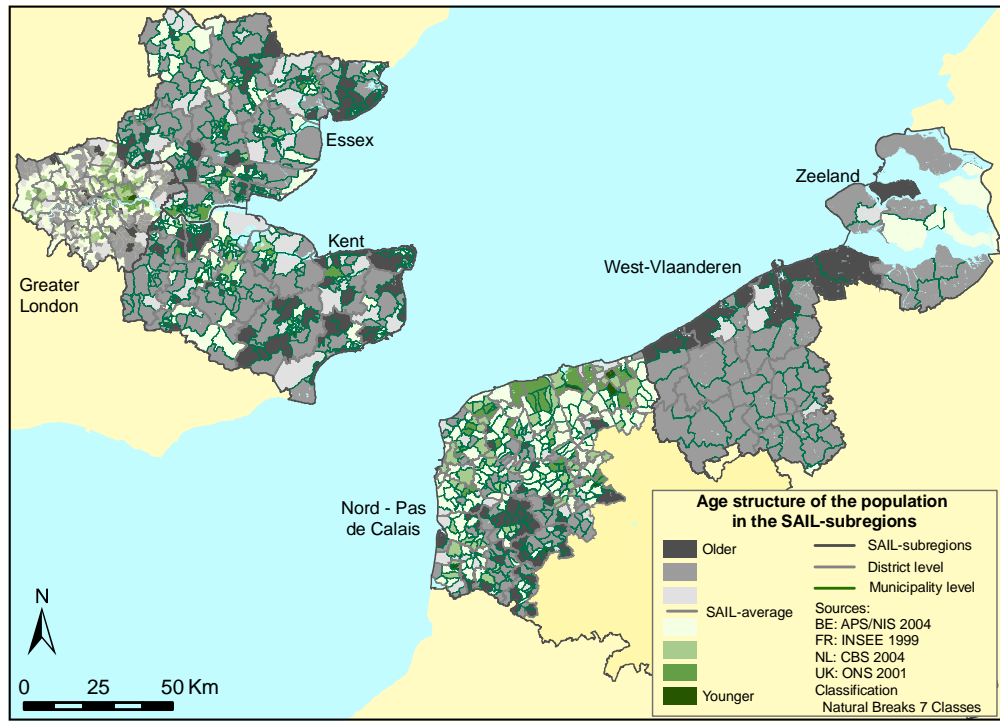
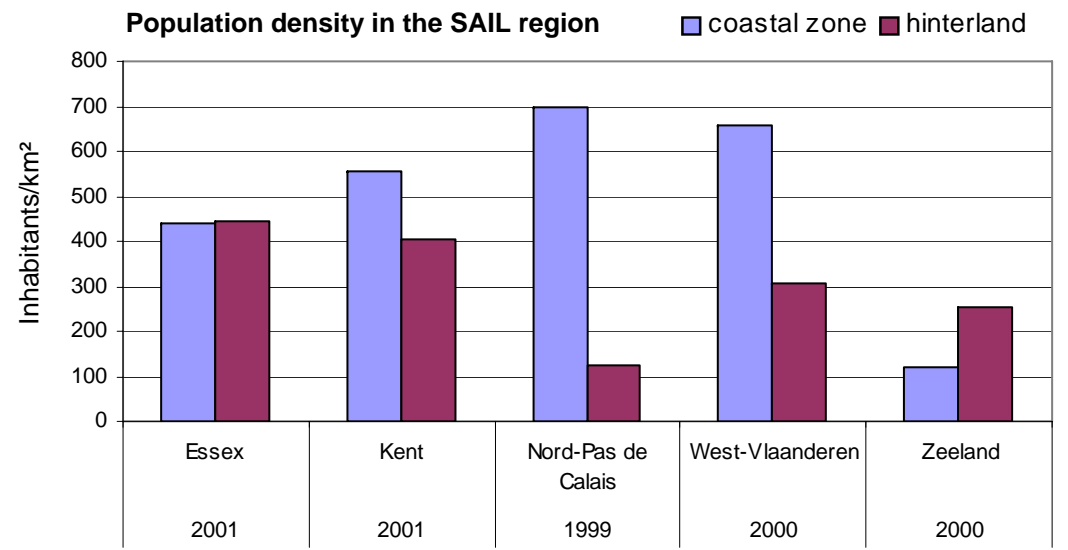
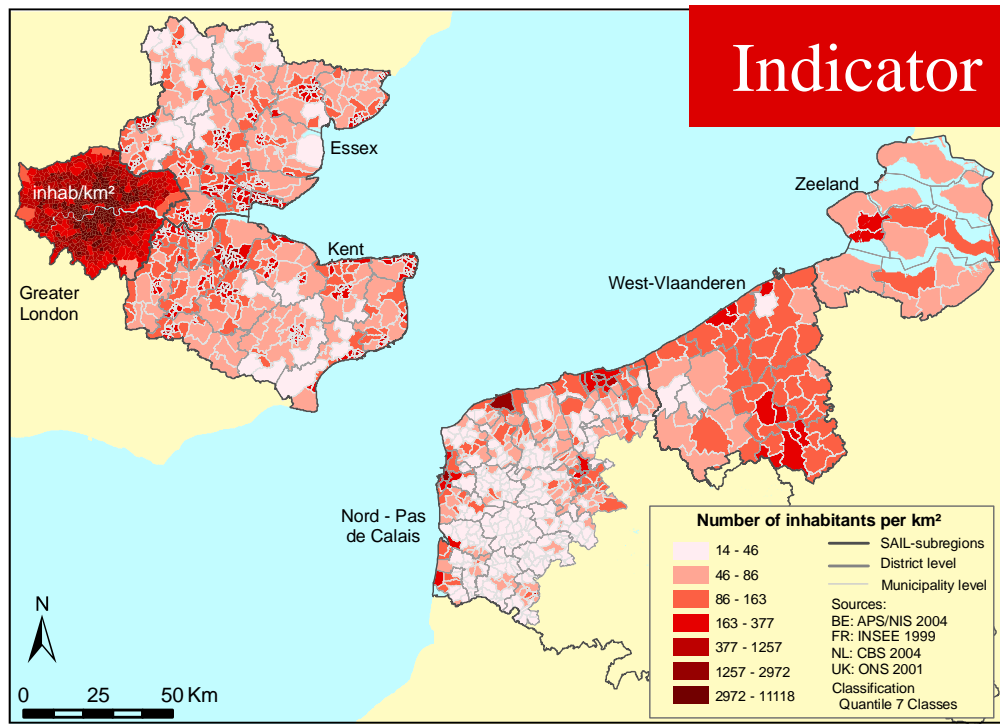
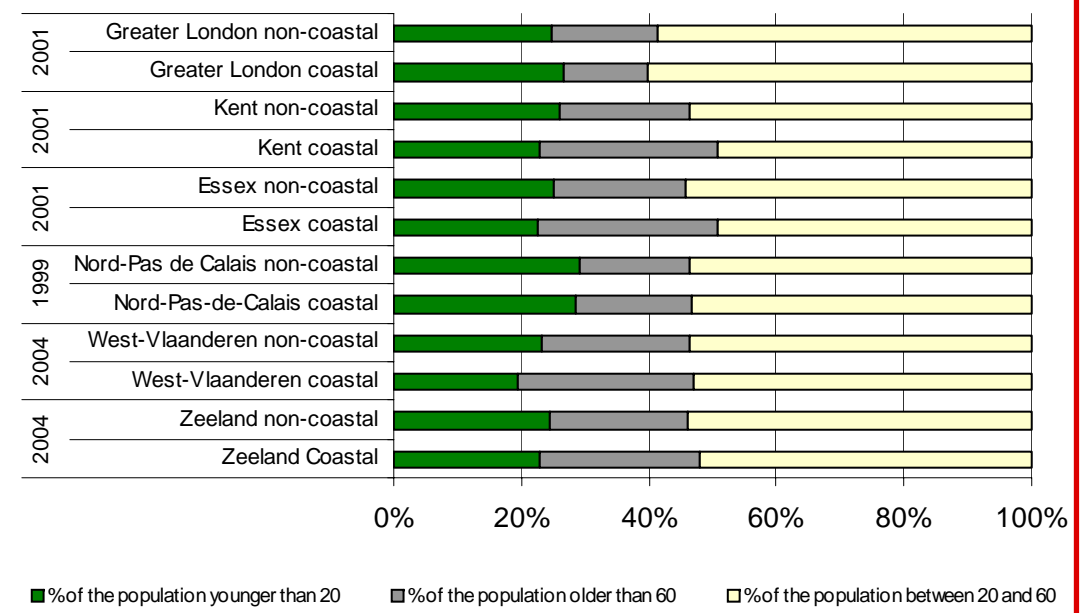


Indicator 1 Population density and age structure



Age structure of the population in the coastal zone and hinterland



- Number of inhabitants per square kilometre
- Age structure of the population

Key Message

- Population density in the coastal zone is twice as high (526 inhabitants per km²) as in the hinterland (254 inhabitants per km²) and is increasing twice as fast.
- Throughout the SAIL sub-regions, the proportion of the population aged 60 and older is higher at the coast than in the hinterland and the trend is on the rise. However, Nord-Pas de Calais has a demonstrably younger coastal population.

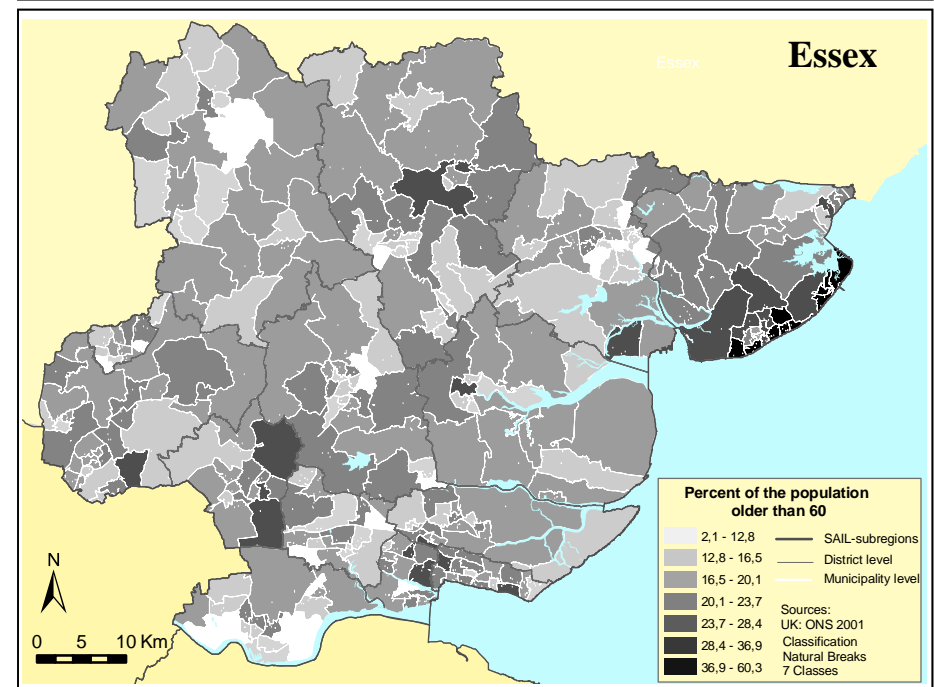
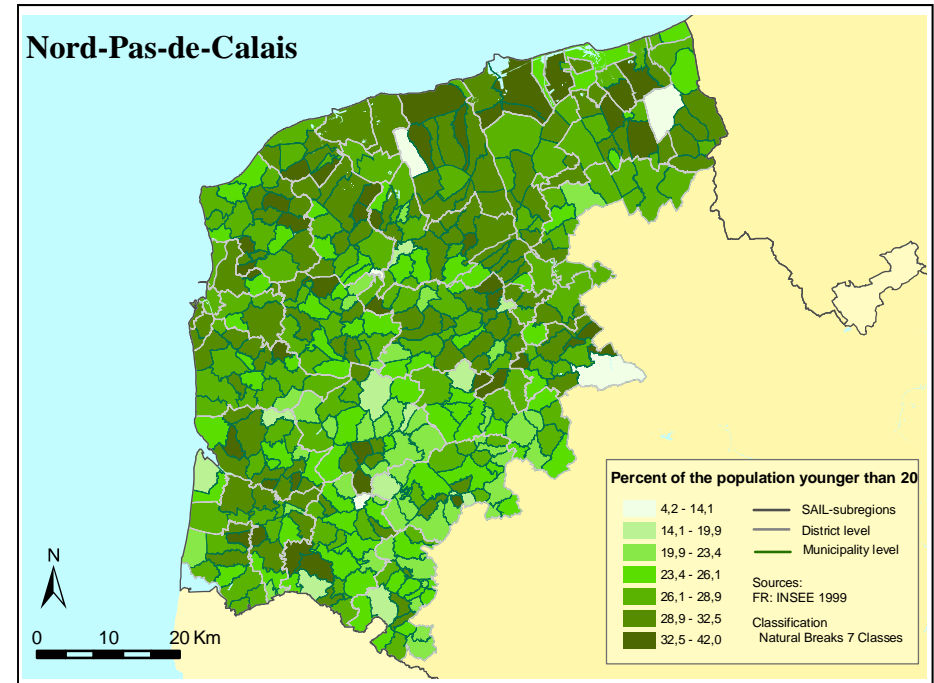
Why monitor population density and age structure?

Population density measures the pressure on land from population concentrations and their requirements for land, housing, employment, public services and transport. For planning purposes it is important to determine whether such a demand for land can be accommodated within the coastal zone. A significant proportion of the land is assigned as important for nature conservation purposes and subject to specific regulations. This in turn has an impact on the supply of land and property and thus also on their price.

The age structure of the population adds an extra dimension of information regarding specific age-related demands from user groups within the population. Age structure is an important factor in the dynamics of an economy and a driving mechanism in the social sector.

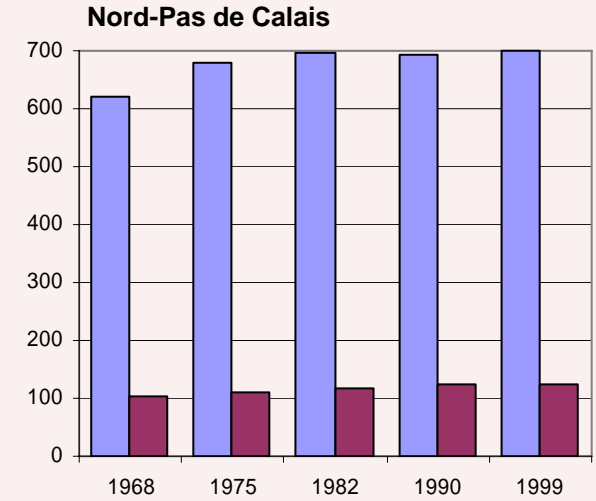
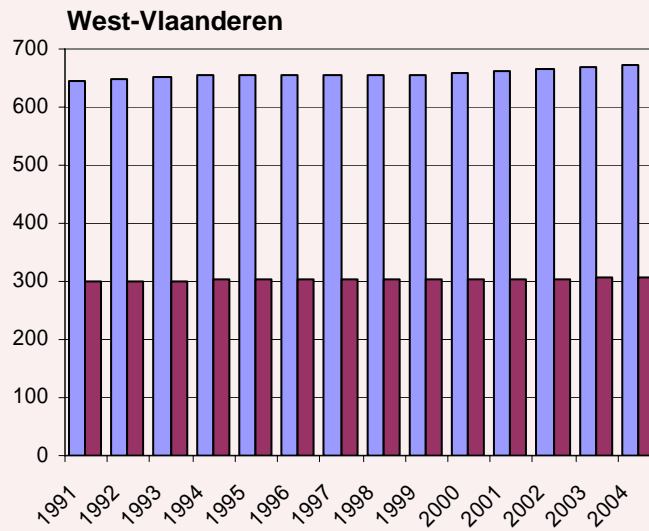
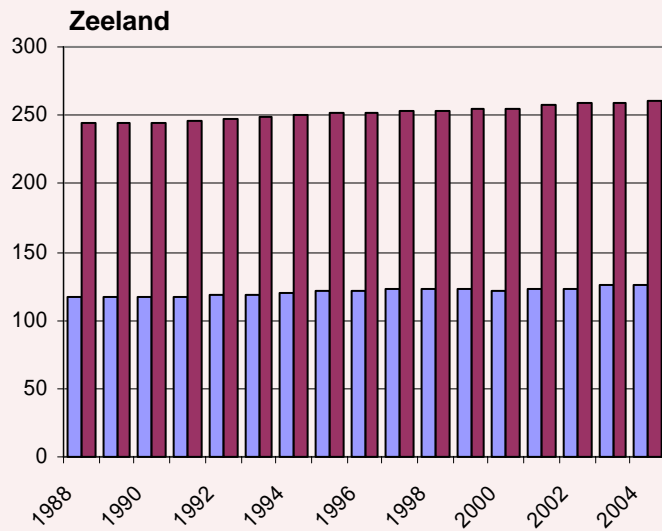
Where do the data come from?

The source of the population data is the National Census data providers. All countries in the Southern North Sea conduct at least a decennial Census that yields reliable data at the municipality level. However, in some countries additional yearly population data is available at the local level through the population register. This is the case for Belgium and The Netherlands for which annual time series are included.

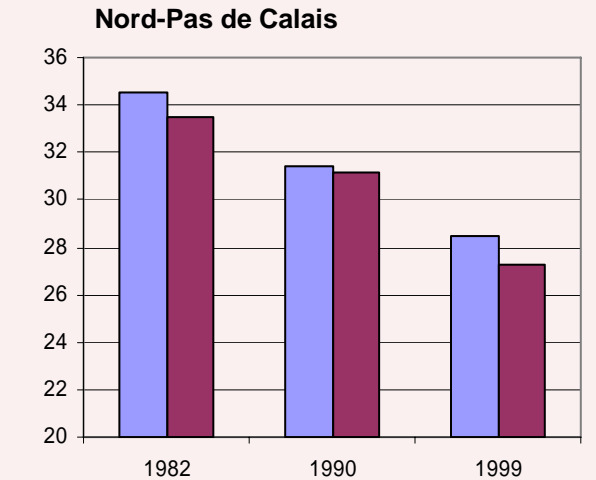
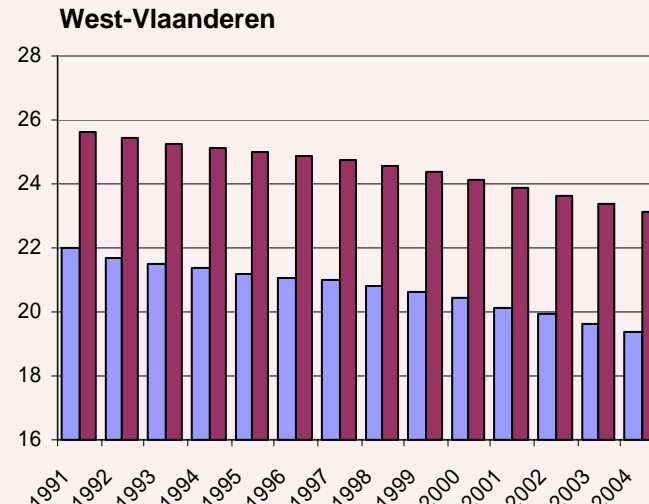
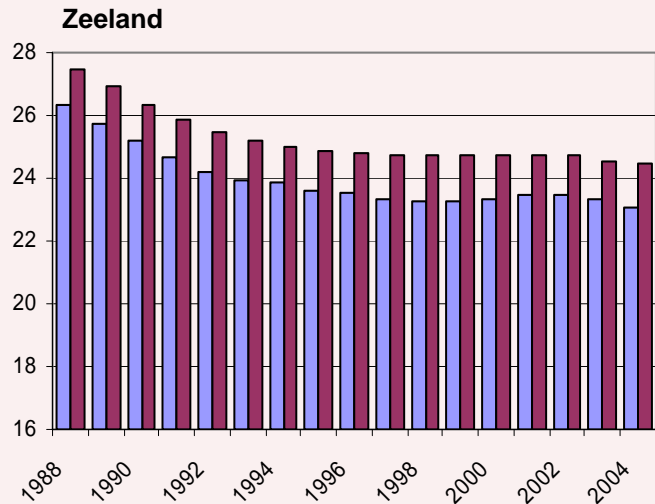


Population density in the SAIL sub-regions (inhabitants/km²)

coastal zone hinterland



Percentage of the population younger than 20 compared to the total population in the SAIL sub-regions



What does the indicator show?

Population density

The Southern North Sea region has a total population of 16 million inhabitants, of whom 7.2 million live in the Thames and Greater London area. More than 1 out of 10 inhabitants in the SAIL sub-regions lives in a coastal municipality or ward.

Population density in the coastal zone is higher and increasing at a faster pace: from 510 inhab/km² in 1990 to 526 inhab/km² in 2000 in the coastal zone, compared to 246 inhab/km² in 1990 and 254 inhab/km² in 2000 in the hinterland. This 'coastal effect' is most pronounced in West-Vlaanderen and Nord-Pas de Calais, where population density at the coast is 6.5 times higher than in the hinterland. Conversely, the coastal municipalities in Zeeland are only half as densely populated as the inland areas.

In Kent, population density is also higher in the coastal wards, with 557 inhab/km² compared to 402 inhab/km² in the hinterland. At the district level, Kent and Essex have higher population densities at the coast, and faster increasing population densities (from 528 and 515 inhab/km² in 1981 to 565 and 572 inhab/km² in 2003 for Kent and Essex, respectively).

The Thames and the Greater London areas both show far greater population densities that have increased considerably over the last 20 years: from 4,313 and 4,379 inhab/km² in 1981 to 4,678 for the Thames area and 4,764 inhab/km² in 2003 for Greater London.

Age structure

In Zeeland and West-Vlaanderen as a whole there is an overall decrease in the proportion of younger people in the population. This trend is even more pronounced at the coast. In West-Vlaanderen, less than 20% of the resident population in the coastal zone is younger than 20. In both regions, the coast attracts older people, with respectively 28% and 25% of the coastal population of Zeeland and West-Vlaanderen being aged 60 or older.

Nord-Pas de Calais has a predominantly younger population which has been slightly better represented at the coast, even though this trend is in decline over the last decennia (from 35% in 1982 to 28% in 1999). Except in specific areas in the northeast, differences in age structure at the coast are less clear in Essex. The coastal district of Tendring has a remarkably older population with more than 33% aged over 60 in 2001 (32% in 1991). This is almost 10% more than the neighbouring district of Southend-on-Sea.

What are the implications for planning and managing the coast?

Population density and age structure can be related to national, regional and local development plans. However, targets may only become relevant at the small scale to meet local objectives in spatial planning mechanisms or in relation with other policies (health, equipment, economy). In order to assess sustainability, population density must be interpreted within a wider set of criteria on natural resources, habitat type and priority settings such as Biodiversity Action Plans, Natura 2000 network and so on. Similarly, age structure must be assessed for sustainability within a context of locally relevant criteria. Tendencies such as 'graying of the population' might even be welcomed as an opportunity for local authorities in relation to specific strategies e.g. in tourism. The EU Demonstration Program on ICZM underlined the concern for rapidly increasing populations in coastal zones and its relation with environmental indicators. However, in terms of sustainability the link with socio-economic indicators also needs to be considered, e.g. the number of overnight stays in tourist accommodations in relation to the resident population size as an additional 'population pressure' map.

How reliable is the indicator?

Census surveys are mandatory and generally considered relevant and reliable data sources. Frequency of data collecting is every 10 years. However, Census years do not coincide amongst countries which adds to the difficulty of getting an entire picture of a region for a specific year.

Long-term time series are not always available at the municipality level, for example in the UK, where the number and boundaries of the wards are not stable over time. Also, there is a considerable difference in size in coastal units and municipalities among

