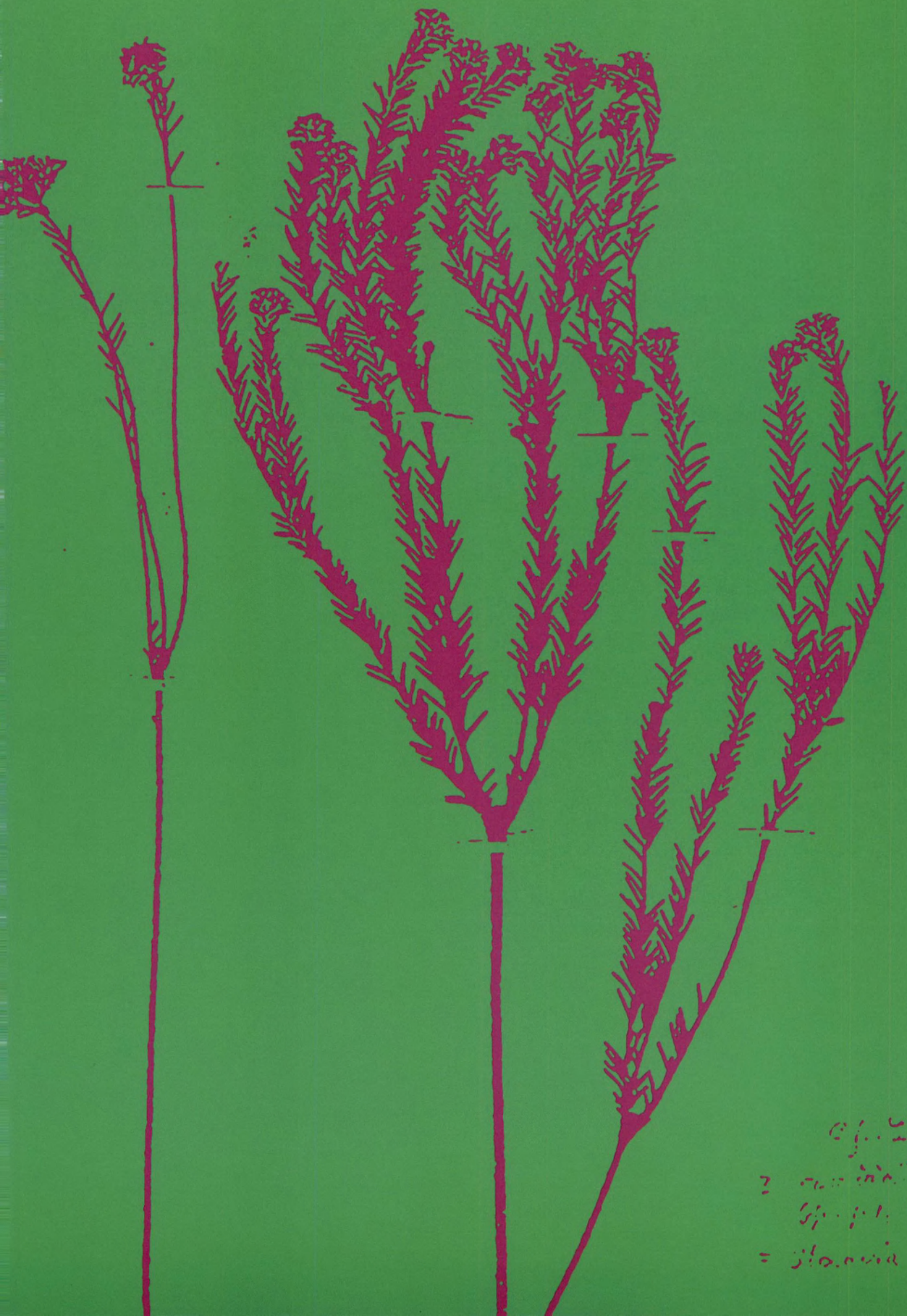
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cf. *Stenactis*  
? *curvata*  
Sp. pl. 1: 2  
= *Stenactis*



# Flemish environmental policy 2003-2005 under the microscope: 24 evaluations

Barbara Tieleman, MIRA, VMM

## INTRODUCTION

The inventory of environmental policy evaluations (1996-2003) as a part of the first Policy Evaluation Report (MIRA-PE 2003) met with general approval. We will continue on this *élan* in MIRA-PE 2005 by providing an overview of the published policy evaluations for the period 2003-2005.

The purpose of this inventory is to reinforce its function as a *reference work on environmental policy evaluations*. In this document we therefore present an overview of the policy evaluation studies, published between 1 July 2003 and 30 May 2005 (part 1, Inventory). General conclusions on the full overview are drawn based on particular characteristics. These 'conclusions' are presented in part 2 'Discussion'. In part 3 we provide a summary of each publication. As regards the inventory and the discussion, we were inspired by a similar inventory of the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2004. The exact reference of each inventory publication can be found in the annex to this chapter.

# 1. Inventory

## 1.1. SELECTION OF THE PUBLICATIONS

In preparation of the inventory, we explored the Flemish Universities' databases (including support centres), the environmental administration, the policy advisory agencies, the advisory bodies SERV and MiNa Council, the Flemish Union for Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) and the environmental libraries' network (Felnet).

We consulted a large volume of information resources discussing environmental policy, such as articles, reports, books and others. The purpose of the inventory was to provide a complete list of high-quality policy evaluations. Most publications are easily categorised as policy evaluations, but this doesn't hold for all of them.

We therefore used the following guidelines as selection criteria:

- A policy evaluation should comply with the characteristics of the definition of a policy evaluation, i.e.
  - be a scientific analysis (no personal opinions, no descriptions);
  - have environmental policy as a central theme (no investigations with regard to an environmental problem without consideration of policy aspects; no investigations with regard to other policies than the environmental policy - including Sustainable Development. Energy and agricultural policies are therefore excluded from the inventory, unless they deal with environmental issues);
  - contain evaluation criteria (evaluation is required, ideally based on explicit criteria. So there can be no policy or guideline discussion without evaluation. As a result, manuals for municipalities containing explanations on decrees or legal explanations of guidelines are not taken into consideration);
  - contain recommendations;
- no recommendations (advisory papers) from advisory councils. Although they do contain critical analyses (predominantly ex-ante evaluations), they are not appropriate in an elaborate case study chapter. Moreover, it remains unclear what scientific analysis served as a basis for these recommendations;
- no articles, unless as research or scientific analysis summary. If it is unclear whether the article is based on scientific analysis (i.e. based on research), it is not included in the inventory. If on the other hand it is clearly based on scientific analysis, then the article basis, in particular the research and not so much the article itself, is incorporated;
- the policy evaluations must be of a high quality. In the long term, MIRA-PE wants to be an example in the field of high-quality policy evaluations at the service of policymakers. Therefore publications lacking a clear analysis framework were excluded from the inventory. However, Flanders does not have a longstanding tradition of policy evaluation, which obviously has repercussions on the product quality. Consequently, the inventory leaves some room for special cases: studies which deviate from the ordinary guidelines, but which stand out because of their recommendations.

Policy supporting studies were not taken into account. There is a fine line between 'policy supporting' and 'policy evaluating' research though. Depending on the research objective, the importance of the 'support' and 'evaluation' elements will differ. Different policy studies serve different purposes:

- gain scientific insight into policy processes;
- measure effects;
- intensify 'the learning' within an organisation.

The first type aims at providing 'scientific insights', the second at 'accountability' and the third aims at 'reflection' on the policy. The policy evaluations are generally aimed at 'accountability', the legitimization of policy choices, policy processes and policy results (Bouckaert, 1992).

## 1.2. OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS

We linked several characteristics to each inventory publication. These characteristics serve as a basis for further discussion (part 2).

The characteristic '*environmental topic*' requires a brief explanation. For each publication it is indicated which environmental problem constitutes the basis of the evaluated policy. The following environmental topics are included (inspired by the MINA-plan 3 (2003-2007), the Flemish Environmental Policy Plan):

- general (policy aimed at several topics combined or at 'the environment' in general);
- climate;
- waste;
- eutrophication;
- nature;
- water – surface water and desiccation quality clustering;
- photochemistry;
- depletion of the ozone layer;
- acidification;
- hazardous substances;
- soil;
- nuisance;
- fragmentation.

Furthermore, we have catalogued each publication according to evaluated '*policy type*'. The MINA-plan 3 classification is largely maintained.

- *region-oriented policy*: a policy which tackles the environmental problems linked to specific areas. A policy which enhances the quality of specific areas of the environment and which is responsible for the mutual coordination between the various functions;
- *policy aimed at target groups*: a policy which influences the behaviour of stakeholders who control the quality of the environment. A policy which stimulates government cooperation and a sense of responsibility among the aforementioned participants;



- *integrated government policy*: a policy aimed at the optimisation of internal cooperation and the cooperation with other policy domains and management levels;
- *international policy*;
- *coordinating policy*: a policy which is to form a solid basis for the policy, the policy processes and the policy structures.

Many inventory policy evaluations focus on one or more specific policy instruments. Whenever this is the case, we have indicated what *kind of instrument* is involved.

We distinguish the following policy instruments:

- social / communicative instruments;
- economic instruments;
- legal instruments;
- supporting instruments;
- direct instruments;
- enforcement.

Contrary to MINA-plan 3, enforcement is not categorised as a legal instrument. Enforcement is an instrument used by the government, which may comprise direct and all kinds of indirect policy instruments and in that sense 'transcends' traditional classifications. It is also a separate policy problem with separate policy evaluation research.

Some legal instruments (e.g. a permit for company x) are well-defined and limited to their field of application, other legal instruments are a 'collection' of measures and instruments (e.g. the manure action plan or the waste implementation plan). The latter, also called supporting policy instruments, are loosely defined and have a wide application field. It is a collective term for programmes and projects involving charges, sensitisation, framework structure etc. A policy evaluation involving a supporting instrument and a 'simple' legal instrument will obviously strongly differ in scope and focus.

The characteristic '*evaluation type*' includes the concepts ex-ante, ex-nunc and ex-post evaluation; plan, process, and product evaluation (see chapter 'About MIRA-PE').

Table 1 shows our selection of policy evaluation studies since 1 July 2003 (24 publications). The publications were classified according to environmental topic, and then according to year and name.

Table 1: Overview of policy evaluations, published between 1 July 2003 and 30 May 2005

topic	title + author(s)	policy type <sup>1</sup>	instrument type <sup>2</sup>	evaluation type
General	Study in preparation of the evaluation of the federal environment-specific product policy (2003) A. Heyerick	target group	l/ec/so	ex ante product
General	Europeanisation of Flanders: a screening of the managerial structures (2003) E. Van Reybroeck, P. Bursens	international	-	ex nunc process
General	Flemish structural consultation for sustainable development (2004) K. Bachus, H. Bruyninckx, M. Poesen-Vandeputte	integration/ coordination	-	ex ante process
General	Border crossing Flemish environmental policy (2004) K. Geeraerts, P. Bursens, P. Leroy	international	-	ex nunc process
General	Follow-up of environmental complaints by the Environmental Inspection: an efficient instrument for high supervision? (2004) A. Monsieurs	integration/ target group	en	ex nunc process/ product
General	Pilot project VLAREM supervision Klein-Brabant, Transport sector (2004) R. Segers	target group	en	ex post process
General	Linking Innovation Policy and Sustainable Development in Flanders (2004) P. Van Humbeeck, I. Dries, J. Larosse	integration/ coordination	-	ex ante process/ plan
General	The Europeanisation of Flemish officials, members of cabinet and politicians: opinion, expertise and attention (2005) M. Baetens, P. Bursens	international	-	ex nunc process
General	Carte blanche or corset? Evaluation of the Cooperation Agreement (2005) K. Bachus	integration	su/so	ex nunc process
General	Enforcement: the missing link in the environmental policy cycle? (2005) T. De Bruyn, K. Bachus	target group	en	ex post plan
General	The implemented sustainable development policy (2005) P. Delbaere, P. Dresselaers, N. Gouzée	coordination	su	ex post product
General	Environmental policy integration in Europe (2005) European Environment Agency	integration	-	ex nunc process
Waste	Sector-specific implementation plans in the Flemish waste policy. Effectiveness analysis of a planning instrument (2003) J. Gysen, K. Bachus, H. Bruyninckx, L. Van Ootegem	target group	su	ex post product
Waste	Waste prevention actions and measures in secondary schools in Flanders (2003) OVAM	target group	di/so	ex post product
Waste	Waste flows and waste policy in elementary schools in Flanders (2003) OVAM	target group	di/so	ex post product

topic	title + author(s)	policy type <sup>1</sup>	instrument type <sup>2</sup>	evaluation type
Waste	Presti 4: involved in environmental protection – measuring the effects (2005) A. Gommers, K. Couderé	target group	so	ex post product
Manure	Three-tier manure policy: evaluation and future exploration (2004) M. Vervaeet, L. Lauwers, S. Lenders, S. Overloop	target group	su	ex nunc process
Nature	Nature, how? Investigation into the social framework for nature preservation in Flanders (2004) T. Leroy, I. Loots, P. Leroy	target group	-	ex ante plan
Nature	Report of the Commission on the implementation of Guideline 92/43/EC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (2004) European Commission	region	l	ex nunc process
Nature	Nature report 2005. The condition of nature in Flanders - figures for the policy (2005) M. Dumortier, L. De Bruyn, M. Hens, J. Peymen, A. Schneiders, T. Van Daele, W. Van Reeth, G. Weyembergh, E. Kuijken	region/ international/ target group	l/ec/so	ex post process/ product
Nature	Financial instruments for nature, forest and landscape (2005) B. Kayaerts	region/ target group	ec	ex post product
Nature	Region-oriented nature policy: operationality and implementation of the Bird Guideline and Habitat Guideline (2005) A. Cliquet, G. Van Hoorick, J. Lambrecht, D. Bogaert	international/ region	l	ex nunc process
Water	Local water policy about to turn: interim evaluation of the sub-basin functioning (2005) A. Crabbé	region/ integration	l	ex nunc process
Water	Regional subsidies for municipal waste water treatment plants in a European context (2005) Court of Audit	integration	ec	ex post product

1 region = region-oriented policy; international = international policy; integration = integrated government policy; target group = target group policy; coordination = coordinating policy

2 so = social instrument; l = legal instrument; su = supporting instrument; ec = economic instrument; di = direct instrument; en = enforcement

## 2. Discussion

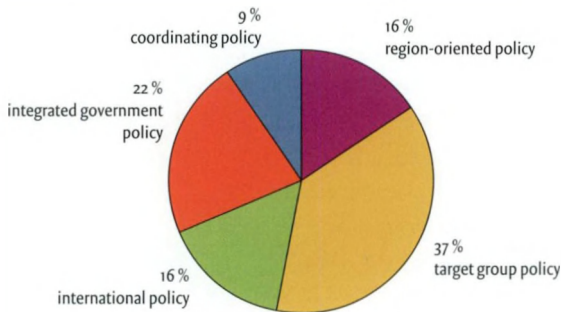
The inventory discussion consists of eight subsections. The type of policy, the type of instrument, the type of evaluation, the environmental topics (linked to budget), evaluation criteria, the principal and the evaluating institutions are discussed in that order. In the sixth subsection we will answer general questions raised by the inventory, in which conclusions from preceding paragraphs are included. Finally, a matrix visualises to what extent the publications provide an actual evaluation of the environmental policy as a whole.

As the number of evaluations is limited, the discussion serves predominantly as an illustration of how these policy evaluations took place. Publications containing two categories for one characteristic count twice.

## 2.1. TYPE OF POLICY

Figure 1 shows the distribution of the publications according to policy type. Most inventory publications evaluate a policy specifically aimed at one or more target groups. Evaluations of coordinating policies occur less frequently.

Figure 1: Distribution of the inventory publications according to policy type

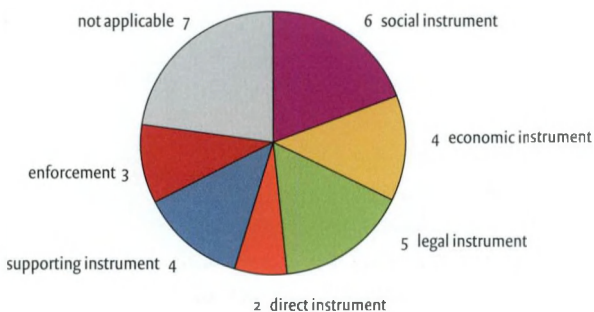


We do not want to make recommendations with regard to an increase in the number of evaluations for certain categories. All categories are equally important. It is up to policymakers to make the right choices.

## 2.2. TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

All evaluations were classified according to the type of evaluated instrument. If an evaluation did not evaluate any instruments, it was added to the category 'not applicable'. Figure 2 shows the examined instruments.

Figure 2: Distribution of the inventory publications according to policy instrument



Nearly one fourth of the publications do not evaluate any instruments. In the other evaluations there is little focus on direct instruments. That is not surprising since, amongst others, in MIRA-T (the Flemish State of the Environment-report), reports on direct instruments are provided by the so-called response indicators, usually backed up by an analysis of the environmental situation.

### 2.3. TYPE OF EVALUATION

The distribution of the publications according to type of evaluation is illustrated by two figures. Figure 3 shows how many evaluations were carried out before, during or after the concerned policy. Figure 4 shows how many publications centre around policy plans, policy processes or policy results (plan, process and product evaluation respectively).

After examining the distribution of the environmental policy evaluations per research period (figure 2), we see that relatively few ex-ante evaluations are carried out. This may change in the future when more regulating impact analyses (RIAs) will be carried out. As of 1 January 2005 a RIA has to be performed for all rules and regulations with regulating effects on citizens, the business community or non-profit organisations. It remains to be seen if the quality of the RIAs will allow their inclusion in the inventory. We also point out that there are impact analyses which are not policy evaluating, but which might as well provide a foundation for future policies.

Clearly an ex-post policy evaluation can provide new insights for policy development and therefore for ex-ante policy evaluation. However, this learning effect requires a minimum of ex-post policy evaluation research which provides sufficient generic (so not only case-specific) insights and is in addition used for ex-ante evaluations. From this perspective Flanders still has a long way to go.

Figure 3: Distribution of the inventory publications according to type of evaluation (according to research period)

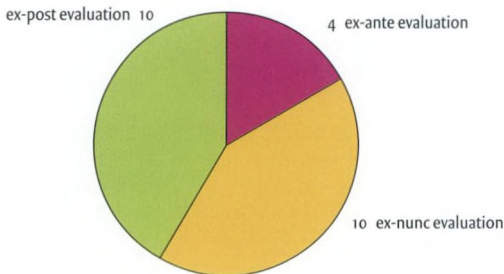
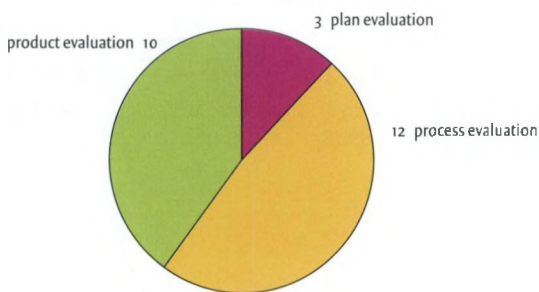


Figure 4 clearly shows that few evaluations examine the planning phase of the policy. The number of evaluations that focus on policy processes is similar to the number for policy results or products.

Figure 4: Distribution of the inventory publications according to type of evaluation (by subject)

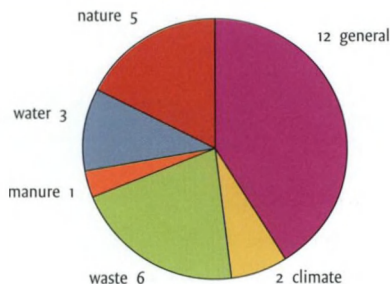


When we consider the fact that the advisory boards regularly advise on draft decrees, there are more ex-ante and plan evaluations than appears from the inventory - even though the recommendations are often too limited with regard to evaluation, as we pointed out in paragraph 1.1.

## 2.4. ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS

For each publication we investigated the environmental problems underlying the policy evaluation. The environmental problems were linked to clustered environmental topics, using MINA-plan as a starting point. Figure 5 shows the considered environmental topics.

Figure 5: Distribution of the inventory publications according to environmental topic



The 'general' policy evaluations constitute the majority. This comes as no surprise since also policy evaluations covering several topics are categorised as such. Waste and nature policies are clearly investigated more frequently; this does not hold for water policy (three publications) or manure policy (one publication). Climate aspects are discussed in two case studies. The other topics remained unexamined. We suspect it depends on the relative weight of the policy domains, social and political interest, delicacies, complexities and the availability of the resources for performing evaluations.

The link between the evaluated environmental topics and the expenditure on these topics are presented in table 2. The data regarding environmental expenditures can be found in MINA-plan 3 (p. 352 and so forth).

Table 2: Link between the Flemish Region's environmental expenditure (2002) and the environmental topics of the inventory

our topic classification	topic classification from MINA-plan 3	environmental expenditure (in 1 000 euros)	share in total environmental expenditure (%)	number of policy evaluations from the inventory regarding this topic
general	integrated government policy, instruments, region-oriented policy, participants, international policy, costs and financing	92 319	10.15	12 (41.5 %)
climate	climate	295	0.03	2 (7 %)
waste	waste products	34 342	3.78	6 (20.5 %)
manure	eutrophication	77 397	8.51	1 (3.5 %)
nature	biodiversity	127 872	14.06	5 (17.3 %)
water	surface water pollution, desiccation and integral water policy	507 386	55.79	3 (10.2 %)
photochemistry	photochemistry	772	0.08	0 (0 %)
depletion of the ozone layer	ozone	147	0.02	0 (0 %)
acidification	acidification	507	0.06	0 (0 %)
hazardous substances	hazardous substances	905	0.10	0 (0 %)
soil	soil	54 463	5.99	0 (0 %)
nuisance	noise, odour and light nuisance	556	0.06	0 (0 %)
fragmentation	fragmentation	3 832	0.42	0 (0 %)
-	'air in general'	8 490	0.93	0 (0 %)
-	costs and financing	263	0.02	0 (0 %)
<b>total</b>		<b>909 546</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>29 (100 %)</b>

Source: MINA-plan 3

Topics that were not evaluated tend to hold a limited share in the environmental expenditures. We also note that the share of evaluations on nature more or less corresponds to the share of nature policy in the environmental expenditure (17.3 % compared to 14.06 %). We also find some discrepancies when we look at evaluations of waste policy, climate policy, water policy and the general evaluations (in bold in the table above). For publications dealing with waste and climate and for general evaluations, we see that the share of evaluations is larger than the share of these topics in the environmental expenditure. In case of a climate policy, this can be partly explained by the fact that a large part of the expenses falls under the energy policy (and therefore not under the budget of the Ministry of Environment). In any case, we will not make any statements regarding the distribution of the resources allocated to each environmental topic.

With regard to the water policy, we would like to point out that in proportion fewer evaluations deal with water policy than the share in the environmental budget (10.2 % opposed to 55.97 %).

## 2.5. THE CRITERIA

In theory the purpose of policy evaluations is to verify whether a specific policy stays on target (effectiveness). Delivering 'proof' of his effectiveness is particularly difficult. Therefore an evaluator will often use criteria which make it possible to explain why a certain policy is performing well or not. Such criteria are for example transparency, coordination, involvement, knowledge and capacity.

The inventory shows that effectiveness analyses are very rare (the only rightful publications are Gysen et al., 2003, OVAM, 2003a and 2003b and Vervae et al., 2004). For almost all policy evaluations, criteria are used as an explanation for an (un)successful policy, without evidence of effectiveness. Key criteria used in the inventory publications are:

- knowledge (knowing);
- capacity (being able);
- wanting;
- legitimacy;
- integration;
- participation;
- communication;
- cooperation;
- legality;
- coherence / structure / coordination.

These criteria were used for the evaluation of plans, products (programmes, decrees, laws ...) as well as for the evaluation of processes.

## 2.6. PRINCIPAL AND PROVIDER

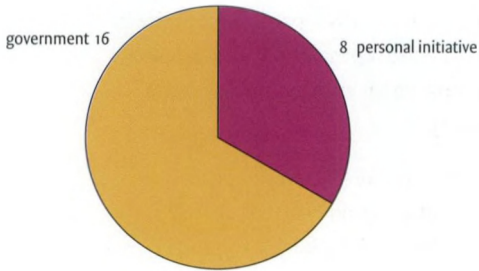
Figure 6 shows the initiator for the policy evaluations. The diagram shows two categories: policy evaluations ordered by the government (and carried out by external parties) and policy evaluations conducted on a personal initiative. 'Personal initiative' refers to evaluations in which the principal and the provider are one and the same person or organisation.

Most policy evaluations were ordered by the government (16 publications). The public institutions which ordered these policy evaluations are the environmental administration (AMINAL, VMM, OVAM), the Centre for Environmental Policy Sciences, the Centre for Administrative Organisation in Flanders, the department of Science and Innovation, the office of the public prosecutor and the provinces. The majority of the 'personal initiative' publications have principals that are members of government. OVAM has taken the initiative twice in this way, for research conducted by its own researchers. The Centre for Agricultural economy, the Federal Planning Bureau, the European Commission and the Court of Audit have taken the initiative once. Only the publications of the MiNa Council (Kayaerts, 2005) and the K.U. Leuven (Monsieurs, 2004) are non-government related. We will come back to the independence of these studies (paragraph 2.7).



Figure 6: Distribution of the publications according to principal

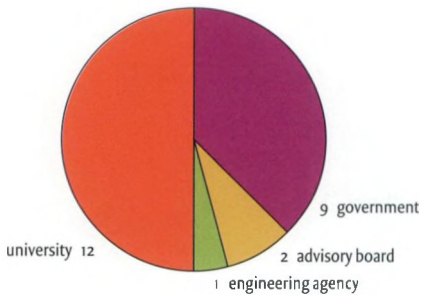
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The following figure shows the policy evaluation undertakers (figure 7). Half of the policy evaluations from the inventory seem to have been undertaken by universities, five of which took place within the scope of research conducted by one of the support centres.

Figure 7: Distribution of the publications according to provider

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Aside from the large number of investigations undertaken by universities, many have been conducted by government as well (9 publications): by Flemish scientific institutions, the Court of Audit, a municipality, OVAM, the European Commission, the European Environmental Agency and the federal Planning Bureau. The remaining publications are undertaken by the MiNa Council, SERV and an Engineering Agency.

## 2.7. GENERAL AND CONCLUSIVE QUESTIONS

The previous paragraphs describe a publication classification based on various characteristics (according to environmental topic, evaluation type, policy type, instrument type and according to principal and provider). The analysis of the inventoried publications will be completed by asking several questions, focusing on aspects that were discussed earlier in this document.

### CAN THE EVALUATIONS BE USED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY PLAN FOLLOW-UP?

MINA-plan clusters the planned policies based on several features (according to environmental topic, policy instruments, policy type, target group...). We tried to align the classification as much as possible with these categories. If the policymakers and the people in charge of the MINA-plan follow-up wish to evaluate the policy by means of an in-depth study, policy evaluations are available for this purpose (cf. inventory). It is possible that some inventory evaluations have already been used for this purpose.

### ARE THERE ANY INVENTORY EVOLUTIONS COMPARED TO MIRA-PE 2003?

When we look at the evaluation types, it appears that of the policy evaluations between 1996 and 2003 (MIRA-PE 2003, 57 publications) 38 % were product evaluations, 37 % were process evaluations and 25 % were plan evaluations. In MIRA-PE 2005 these percentages are 40 %, 48 % and 12 % respectively. Apparently the policy plans were evaluated to a lesser extent. A possible explanation for this is the fact that in MIRA-PE 2003 recommendations from the MiNa Board and SERV were added to the inventory, which lead to an increase in the plan evaluations of MIRA-PE 2003, seeing that advisory boards especially refer to policy plans.

We note that the environmental topics in the policy evaluation report of 2003 were classified according to 'key' topics. Topics such as environmentally hazardous substances, acidification and photochemistry were not included in the analyses. The classification in MIRA-PE 2003 was as follows: manure policy evaluations (4 %), nature (15 %), soil (2 %), waste (28 %), water (9 %) and climate (0 %). The evaluations that didn't focus on a specific topic or that evaluate policies with several topics (category 'general') made up 41% of the total. In MIRA-PE 2005 this is 3.5 %, 17.3 %, 0 %, 20.5 %, 10.2 % and 41.5 % respectively (figure 4). 7 % of these evaluations regard evaluations on climate policy. So the share of most environmental topics has remained constant since 1996. The share of soil policy evaluations has reduced and was compensated by an increase in climate evaluations. It has to be noted that we are dealing with limited case studies which only deal with minor fragments of the climate problems (Heyerick, 2003, De Bruyn & Bachus, 2005).

ARE THERE ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE INVENTORY EVALUATIONS REGARDING CRITERIA, DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD?

Paragraph 2.5 shows that there are many similarities between the criteria used by the authors for the prediction or explanation of policy success or failure (effectiveness). Coordination, legitimacy, capacity, knowledge, readiness and integration are criteria reoccurring in virtually all evaluations. Evaluations focusing on effectiveness are the exception.

The method for data collection that is used most frequently is literary study, sometimes combined with interviews. Surveys and participating observation are used for the collection of (quality) data (Baetens et al., 2005, *Monsieurs*, 2004, OVAM, 2003a, OVAM, 2003b, Gommers et al., 2003).

There is no shared method for the actual evaluation. There is no one recipe. Which makes sense, because for each evaluation study the methods and techniques have to be adjusted to the research questions. However, there are general methodological references and manuals. These are used and made explicit more or less frequently depending on the quality of the study.

ARE THERE ANY SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE POLICY EVALUATIONS OF THE INVENTORY WITH RESPECT TO CONTENT?

The evaluations differ strongly with regard to topic and scope. However, there are evaluations with a similar content.

- The evaluations focusing on 'enforcement' show to be problematic, as (for whatever reason) the topic remains defective and polluting companies get off scot-free. The recommendations put forward in these studies are requests for more personnel, but just as well for a better follow-up and for criminal prosecution (*Monsieurs*, 2004, Segers, 2004, De Bruyn & Bachus, 2005).
- Also international policy has been scrutinised in several evaluations; there are some common characteristics to be noted: we note that (too) little attention is given to the actual implementation. There is too little contact and coordination between departments and the various (regional) governments in Belgium (Baetens & Bursens, 2005, Van Reybroeck & Bursens, 2003, Geeraerts et al., 2004).
- It is also remarkable that studies examining the effectiveness of a certain policy topic show that it is complicated, as there is a lack of objectives (Heyerick, 2003) and/or data (Heyerick, 2003, Gysen, 2003). When it was possible to evaluate the effectiveness, it appeared to have been possible because sufficient data and clear objectives were at hand (OVAM, 2003a, OVAM, 2003b). And in one instance (Vervaet et al., 2004), the analysis showed that the objectives were met, but that there was reason to believe that the objectives were doubtful.
- The environmental integration in other ministries (horizontally) or at other levels (vertically) is a hot topic as regards inventories (European Environmental Agency, 2005, Van Humbeeck et al., 2004, Bachus et al., 2004, Delbaere et al., 2005). To accomplish better (environmental) results, a stronger environmental integration in

other policy domains seems required. All four evaluations show that an environmental policy (and finally sustainable development) is often implemented 'separately' from other domains, which leads to opposite goals and inconsistent actions. Furthermore, the integration of sustainable development often appears to be limited to promising intention statements, but doesn't meet the demands for implementation.

#### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE POLICY EVALUATIONS ON THE POLICY?

The inventory evaluations provide recommendations. In theory, they can thus present information for the preparation (the ex-ante evaluations), the elaboration (the ex-nunc evaluations) or modification (the ex-post evaluations) of the policy. Unfortunately it remains unclear what effects the evaluations have on the policy. We don't know what happens after they are published. In the OVAM evaluations on effectiveness of waste policies in schools (OVAM, 2003a, OVAM, 2003b) it is stated that the results were used as a starting point for improving the policy for that specific target group. The Court of Audit evaluation is traditionally accompanied by a response from the competent minister. Is this sufficient to guarantee adequate actions? This requires an investigation of the principals and an answer to the question 'how are the evaluations used and why?'. This could be the start of a learning process for the production of good public tenders; the researchers could be given the opportunity to correctly estimate the government's expectations.

The 'personal initiative evaluations' (8 publications) have a different policy effect: we suspect that the evaluations carried out by the government itself could have a major impact, since they are carried out by the people in charge of the policy. It thus appears that the two OVAM evaluations on waste prevention in schools helped shape the policy. An Action Plan for Schools was set up based on this research. The effects of the publications of the Court of Audit and of the Centre for Agricultural Economy are possibly smaller, because the aforementioned condition was not met. The effects of the final report by A. Monsieurs (K.U.Leuven) probably remain limited. A final report attracts less attention, in spite of interesting results. Even so, such evaluations are useful as the authors are not bound by delicacies (regarding the principal) and in theory the evaluation is conducted in a neutral way. The effects of the MiNa Council study (Kayaerts, 2005) are more difficult to assess: provided that it is carried by the policymakers and that the study is well publicised, the ambition, as it is phrased in the study, (namely, to deliver a contribution to the debate on instrument optimisation for open space), can become a reality.

#### HOW INDEPENDENT ARE THE INVENTORY POLICY EVALUATIONS?

We find that some evaluations were carried out internally. Internally means that the evaluating organisation is itself involved in the development or implementation of the policy that it is evaluating. In fact, this organisation is then evaluating its own functioning. Therefore the neutrality of the policy evaluations may be questioned. It should be nuanced that the evaluation can be carried out by a department of the organisation which is not in charge of the performance of the evaluated policy and can actually act as

a neutral referee (as far as this is possible for a government institution). Internal research offers the major advantage that researchers have ready access to the necessary information and already have an insight into the processes. However the involvement and, in some cases, years of experience in the research field could lead to biased research. The results will therefore have to be interpreted with the necessary caution. Also external evaluation can be biased, for example when economic interests are considered or when the involvement with the principal(s) becomes too close, the required objectivity will disappear.

#### WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF THE INVENTORY POLICY EVALUATIONS?

We did not go into detail with regard to the quality of the present publications (methodological accuracy, readability, transparency ...). Independent and thorough research would be required. In our selection we did exclude publications for which the analysis framework could not be identified.

In this context we would like to point out some deficiencies of some of the inventoried evaluations. In some instances there are no explicit research questions, criteria or recommendations. This complicates not only the reading of the text, but also the retrieval of the essential information (namely the evaluation of the concerned policy and the lessons to be drawn from it).

Many publications do not include a summary. Obviously, it is necessary to capture all of the nuances in such a study - a summary alone can therefore not suffice - but will the people who will have to act on the publications take the time to go through the sometimes very elaborate research reports?

We are therefore in favour of policy evaluations that are accompanied by a summary, a clear statement (cf. 'declaration of intent' in the Court of Audit evaluations) along with explicit research questions, evaluation criteria and recommendations.

## **2.8. IN CONCLUSION: COMPLETION OF THE MATRIX**

The actual purpose of policy evaluation reports - aside from presenting a current state of affairs and an overview of environmental policy evaluations - is to inform policymakers so as to offer a foundation for their policy (choices). This report contains 24 policy evaluations, which all evaluate some environmental policy aspect(s). The matrix in table 3 shows that some 'gaps have been filled' (compared to MIRA-PE 2003), but that a lot of work is still to be done to cover the entire environmental policy. The darker the square (from yellow to green to blue), the more policy evaluations have been conducted.

Table 3: Matrix of evaluated policy topics in MIRA-PE 2003 and MIRA-PE 2005

environmental topic	policy type*				
	region	international	integration	target group	coordination
general	yellow	green	dark green	blue	green
climate	grey	grey	grey	yellow	grey
waste	grey	grey	yellow	dark green	yellow
manure	grey	grey	grey	yellow	grey
nature	green	yellow	light yellow	green	yellow
water	light yellow	grey	green	light yellow	light yellow
photochemistry	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey
ozone layer	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey
acidification	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey
hazardous substances	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey
soil	grey	grey	grey	grey	yellow
nuisance	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey
fragmentation	grey	grey	grey	grey	grey

\* region = region-oriented policy; international = international policy; integration = integrated government policy; target group = target group policy; coordination = coordinating policy

### 3. Evaluation summaries

This section contains the summaries of the policy evaluations in our inventory (table 1).

Each summary consists of four subsections:

- definition of problem and research questions of the policy evaluation;
- the methods and criteria used;
- key findings and conclusions;
- recommendations.

We do not make any statements about the quality of the publications. When the recommendations are very elaborate, specific and detailed, we automatically refer to the actual publication.

## Study in preparation of the federal environment-specific product policy

A. Heyerick · Centre for Sustainable Development, Ghent University (UGent), 2003

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general, cross-topic (waste, climate)

##### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

legal, economic, and social policy instrument

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-ante evaluation, product evaluation

##### PRINCIPAL

Federal Ministry of Environment, product policy department

#### Definition of problem and research questions

This study examines the federal product policy. It consists of two large sections. The first question that is examined is whether a product policy evaluation per se is in fact possible. Secondly, three product policy instruments will be evaluated: the European eco-labels, the eco-bonuses and the implementation of the European guidelines regarding fuel quality.

#### Method and criteria

The author conducts a classic product evaluation. He tests the objectives against the output, outcome and environmental effects. The author collects the qualitative and quantitative data from the involved administration by document analysis. The criterion is effectiveness. For the explanation of pressure points and success factors the following criteria are used: clarity in the objectives, (communication) transparency and integration in and outside of the policy domain.

#### Findings

The first part of the research clearly lacks well-defined objectives, which makes it impossible to conduct an effectiveness evaluation. In the second part we found the following:

- Despite government efforts, the eco-label does not seem to be a success on the Belgian market. A product evaluation with effectiveness as its criterion is necessary in order to figure out what is the cause of this; here too there's a lack of objectives to carry out the evaluation. On top of that, there are insufficient data with regard to the number of companies with eco-label, the number of products with eco-label, the type of products, the label recognition by the consumer ...
- The evaluation of the eco-bonuses is a plan evaluation, because the legislation is ready, but not yet approved. The reuse objective was the driving principle in the composition of the original legislation.





platforms are discussed. The study is based on interviews and empirical material (files and reports). The criteria used in the analysis include transparency, coordination, uniformity (of the formal structures) and pro-activity.

**Findings**

Some key findings:

- the sector 'Environment' has sufficient formal tools for fulfilling European tasks compared to the sector 'Education';

- Environment and Agriculture are especially equipped for the preliminary policy stage: little attention goes to the translation of rules and regulations (the operational and implementation phase);
- contact and uniformity between the structures and domains is limited.

**Recommendations**

The authors recommend developing a proactive strategy, to make the existing conversion database more accessible, and

to set up a European cell within the departments with clear, coordinating tasks (this was already done for the Environment department).

## Flemish structural consultation for sustainable development

K. Bachus, H. Bruyninckx, M. Poesen-Vandeputte · *HIVA, K.U.Leuven, 2004*

**Characteristics**

**ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC**

general

**POLICY TYPE**

integrated government and coordinating policy

**TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT**

not applicable

**TYPE OF EVALUATION**

ex-ante evaluation, process evaluation

**PRINCIPAL**

Flemish government (AMINAL)

**Definition of problem and research questions**

In the wake of global attention for sustainable development (SD), also Flanders is facing the challenge of implementing a performant sustainable development policy. The question to be answered is what such a Flemish SD policy should look like. The study consists of five research questions:

- What are the current activities of the Flemish government with relation to SD?
- What should the future SD institutionalisation in Flanders look like?
- Is there any need for a Flemish SD decree?
- Does Flanders need its own Flemish Strategy for SD? If yes, in what form and what is its relation with a possible national Strategy for SD?
- What kind of (multi-stakeholder) participation goes hand in hand with a Flemish SD strategy?

**Method and criteria**

This study provides an ex-ante evaluation of a Flemish policy for sustainable development. The current situation is analysed, as well as the conditions for an efficient, performant sustainable development policy. This is done by a document analysis and interviews.

Furthermore a comparative study is set up with other countries. Case studies in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the Belgian federal government serve as a foundation for the evaluation. At the end of the study, three round-table conferences were held with the policymakers and stakeholders involved to supply additional relevant information.

The criterion is effectiveness (how can SD become effective in Flanders?). By means of the criteria Political Support, Integration and Coordination, the authors offer several scenarios for implementing an effective SD policy.

### Findings

Horizontal policy integration is one of the key elements in a sustainable development policy. Therefore, the development of a performant SD policy should be based on this principle. Another central element is the participation of the Flemish stakeholders through advisory boards or networks. Some of the important peripheral conditions include available budgets (SD should be more than words alone), long-term strategy and a political platform. Documents show that not all of these peripheral conditions have been met. Furthermore, the changing cabinets cause an instable climate for SD. So as to assure the horizontal integration, SD should be the responsibility of a horizontal department. The most important reason

for this is to get the policy accepted by all departments. Actions for SD initiated by a vertical policy domain could meet with opposition from competing policy domains.

### Recommendations

- The authors propose to set up a Coordination cell for Sustainable Development. The coordination cell is to support the other policy domains in their efforts pertaining to SD; judging these efforts and report to the Flemish Parliament. The interdepartmental consultation should be ensured through a consultation committee.
- A Flemish Decree on SD is recommended, provided that not everything is strictly defined, provided that the decree

doesn't affect other processes and provided that the Knowledge Cell Statutory Moderation keeps an eye on the content of the document. The authors ask not to allocate the 'SD portfolio' to a minister in a vertical policy domain but to the minister-president.

- A Strategy for Sustainable Development is required, with the emphasis on the process. As a result all policy domains should submit the concrete action programs to the SD Coordination Cell.
- The involving of Flemish stakeholders could take place through an advisory board. A special advisory board is not recommended. The existing advisory boards SERV and MiNa Council could have advisory authority on the condition that all groups are involved.

## Border crossing Flemish environmental policy

K. Geeraerts, P. Bursens, P. Leroy · *Centre of Expertise on Environmental Policy Sciences, University of Antwerp (UA), 2004*

### Definition of problem and research questions

This publication deals with the way in which the Flemish environmental government deals with the international decision-making process pertaining to the environment. The research question is *in which way (and to what extent) does Flanders take part in the realisation of the international environmental policy.* In the first place the formal and informal participants, settings and (communication) channels are described and analysed. An evaluation will follow. Questions with regard to the subject: (1) what route – influence channel – does Flanders take

towards the international forums; (2) what is the coordination like within the Flemish government; (3) what impact does Flanders have on the international scene. The authors verify whether cooperation and mutual coordination are at hand and to what extent every matter is arranged in a formal way.

### Method and criteria

The authors have conducted this research by means of interviews and document analyses. A database was set up to offer support to the research and in which all environmental agreements have been included. The authors used an analysis framework based on international



### Characteristics

#### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

#### POLICY TYPE

international policy

#### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

not applicable

#### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation

#### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (Centre for Environmental Policy sciences)

literature. This analysis framework facilitates the classification of the Flemish preparation of and participation in the international environmental policy: intra-stately versus extra-stately, cooperative versus non-cooperative, direct versus indirect participation and formal versus informal participation. The criterion used for the analysis evaluation is *internal efficiency* (of the processes) with the purpose of achieving the best possible position in the international policy. Subcriteria include amongst others the degree of openness, precision, cooperation and data transfer.

#### Findings

In short, the authors note that the Belgian institutional organisation creates a great dependency between regional and federal governments. This leads to a cooperative attitude and respect towards the federal government. An additional explanation lies in the fact that during the research period, the stakeholders had the same political colour. Flanders and Belgium have good international negotiating skills, but this reputation is challenged by a defective implementation of agreements.

#### Recommendations

The authors make several recommendations: importance of federal loyalty; the set-up of a systematic consultation procedure exceeding the boundaries between policy domains; the review of the CCIM; the set-up of an effective interest defence at the European Parliament ... As the recommendations are quite elaborate, we would like to refer to the book itself for a full summary with the authors' arguments.

## Follow-up of environmental complaints by the Environmental Inspection: an efficient instrument for high supervision?

A. Monsieurs · Faculty of Law, K.U.Leuven, 2004

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

##### POLICY TYPE

target group policy and integrated government policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

enforcement

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process and product evaluation

##### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative (final report)

#### Definition of problem and research questions

This final report investigates the supervision of class 2 and 3 companies by municipalities and the Environmental Inspection. The investigation starts from the observation that the supervision is rather deficient and that the municipalities – which are responsible for the supervision of the companies – do not always intervene when required. In addition it seems that the Environmental Inspection offers inadequate so-called 'high supervision' with regard to these companies. This results in a lack of action against some nuisance generating class 2 and 3 companies. The report analyses:

- the reasons for the deficient supervision by the municipalities and the bottlenecks at the Environmental Inspection with regard to the required high supervision;
- a possible solution from the viewpoint of the Environmental Inspection (i.e. the

complaint handling could function as an efficient instrument for the high supervision).

#### Method and criteria

The methods used are participating observation and a questionnaire for municipalities, which tries to pinpoint their enforcement problems. By means of the case follow-up system, analysis is carried out to see whether the Environmental Inspection can guarantee a satisfactory follow-up of the complaints. The evaluation is mainly performed based on the following criteria: efficiency, knowledge and capacity.

#### Findings

The author finds that municipalities intervene in companies only as a preventative measure when environmental permits are requested. (The reason, according to the investigation, is that enforcement is one of many tasks.) The questionnaire showed

that the municipalities have a wide range of tasks to fulfil, a lack of personnel and that the complex environmental legislation is a limiting factor to effective supervision. As a result, complaints for which the municipalities are responsible, are forwarded to the Environmental Inspection. The Environmental Inspection therefore receives hundreds of complaints regarding topics which are not a priority within the scope of their primary inspection tasks. As it is, the Environmental Inspection already lacks the personnel to effectively supervise class 1 companies, leave alone the companies of class 2. Therefore many

municipalities do not get a warning from the Environmental Inspection (which has to exert high supervision on the municipalities) and the class 2 institutions remain uninvestigated and for that matter unpunished.

#### Recommendations

- To eliminate insecurity with regard to the enforcement of the *municipal* environmental officials (lack of experience, no enforcement training, work load, no systematic planning ...), it is necessary to hire an extra environmental official, for authorised supervision/ inspection only.

This person should be an expert, preferably someone with an independent status.

- Also the *Environmental Inspection department* should hire more personnel in order to exert high supervision. Follow-ups are best performed through a complaint handling system, which the municipalities and the Environmental Inspection have access to. The municipalities ought to be trained rather than punished by the Environmental Inspection, seeing as in most cases the problem of the municipalities is not caused by unwillingness but by incapacity.

## Pilot project VLAREM supervision Klein-Brabant, 'Transport sector'

R. Segers • Publication by the municipality Puurs

#### Definition of problem and research questions

This publication is the report of a project initiated by the Office of the Public Prosecutor. The project originated after a double observation: on the one hand companies did not comply with the environmental rules and regulations and on the other hand municipalities were not well aware of everything going on within their territory. The author of the document summarises how the municipality(ies) Puurs (and Bornem and Sint-Amands) for 7 years tried to regulate, inform and technically support companies that did not comply with environmental law, in cooperation with the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the police and the Environmental Inspection department of AMINAL. The document provides an evaluation of this process, with the focus on the final results.

#### Method and criteria

Through *local visits, info meetings and letters* the target group becomes involved and is aware of what is happening when and where. The criteria of the project evaluation are '*ability*' (municipalities: administrative follow-up; companies: arranging of the company premises and equipment), '*goodwill*' (the company attitude) and '*knowledge*' (inform companies about VLAREM). Additionally, the *cooperation* between municipalities, Courts of Law, police and the Flemish environmental authorities is discussed.

#### Findings

- A large number of companies simply ignore the first warning notices.
- Administrative follow-up seems difficult: during and after the project new companies without a permit were added and

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

##### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

enforcement

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, process evaluation

##### PRINCIPAL

initiated by the Office of the Public Prosecutor

- other companies had suspended their activities or were been taken over by another company (without notifying the municipality).
- Auto-control doesn't seem to work for most companies. In 19 cases there were companies which, after 7 years of project, did not succeed in acquiring a full permit for their activities. With regard to the storage of fuels and waste products, no efforts were made by most companies, while one quarter didn't even own an oil secretor which happened to be one of the original targets of the project.
- Some fundamental shortcomings exist that present a danger to the operator (fire, security) and the environment (particularly regarding water and soil). If nothing happens, the financial repercussions could be enormous.
- Some companies do not have an adequate infrastructure; without reconstruction works they cannot meet the VLAREM criteria. Other companies have problems because of their lack of know-how in this field; they don't have anyone to supervise them and don't initiate any actions.
- Operators with good intentions expect inspections to be a positive confirmation of their approach and investments.
- The attitude of the operators has to change. The necessary information has been offered, especially to class 2 companies. Even so, many companies often do not even try to read or understand this information. The checklist was drawn up using clear and simple wording so that this cannot be an excuse not to act upon it. The question rises whether the future system of 'integral environmental conditions' can have a positive impact with this operator attitude.
- The use of the checklist is more convenient in the field than the official VLAREM texts. *The development of the checklist seems to be a task for higher government; in this way everywhere things are checked in the same manner.*

#### Recommendations

- Despite the offered information and the favourable attitude of the Office of the Public Prosecutor and the supervising officials, for many years now some companies do not take the inspections seriously. *Criminal prosecution is the only option*; otherwise projects will continue to drag on. It seems reasonable to offer companies first an administrative option, except when dealing with acute pollution or danger, but further follow-up should not be a permanent burden on the municipal services.

# Linking Innovation Policy and Sustainable Development in Flanders

P. Van Humbeeck, I. Dries, J. Larosse · *IWT Studies*, 2004

## Definition of problem and research questions

Innovation policy and sustainable development policy are relatively new. They involve complex, horizontal policy domains, and include a heterogeneous group of participants. The institutionalisation of these policy domains is rather limited at present. This publication will analyse how policymakers today are restrained by a material and energy intensive industry (and the resulting environmental problems). The challenge remains to innovate such a system and to achieve a knowledge-based economy. In order to do so, innovation policy and sustainable development policy have to go hand in hand. The authors further analyse how this is possible and what conditions have to be met.

## Method and criteria

This ex-ante evaluation first of all explores how the sustainable development policy is organised in Flanders. Secondly, the links between the innovation policy and the sustainable development policy are analysed. Finally, possible scenarios are investigated for a synergy between both policy domains. All of this is done by means of a document analysis. The process evaluation criterion is the integration between both domains and the integration within the existing vertical policy domains. For this reason, coherence is examined in the policy objectives, the political platform as well as transparency.

## Findings

- At this point there is no integrated policy for sustainable development covering all policy domains. Actions for sustainable development are ad hoc and are specific for each sector.
- Environmental policy, economic policy and technological innovation have no real connection at the moment, despite the (economic and ecological) advantages generated by cooperation and integration. During the government period of 1999-2004 an Environmental Innovation Platform (MIP) was created. The Platform could enable a better synergy between innovation policy, environmental policy and energy policy.

## Recommendations

In order to guarantee coordination between innovation policy and environmental policy, along with the integration of sustainable development, actions have to be undertaken in the policy domains. The MIP could enable the integration of these initiatives. An important condition for achieving an innovating economy and an innovating environmental policy is political support. Moreover, the ministries should share common objectives.

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

### POLICY TYPE

integrated government policy, a coordinating policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

not applicable

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-ante evaluation, process and plan evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

OESO and the Flemish government (Department Innovation and Science)

# The Europeanisation of Flemish officials, members of cabinet and politicians: opinion, expertise and attention

M. Baetens, P. Bursens • Centre of Expertise on Administrative Organisation Flanders, K.U. Leuven, 2005

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

### POLICY TYPE

international policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

not applicable

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (Centre of Expertise on Administrative Organisation Flanders)

Note: see also the publication

'Europeanisation of Flanders: a screening of the managerial structures'

## Definition of problem and research questions

The authors examined how 'Europe' interrelates with the policy culture of the members of cabinet, the officials and the members of parliament. The Europeanisation of that culture is discussed, asking whether European awareness is incorporated into the government practice of these policy operators. This question is important since on the one hand it enables a correct and timely implementation of European rules and regulations (downloading) and on the other hand it optimises the Flemish input in the European process (uploading).

## Method and criteria

By means of a large-scale questionnaire for members of cabinet, officials and members of parliament, it is verified what European related activities they perform, what their knowledge of Europe is like, what their thoughts on Europe are like, whether Europe is involved in their daily lives and finally what the complexity of the decision process is like in relation to European issues. Based on these data and fieldwork at the institutions, the 'Europeanisation' of the policy operators (of cabinet, civil service and parliament) is measured.

In order to evaluate these elements, the authors focus on four policy domains, amongst which 'the environment'.

Evaluation criteria include knowledge, interest, integration (of organisations inside and outside of the policy domain), complexity, transparency and capacity.

## Findings

The broad outline of the findings with regard to environmental policy is as follows:

- There is strong focus on the policy preparation and the legal transposition of European rules, with little attention for the application of these rules (operational aspect). The environmental administration is even less concerned than the agricultural administration.
- The competence of agricultural officials reaches beyond their own region much more than for environmental officials (probably because 'agriculture' has only recently been regionalised). Close ties with colleagues in the Walloon provinces are beneficial to the European policy process.
- Contacts are predominantly established with the European Commission and also there, environmental officials seem to have fewer contacts with the members of commission than agricultural officials. In general contacts with the European members of parliament are inadequate.
- On a scale of expertise (how well does one know Europe?) all participants attain less than half of the total possible score. The environmental officials score significantly lower on the scale for

European expertise than the agricultural officials. These show for example more enthusiasm towards additional training.

- There is rather a lot of support for Europe, but still the officials and members of cabinet remain critical (much more so than members of parliament). A lot of attention goes to Europe (e.g. case follow-up in relation to the European rules and regulations),

except – paradoxically – among members of parliament.

- A joint Belgian position is difficult seeing the complexity of the Belgian institutional make-up. This is also obviously a handicap for Belgium (and Flanders).

#### Recommendations

The authors give a lot of recommendations (about 30 pages) aimed at reinforcing

the European 'culture' (knowledge, expertise, attention ...). After all, Europeanisation enhances the will and capacity to participate in the European policy process with strong opinions and an elaborate strategy and to correctly apply the rules and regulations. We therefore refer to the full report.

## Carte blanche or corset? Evaluation of the Cooperation Agreement

K. Bachus · HIVA, K.U. Leuven, 2004

#### Definition of problem and research questions

The local government level fulfils an important function in dealing with environmental problems. The Flemish government supports the municipalities and provinces in the development of a local environmental policy. Cooperation agreements are used for that purpose. This study verifies whether the implementation of the instrument went exactly as planned. The object of this interim evaluation was to identify those areas that need to be adjusted by the Flemish government.

#### Method and criteria

The evaluation was conducted by means of document analysis, interviews and participating observation. The criterion is effectiveness: not the achievement of environmental targets, but of the structuring objectives of the Cooperation Agreement (e.g. good communication with the municipalities, support, planning, number of participating municipalities).

#### Findings

- Participation of the municipalities in the Cooperation Agreement is more limited than before.
- The conditions for financial aid to the municipalities are very strict. This sometimes causes problems for municipalities.
- Both government levels (Flemish and local) feel that they are not on the same wavelength.

The municipalities have to report on their accomplishments. These reports do not always reflect the situation in the field.

#### Recommendations

The investigation was initiated by the Flemish government: the recommendations are therefore intended for them. Recommendations are formulated with regard to the relation between the Flemish Region and the municipalities. The Flemish Region should pay more attention to the weaker municipalities, provide more and better communication and organise

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

##### POLICY TYPE

an integrated government policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

founding instrument

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation

##### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (AMINAL)

more frequent field visits. An internet forum could be another interesting option (e.g. to make people familiar with practical examples). Furthermore, efforts should be made to embed the environmental service in all the municipalities.



# Enforcement: the missing link in the environmental policy cycle?

T. De Bruyn, K. Bachus · MIRA-PE 2005, 2005 (Dutch version)

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general, cross-topic (waste, climate, water)

### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

enforcement

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, plan evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (VMM)

## Definition of problem and research questions

This study focuses on enforcement.

Enforcement is required to ensure the observance of environmental rules and regulations. This aspect is often neglected when drafting new rules and regulations.

The researchers therefore consider *how the inclusion of enforcement measures at the start of the policy process may influence the execution and enhance its effectiveness.*

## Method and criteria

The study centres around four case studies: the discharge of domestic waste water, the separated collection of industrial waste, the maintenance and inspection of heating systems and the integral environmental conditions. The authors investigate whether and how the policymakers took into account eleven criteria when drafting their rules and regulations: these criteria include acceptance by the target group, costs and benefits in case of non-compliance, knowledge and transparency of the rules, informal chance of inspection, chance of sanctions, chance of detection ...

## Findings

The policymakers pay a lot of attention to voluntary compliance: through information and other instruments target groups are involved in the policy process so as to increase voluntary compliance. However, policymakers are aware that supervision and inspection are of paramount importance. They assume that

the traditional inspection systems will take care of this. Paradoxically, all parties indicate that it is precisely the traditional inspection systems that present a lot of problems.

## Recommendations

The researchers offer two types of recommendations. The first type refers to recommendations for policy preparation and policy formulating administration, the second type includes recommendations for the Flemish government in general pertaining to the organisation of enforcement. As regards the first type, it is recommended to prepare a 'manual' with enforcement options and tips which guarantee optimal enforcement. As far as the latter type is concerned, the researchers demand attention for communication between the public prosecutor and the Environmental Inspection, to explain the reasons for dismissal.

# The implemented sustainable development policy

P. Delbaere, P. Dresselaers, N. Gouzée · *Federal Planning Bureau, 2005*

## Definition of problem and research questions

This publication contributes to the commitment of the federal government to perform an annual evaluation of the implemented sustainable development policy on a federal level. The document consists of three sections: (1) evaluation of the content of the two existing Plans regarding Sustainable Development (2000-2004 and 2004-2008); (2) analysis and evaluation of the processes in which the plans are generated and executed; (3) a Strategy for Sustainable Development of policy levels other than the Belgian federal government. During the investigation, a plan evaluation of the (kinds of) measures taken, delayed, cancelled etc. was made. The coordination between the two plans was examined as well. For the process evaluation the process and output indicators are used (e.g. used budgets, number of media citations, number of reactions on the plan's preliminary draft and transparency of the plans).

## Method and criteria

The various measures in the plan are classified according to topic (poverty & health, energy ...) and according to the type of instrument (economic, communication, voluntary ...). The processes (and participants) are described and analysed based on existing documentation maintained by the Federal Planning Bureau. Criteria for evaluation include integration (coordination of the two plans, coordination between the sectors distributed over

multiple ministries, coordination between federal and regional level), participation, transparency of the texts and plans, planning ...

## Findings

Since the introduction of the first plan, at least 56 % of the measures are now in the operational phase, 20 % are under preparation and 32 % are being executed. Nothing further is known with regard to the other measures as no other data are kept by the reporters. The two federal plans and the sector-specific policy plans of the federal government are overlapping. This is mentioned in the second Plan for Sustainable Development, but no further suggestions are made to increase coherence.

## Recommendations

The authors note five routes to improvement:

- improvements could be made with regard to the monitoring of follow-ups for the Plan for Sustainable Development;
- a guarantee for Belgian representation on all national and international policy levels;
- in the long term, a guarantee for an effective succession in time between the instruments for sustainable development;
- the enhancement of integration of the thematic and sectoral policy;
- enforcement of the knowledge basis for a policy regarding sustainable development;
- the mobility of large social groups and population by the federal Strategy for Sustainable Development.

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

general

### POLICY TYPE

a coordinating policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

supporting instrument

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, product evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

law

# Environmental policy integration in Europe

European Environment Agency · Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2005

Characteristics  
**ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC**  
general  
**POLICY TYPE**  
an integrated government policy  
**TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT**  
not applicable  
**TYPE OF EVALUATION**  
ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation  
**PRINCIPAL**  
personal initiative

## Definition of problem and research questions

This publication of the European Environment Agency evaluates the way in which *environmental aspects are integrated in the policies of EU member states*. This integration makes that environmental problems are tackled pro-actively and systematically. Furthermore it enables continuity, symbiosis and transparency between policy domains and levels. Finally 'integration of environmental policy' is to ensure sustainable development.

## Method and criteria

The EU member states informed the European Environment Agency of the extent of environmental integration and sustainable development in their administration by means of a questionnaire. Additionally, documents from all EU member states were analysed by experts.

## Findings

In general it appears that governments have taken steps towards environmental integration aiming at sustainable development, but that a lot more can be done. Most EU member states have a Strategy for Sustainable Development, but it remains unclear whether it is in fact implemented. As far as the institutional developments are concerned, most EU member states have set up an environmental cell within each ministry. Belgium for example has an inter-ministerial cell for the implementation

of Sustainable Development. Coordination between regions, ministries and policy levels appears to be limited. The Belgian cooperation between the local level and the Flemish level is mentioned as an example (in the form of a Cooperation Agreement). RIAs (regulating impact analyses) are conducted in 15 countries (including Belgium). However, we note that they are not always of a high quality and that they are not always used in a correct manner.

## Recommendations

- A better coordination should be encouraged between the ministries and government levels pertaining to the environment.
- Clear objectives for sustainable development have to be defined, which are to be implemented by a coordinating ministry.

# Sectoral implementation plans in the Flemish waste policy

## Effectiveness analysis of a planning instrument

J. Gysen, K. Bachus, H. Bruyninckx, L. Van Ootegem · Centre of Expertise on Environmental Policy Sciences, K.U. Leuven, 2003

### Definition of problem and research questions

This publication explores the 'execution plan' as a policy instrument, as it is used in the waste policy. First of all the instrument itself is analysed (the functions of the instrument and the question whether it satisfies the conditions for success: critical success factors). In addition the authors subject a specific implementation plan to an effectiveness analysis (the implementation plan for organic-biological waste). The effectiveness analysis investigates a possible relation between the policy actions and the environmental impact and whether this relation shows any causality.

### Method and criteria

(1) The instrument per se is assessed based on critical success factors (conditions for enhancing the instrument's success) such as: good communication, security and support function (the target groups have to be involved and financial stimuli enable acceptance).

(2) The effectiveness analysis is based on a methodology developed by the authors. As it is extremely difficult to prove a correlation between policy and environmental condition, the researchers want to reconstruct the relation(s) between policy actions and their effects on the environment *step by step* and then the causes and consequences of these relations. In other words, *causality chains* are constructed, starting from the policy

actions and ideally resulting in an environmental effect. The researchers reconstruct the chains by means of logical deduction, interviews with involved parties, policy theory, output, outcome and environmental indicators.

### Findings

The policy actions have not decreased the organic-biological waste volume. They did facilitate a maximal recuperation of the waste products.

### Recommendations

The authors make some recommendations with regard to the instrument itself: the model function has to be altered; the government should communicate on how the plan must be implemented and what resources must be provided for the execution of the implementation plan. Moreover, the authors suggest collecting all data on output, outcome and impact, so as to enable a better evaluation of the instrument.

### Characteristics

#### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

waste

#### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

#### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

supporting instrument

#### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, product evaluation

#### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (Centre for Environmental Policy Sciences)

# Waste prevention actions and measures in secondary schools in Flanders

OVAM · OVAM, 2003a

Characteristics  
**ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC**  
waste  
**POLICY TYPE**  
target group policy  
**TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT**  
social-communicative and direct instrument  
**TYPE OF EVALUATION**  
ex-post evaluation, product evaluation  
**PRINCIPAL**  
personal initiative

## Definition of problem and research questions

On the one hand, this study focuses on how school boards adjust their policy to the changing Flemish waste rules and regulations (assess the outcome) and on the other hand, it focuses on the effects of a possibly structured environmental policy on the waste situation (assess the environmental effects). The researchers want to identify the peripheral conditions in order for the schools to take successful waste prevention measures. All of this is examined by investigating the external stimuli and internal characteristics of individual schools. As regards the external factors, in particular the municipal policy and its impact on the schools' waste policies is further explored.

## Method and criteria

By means of a questionnaire several variables are compared to each other and linked to assess the effectiveness of the measures. In this way the waste quantity per fraction is compared to the type of school (ASO (General Secondary Education), TSO (Technical Secondary Education), industrial education) and the actions undertaken by the schools (e.g. a lunch box campaign).

The evaluation is based on many criteria. The principal criterion is effectiveness, with explanatory notes on communication and participation (participation of the students).

## Findings

What is striking is that environmental protection systems in schools (where teachers and students cooperate actively according to a long-term vision) seem to have a considerable impact on the waste volume. Communication is of paramount importance.

An example of a specific, successful measure could be a lunch box campaign combined with ban on plastic and tin foil.

## Recommendations

We have selected three of the most important recommendations:

- Financial factors: the application of 'the polluter pays' principle will convince schools to take more action. However it needs to be stressed that by avoiding waste, one can also save on purchase and processing costs. This message should be conveyed to the school boards in a clear manner.
- External factors: the municipalities could provide stimuli, e.g. with regard to communication. The study shows that an active environmental service with clearly targeted communication and school-oriented action can have stimulating effects.
- Internal factors: a well-defined environmental protection system is very effective: the distribution of lunch boxes and returnable glass bottles are concrete, effective measures. The extent of student participation in the development and implementation of these actions is the decisive factor for success.

# Waste flows and waste policy in elementary schools in Flanders

OVAM • OVAM, 2003b

## Definition of problem and research questions

This study presents an overview of the waste quantities per waste fraction generated by elementary schools on an annual basis. The data are a starting point for identifying the factors (internal and external) that determine the size of the waste mountain. It is examined how some very specific actions can possibly diminish the waste quantities.

## Method and criteria

A questionnaire was forwarded to all Flemish elementary schools (except for the schools situated in the Brussels-Capital Region). The response was representative. By means of output indicators, statements could be made on the waste quantities. The compared criteria are analogous to the ones of the research conducted in secondary schools by OVAM (see above).

## Findings

Elementary schools collect more vegetable and fruit waste than secondary schools, but generally speaking the waste quantity remains relatively limited in comparison to the latter.

The internal factor which decreases waste is a good environmental functioning which is planned in detail and which works continuously. Furthermore, we find that schools which cooperate actively with municipalities within the scope of local waste actions show very good results. What is remarkable is that no effect is noted as to

the possible involvement of the municipalities in the environmental covenant.

With regard to specific measures, we see that the exclusion of vending machines and the installation of drinking fountains do not have a significant effect on the waste production. On the contrary we see that a complete ban on specific packaging materials (e.g. aluminium and cardboard drink cartons) does have a real impact, especially in consultation with the parents and students.

## Recommendations

Below we mention two striking observations, which could be considered as recommendations:

- Schools require active cooperation with municipalities; local officials should define specific cooperation actions. Sensitisation in itself is not sufficient;
- A ban on certain packaging materials has proven to be the most effective, especially in consultation with parents and students. The exclusion of vending machines has no significant effects.

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

waste

### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

social-communicative and direct instrument

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, product evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative

*Note: see 'Waste Prevention actions and measures in secondary schools in Flanders' (OVAM, 2003a)*

# Presti 4: involved in environmental protection – measuring the effects

A. Gommers · Resource Analysis, 2003



<b>Characteristics</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC</b>
waste
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>
target group policy
<b>TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT</b>
social-communicative instrument
<b>TYPE OF EVALUATION</b>
ex-post evaluation, product evaluation
<b>PRINCIPAL</b>
Flemish government (OVAM)

## Definition of problem and research questions

Most companies produce waste during the exercise of their business activities.

To encourage these companies to take

waste, water and energy reducing measures, the government mobilises

several instruments. One of these

instruments includes the Presti

programme (encouraging waste

prevention actions). This study examines

the effects of the programme on the

participating companies.

## Method and criteria

In order to discover the problems experienced by programme representatives

in-depth interviews were conducted. A

questionnaire was forwarded to the

participating companies to collect data

on the effects of the programme. The

companies not participating were

questioned by means of stratified

sampling. Based on the questionnaire

some of the companies were selected

for in-depth interviews. The object was to

assess the effectiveness of the programme.

## Findings

- Not all objectives of the programme were clear.
- Only a limited number of companies responded.
- The companies that responded have a more positive attitude towards environmental protection.
- The environmental impact of the responding companies decreased more than that of the non-participating companies.
- The participating companies are satisfied with their participation.

## Recommendations

Projects are best conducted in different stages. Companies that have been involved in environmental protection for a longer time, could start in a higher stage. A system of 'godparent companies' could be an option to have experienced companies coach others.

# The three-tier manure policy: evaluation and future exploration

M. Vervaet, L. Lauwers, S. Lenders, S. Overloop • Centre for Agricultural Economy, Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2004

## Definition of problem and research questions

The Flemish Region struggles with a manure surplus. This leads to excessive nutrient losses towards the environment. Since 2000, the government has been trying to deal with these problems in the manure action plan (*in casu* MAP2bis). This plan starts from three tiers or 'measure packages' (source approach, judicious fertilisation and manure processing). For each of these three tiers the following targets have been set: the first two measures have to contribute to the elimination of the manure surplus up to 25% and manure processing must be responsible for at least 50% thereof. The authors verify whether the three tiers are in fact *effective policy instruments and to what extent they are coherent*.

## Method and criteria

This sheer product evaluation looks into the effects in the field. Based on a calculation model the sale at company owned sites, at third parties and manure processing is simulated, starting from individual company data and the quantity of saleable manure. The criteria for this study are coherence (between the measure packages) and effectiveness. An implicit evaluation of the objectives and their reliability is conducted as well (i.e. how the size of the manure surplus is to be interpreted correctly).

## Findings

The authors examine whether the manure surpluses in Flanders can be eliminated. This almost seemed to be the case in 2003. However, the authors do not wish to make any statements about the effectiveness of the manure policy. The authors in fact remain critical with regard to the correct interpretation of the manure surplus. An important part of the manure surplus appears not to be 'internalised' by the policy. The government doesn't consider one part of the manure surplus, so that depending on *the interpretation of the manure surplus size*, the policy can be called effective or not. A more comprising calculation of the nutrients losses shows that a manure surplus in fact still exists. The authors verify whether the current three-tier policy will in fact deal with a 'broader' interpretation of the manure surplus.

## Recommendations

The authors list several recommendations, including a plea for an efficient mineral inventory.

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

manure

### POLICY TYPE

target group policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

supporting instrument

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, product evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative



# Nature, how? Investigation into the social framework for nature preservation in Flanders: partial assignment: methodology for the evaluation of a policy pertaining to the social framework for nature preservation in Flanders

T. Leroy, I. Loots, P. Leroy · Faculty of Political and Social sciences, UA, 2004

Characteristics
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC</b>
nature
<b>POLICY TYPE</b>
target group policy
<b>TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT</b>
not applicable
<b>TYPE OF EVALUATION</b>
ex-ante evaluation, plan evaluation
<b>PRINCIPAL</b>
Flemish government (AMINAL)

*Note: The first part of this study is published as 'Onderzoek naar het draagvlak voor natuurbehoud in Vlaanderen: deelopdracht: opstellen van een korf van indicatoren voor het meten van het maatschappelijke draagvlak voor natuurbehoud in Vlaanderen' by M. De Zitter, T. Wymeersch, D. Bogaert, A. Cliquet and published in Ghent: Arteveldehogeschool and University of Ghent, 2003. This research does not evaluate policies, but is intended for rendering operational the framework policy, more specifically its monitoring.*

## Definition of problem and research questions

This publication makes an ex-ante evaluation of the nature framework policy. Currently there is no real framework policy and therefore it is not possible to conduct an ex-post evaluation. The study consists of two parts: a discourse analysis (opinion evaluation, visions, and hopes pertaining to framework) and an analysis of specific nature projects and the way in which a framework is structured.

## Method and criteria

This study is based on document analysis and interviews. The discourse analysis identifies viewpoints with regard to framework. A separate analysis framework was used for the analysis of nature projects. This analysis framework allows the classification of projects exceeding their own situation. The framework refers to 3 questions: allocation (how much space and/or resources can be allocated to nature?), location (what priority is given to nature?) and joint use (function interrelations?). The evaluation criterion is 'clarity' in the discourse analysis (what is the definition of a framework?) and 'accessibility', 'mutual coordination between the participants', 'acceptance by participants' in nature projects.

## Findings

- A framework policy (a systematic and well-considered process aimed at increasing social support for the nature policy) cannot be a separate policy; it must be a part of the integral nature policy. Only fragmentary elements with regard to this can be found in policy documents and viewpoints of the participants involved;
- Nature policy requires links to other policy domains. Nature dominance could lead to a shrinking of the framework. When nature must be exclusive, extra framework attention will be required;
- An exploration of the social context (participants and their relations) is important as the participants put their trust into the initiator and because it facilitates an adequate framework strategy.

## Recommendations

We refer to the findings above.

# Report of the European Commission on the implementation of Guideline 92/43/EC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna

European Commission • EC, COM(2003) 845, 2004

## Definition of problem and research questions

This publication examines the progress of the implementation of the Habitat guideline and whether this is done effectively. The activities are inspected on a European level and on a EU member state level.

## Method and criteria

The implementation evaluation is based on the reports of the EU member states. As regards the European activities the authors start from commission reports. The paragraphs on EU member state progress were drafted by one or more consultants. The national reports of the EU member states are analysed by governmental and non-governmental experts and officials of the European Commission.

The criterion is whether and how the objectives of the European guideline are implemented in the EU member states.

## Findings

• Since 1999 there has been progress in the selection of regions, as required by the Habitat guideline. Even so, we note a delay in the planning. The Belgian lists, with suggested regions for the Natura 2000 network are not exhaustive enough, even though progress has been made since 2002.

- No EU member state provides information indicating the effects of the exceptions to the strict protection for the species involved.
- The reports of the EU member states are not very critical. In addition, the reports vary significantly among EU member states, which makes comparison difficult.

## Recommendations

The quality of the EU member state reports must improve. Methods have to be developed which enable in-depth evaluation. The input of the European Environmental Agency has to be amplified for example.

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

nature

### POLICY TYPE

a region-oriented policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

supporting instrument

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative (European Commission)

# Nature report 2005. The condition of nature in Flanders - figures for the policy

M. Dumortier, L. De Bruyn, M. Hens, J. Peymen, A. Schneiders, T. Van Daele, W. Van Reeth, G. Weyembergh en E. Kuijken · Institute for Nature Preservation, 2005

## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

nature

### POLICY TYPE

region-oriented policy, target group policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

juridical, economic and social-communicative instruments

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

process and product evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government. The submission of a Nature Report is an obligation by decree.

## Definition of problem and research questions

The Nature Report presents a current state of affairs and an evaluation of nature in Flanders, centred around specific topics.

It is impossible to summarise all findings of this elaborate report. The report aims at

policy support. By means of indicators the report paints a picture of how the environment is faring. Also the policy is described and in certain cases evaluated and knowledge (deficiencies) is(are)

indicated. Part 6 of the report 'Protection and recovery' analyses and evaluates the policy and its instruments explicitly. The focus is on:

- international policy;
- VEN/IVON;
- spatial policy;
- land acquisition;
- nature reserves;
- forest reserves;
- institutional instruments;
- nature permit;
- water policy;
- regional landscapes;
- cooperation with local governments.

In part 7 'Society' the nature framework is presented as well as nature and environment education.

## Method and criteria

The report includes a number of nature indicators, output indicators, process indicators and outcome indicators.

These indicators are collected through

monitoring, document research and interviews. The effectiveness of the policy was examined in detail and whenever this was not possible, the progress was evaluated.

## Recommendations

Because of the diversity of the treated policy topics in the Nature Report 2005, it is not possible to present all recommendations. We therefore refer to the full Nature Report.

# Financial instruments for nature, forest and landscape

B. Kayaerts · MiNa Council, 2005

## Definition of problem and research questions

This publication presents the financial instruments for implementing the nature policy (in the broadest sense: aimed at forests, landscape, nature and biodiversity). The evaluative extent of the study is discussed in the *need for optimisation*: the extent to which the policy draws attention to the various elements that impact the effectiveness of the instruments. But also other evaluation aspects are discussed (see below). First an overview of the policy nature objectives is presented. The author discusses the strategic and operational targets. In the second last part the analysis focuses on whether the policy shows sufficient interest in the elements that impact effectiveness. The key criterion is coherence. The following evaluation questions will be answered:

- To what extent does the policy focus on the development of clear strategic objectives with sufficient structure?
- To what extent is attention given to the development of financial instruments for involving all relevant target groups and the improvement of the coherence among the target groups? The analysis aims at the parties participating in the 'management'.
- To what extent does the policy focus on coherence between the available financial instruments and the objectives?
- To what extent does the policy focus on

clear and measurable objectives? Most instruments are a form of compensation (e.g. compensation for property owners for the inclusion of their lands in the VEN). The objectives are rarely SMART-formulated.

- To what extent does the report focus on the development of the financial instruments for the coordination of the instrument in its spatial field of application? Are the instruments sufficiently specifically oriented?
- To what extent do the financial instruments fit in a region-oriented vision? Is sufficient attention paid to the current or future spatial destination? Is there any attention for management continuity?

Finally the study focuses on the financial flow linked to the instruments.

## Method and criteria

The study examines the objectives, the target groups and the instruments and verifies whether certain conditions for achieving these objectives are met. The criteria are coordination, SMART content of the objectives and the involvement of the target groups.

## Findings

The objectives are highly *fragmented and distributed* over several policy domains and the *operational objectives are not always SMART-formulated*. The researcher describes the target groups, followed by a discussion of the 57 financial



## Characteristics

### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

nature

### POLICY TYPE

region-oriented policy, target group policy

### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

economic instrument

### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, process evaluation

### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative (MiNa Council)

instruments, each divided per target group and per objective. General observations especially deal with subsidies; they are strongly embedded in legislation and more than half of the instruments are remarkably young. The author finds that the

objectives (within 'nature' between 'nature and landscape' and between 'nature and agriculture'...) are not always geared to one another. Furthermore, there is only consideration for the cooperation between the participants.

#### Recommendations

The preface mentions that the study aims at delivering a contribution to the debate on open space instrument optimisation. The findings are therefore also recommendations.

## Region-oriented nature policy: operationality and implementation of the Bird Guideline and the Habitat Guideline

A. Cliquet, G. Van Hoorick, J. Lambrecht, D. Bogaert • MIRA-PE 2005, 2005 (Dutch version)

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

nature

##### POLICY TYPE

a region-oriented policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

juridical instrument

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, plan and process evaluation

uation

##### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (VMM)

#### Definition of problem and research questions

This research evaluates the translation of the Habitat guideline and the Bird guideline. Also the measures ensuing from the guidelines are analysed. The research questions are:

- What are the specific region-oriented obligations for Flanders under the guidelines?
- Did Flanders correctly transpose the guidelines into legislation?
- What instruments are provided and which ones are in fact implemented?
- What are the possible success and failure factors?

#### Method and criteria

This research is based on document analysis. The instrument 'nature guideline' was evaluated by means of interviews.

First of all, the transposition of the European guidelines is examined. For each instrument supporting the achievement of guideline objectives, the following criteria of analysis are used: legality, concreteness, coherence and ambition. Whenever possible, effectiveness is also examined.

#### Findings

- As a result of the modifying decree of 2002, the region-oriented obligations are translated to a reasonable extent into the Flemish rules and regulations. However, some legal problems still exist.
- Few specific objectives have been included in the policy plans (e.g. MiNa plan) pertaining to particular protection areas.
- Reserves appear to be particularly apt for the protection of critical species.
- The guarantee for achieving the protection objectives on sites that are not owned or managed by the government or land management associations, is inadequate.
- The current (nature) permitting system does not sufficiently contribute to a differentiated policy, which is necessary for the special protection areas.
- Most specific plans for the special protection areas are nature-oriented plans. Their implementation was delayed. This means that the objective with regard to the set-up the nature-oriented plans by the end of 2007 for every area in the VEN, will not be achieved.

#### Recommendations

- The protection objectives have to be embedded in legislation.
- A systematic legal framework for the management and supervision obligations has to be provided.
- The necessary financial resources must be allocated to nature organisation and reserve formation.
- Management agreements are preferably selective and differentiated.
- All interventions which may affect a particular protection area must be subjected to a permit.

## Local water policy about to turn: interim evaluation of the sub-basin functioning

A. Crabbé · Centre of Expertise on Environmental Policy Sciences, UA, 2003

#### Definition of problem and research questions

This study deals with a recent initiative for an integrated water policy. Municipalities, provinces, polders and waterworks are stimulated by the Flemish Region to create a more ambitious cooperation and more coherent water policy. On a scale of 103 sub-basins, sub-basin management plans are developed: Water policy plans which program actions and measures for future water policy. In this study an interim analysis and evaluation are presented of the processes which should lead to the development of the sub-basin management plans. The focus is on what has been accomplished so far (ex post), as well as on what is still to come (ex ante). The object of the study is to list critical failure and success factors which may impact the development of the sub-basin policy either in a positive or in a negative way.

#### Method and criteria

This research is the result of document analyses, participating observation and interviews.

In the ex post evaluation the following evaluation criteria are used as starting points: the mobilising power of the Flemish policy for the dynamicity of the sub-basin functioning, the transparency of the Flemish policy, the coordination of the sub-basin functioning (by the provincial councils), the legitimacy of the plan method and social participation in the policy planning.

The ex-ante evaluation is concerned with the timeliness of the local water policy plan delivery, the (un)certainty with regard to the effects of the planning process, the chance of embedding the sub-basin functioning, social participation in the policy planning, mutual coordination between the sub-basin functioning and the basin functioning, mutual coordination with other arrangements in the water policy and coordination with other arrangements outside of the water policy.

#### Findings

- In all Flemish sub-basins the initiative was taken to set up a water policy plan on a sub-basin level.

#### Characteristics

##### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

water

##### POLICY TYPE

region-oriented policy, integrated government policy

##### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

juridical instrument

##### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-nunc evaluation, process evaluation

##### PRINCIPAL

Flemish government (Centre of Expertise on Environmental Policy Sciences)

- All initiatives to motivate provinces, municipalities, polders and waterworks to sub-basin functioning, have lead to a jumble of financing channels and names, which does not enhance policy transparency.
- The coordinating provincial councils enable a positive dynamics in the sub-basin functioning, but their effort is sometimes experienced as too dominant.
- Most planning processes in the 103 Flemish sub-basins will not be

completed by the provisory planning of mid 2005.

- The future of the planning composition on sub-basin level is unclear.
- There are no rules for rendering the policy in the traditional policy arrangements dependent from the content of the sub-basin and basin management plans (such as water course management, water purification and drinking water supply). This possibly has a negative impact on the execution of the policy actions which are to be programmed.

- The mutual coordination between sub-basin management planning and other policies (e.g. nature policy, environmental planning) is not self-evident.

#### Recommendations

The study provides three recommendations, three strategic objectives:

- to convince all stakeholders of the added value generated by cooperation;
- working on mutual coordination;
- optimising the sub-basin functioning policy framework.

## Regional subsidies for municipal waste water treatment plants in a European context

Court of Audit · Flemish Parliament, Part 37 (2004-2005) Number 1, 2005

### Characteristics

#### ENVIRONMENTAL TOPIC

(waste)water

#### POLICY TYPE

an integrated government policy

#### TYPE OF POLICY INSTRUMENT

economic instrument (subsidies)

#### TYPE OF EVALUATION

ex-post evaluation, product evaluation

#### PRINCIPAL

personal initiative (one of the tasks of the Court of Audit is to perform effectiveness analyses on its own initiative or by order of the parliaments.)

### Definition of problem and research questions

The Court of Audit evaluates in this publication the organisation of waste water purification in Flanders (an obligation resulting from the European guideline on urban waste water). The evaluation focuses on the task division (municipalities, NV Aquafin and the municipal government, *in casu* VMM), the financing channels, the subsidy regulations and the KWZIs. The central research question is 'how does the Flemish Region fulfil its European obligations?'

### Method and criteria

The Court of Audit has screened the rules and regulations and the parliamentary documents and has conducted interviews involving the stakeholders. Furthermore it has examined some of the 2000-2003 documents at the water department and

the MiNa fund. The selection of these documents was based on indications of irregularities.

The Court of Audit defined efficiency, legality, economy and effectiveness as key criteria.

### Findings

The Court of Audit concluded that the Flemish Region does fulfil its European obligations, but not according to plan: the region is still waiting for some large investments by the municipalities in sewer systems. These efforts are impeded by factors such as unclear task division between the Flemish Region and the municipalities, a deficient and outdated planning, the undermining of regional management by the municipal autonomy and a lack of optimal subsidy systems.

## Recommendations

The Court of Audit formulates 10 recommendations:

- The region is to continue its current efforts with regard to task division (municipal versus supra-municipal) and planning. The zoning and master planning should bring shed some light on the need for and requirements of collective and individual waste water treatment.
- The region must draw up a map of all planned sewage works; not merely of the ones that are being subsidised. This should enable a better and coordinated planning and execution of sewage works.
- For non-MiNa fund subsidised works, the region must be able to object to proposed sewage works which do not fit in with the region's vision or which do not meet the technical criteria.
- The budget and additional budget documents are to provide the Flemish Parliament with the required information on available credits which provide for the municipal sewage works subsidy.
- The volume of the RIO subsidy programmes is to match the available credits as required by decree. If a lack of credits is imminent, the region is to take action.
- When works are combined, the current subsidy rules and regulations impose obligations on the municipalities, which are hard to fulfil because they depend on other organisations. Seeing as the combined works make up a substantial part of the subsidy programmes, the region is to consider a adjustment of these rules and regulations.
- The financial implications have to be known to the region when setting up

the subsidy programme. If a project is included in the programme only after approval of the preliminary draft, this will enable the region to better estimate the cost efficiency.

- The region is to clearly indicate the projects and reasons for the subsidies. In any case the project's cost efficiency is to constitute an important criterion.
- The municipalities are to give account of the received subsidies, so that the region obtains a clear picture of the executed works. If a municipality does not give proper account, in particular, if after the receipt of an advance no balance with explanations is requested, the region is to re-claim the non-accounted part of the received subsidy. In such case the region may refuse advances for similar projects of the same municipality.
- The region is to observe all legal and regulatory declarations of the RIO subsidies, including the obligation that the Flemish government (not the Flemish minister of the Environment) determines the subsidiary programme and the involvement of the official commission in the preparation thereof.



# Annex: Inventory reference list 2003-2005

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# Explanatory list of abbreviations

- ALT: Administration of Agriculture
- AMINAL: Administration of Environment, Nature, Land and Water Management
- APS: Planning and Statistics Administration
- AWI: Administration of Science and Innovation
- CDO: Centre for Sustainable Development
- CLE: Centre for Research on Agricultural Economics
- EC: European Commission
- EEA: European Environment Agency
- EU: European Union
- GMO: Regional Consultation Unit on the Environmental Policy
- HIVA: Higher Institute for Labour Studies
- INBO: Research Institute for Nature and Forest
- IWT: Administration for Innovative and Scientific Research
- K.U. Leuven: Catholic University of Leuven
- MiNa Council: Flemish Nature and Environment Council
- MINA-plan: Environmental Policy Plan
- MIRA: Flanders Environment Report
- OVAM: Public Waste Agency of Flanders
- PE: Policy Evaluation
- SERV: Flemish Socio-Economic Council
- UA: University of Antwerp
- UGent: Ghent University
- VEN: Flemish Ecological Network
- VLAREM: Flemish Decree on Environmental Permits
- VMM: Flemish Environment Agency
- VVSG: Flemish Union for Cities and Municipalities

# About the Flemish Environment Agency

The **Flemish Environment Agency (VMM)** is a Flemish public institution that works for the Flemish government and serves its citizens. VMM measures and checks the quality of the air and the water, translates its findings into scientific reports, formulates optimisation recommendations and stimulates the population to deal with the environment in a sustainable way. VMM collects a levy on water pollution and water abstraction. Furthermore, VMM coordinates the **Flanders Environment Report (MIRA)** that deals with all aspects of environmental issues in Flanders for which purpose a project team is hired. VMM also plays an important role in sewerage policy and waste water treatment. It is responsible for the planning and the inspection of the construction of sewerage systems and collectors and the building of waste water treatment plants.

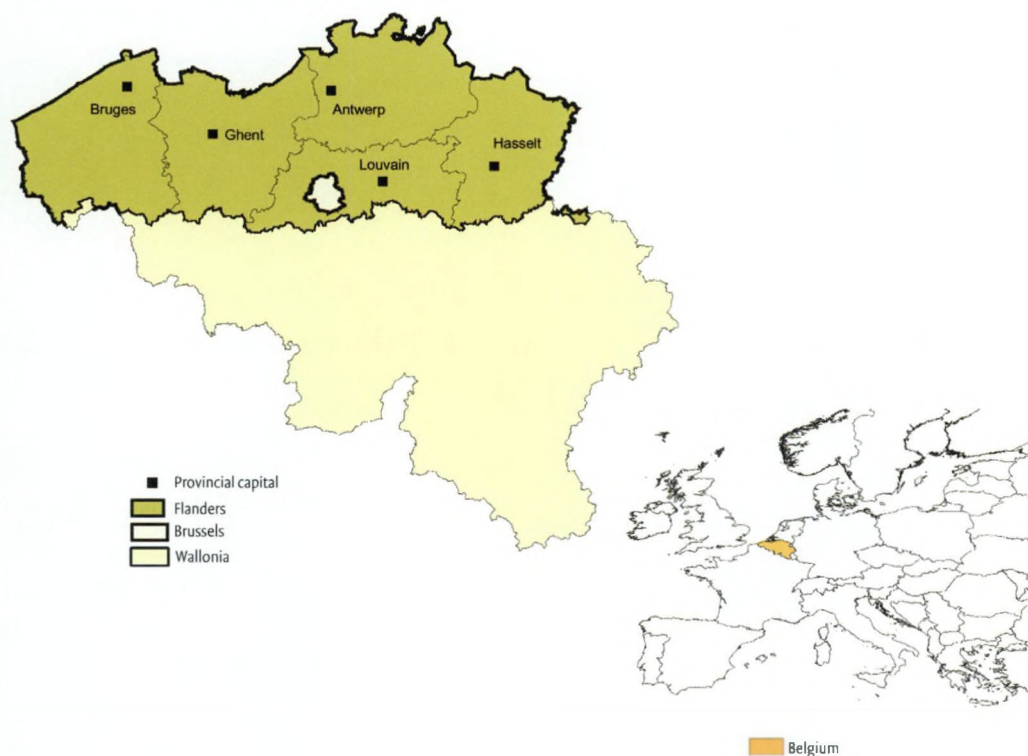
The task of the **Flanders Environment Report (MIRA)** is threefold:

- a description, analysis and evaluation of the current state of the environment;
- an evaluation of the environmental policy conducted up to that point in time;
- a description of the expected development of the environment by unchanged policy and by changed policy according to a number of scenarios considered relevant.

Furthermore, the report must be well publicised. MIRA provides the scientific foundation for the environmental policy planning in Flanders. The state of the environment is presented in the annual MIRA-T reports. In these reports the policymaker and the citizen find answers to questions about the state of the environment, what the underlying causes are and how the environmental situation can be improved. The first scenario report was published in 2000, MIRA-S 2000, the next edition is planned for 2009. The first policy evaluation report (MIRA-PE) appeared in June 2003, the second edition in the autumn of 2005.

# File on Flanders

The Flemish Region (Flanders) is one of the three Belgian regions with its own government, parliament and administration. The other two are the Brussels-Capital Region and the Walloon Region. Comprised in the Dutch-speaking part of the country, the Flemish Region has the largest population of the three (58%). As a result of various state structure reforms over the last 30 years, Belgium has been transformed into a federal state giving the regions more and more powers. Apart from the environment (the subject of this report), the Flemish government is also competent for other matters, such as the economy, employment, education and culture, farming, foreign trade, land planning, urban development, housing, public works ...



## MIRA-PE 2005

### Flanders Environment Report: Policy Evaluation

Environmental Policy. How does it work? What are the results? What does it teach us? This report offers an overview of 24 evaluation studies of (sub)areas of the Flemish environment policy. Methods, investigated policy areas, findings and recommendations of all 24 evaluation studies are summarised, followed by a discussion of the inventory as a whole.

MIRA-PE is the biannual policy evaluation report of the Flemish Environment Agency (PE stands for 'Policy Evaluation'). It is the work of reference with regard to policy evaluation studies in the Flemish Region of Belgium. The report is aimed at policy makers (members of parliament, cabinet members, those responsible for policy planning), policy executors and other people involved in the policy process. Moreover, other persons with an interest in the policy (or a critical view on it) may find the report useful as well. After all, a policy has consequences for every company and every citizen.

*All publications, figures and indicators from MIRA can be consulted on the website of the Flemish Environment Agency [www.milieurapport.be](http://www.milieurapport.be) (available in English).*

*(Agis u. M. Oehms-Linn)*

