

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CBD PROGRAMME OF WORK ON PROTECTED AREAS**

**Report from BELGIUM in reply to the CBD Secretariat Notification 2006-080  
on Protected Areas**

## EVALUATION MATRIX - PROTECTED AREAS

| Goal, Target |   | Assessment criteria and evaluation   | Description of progress and main obstacles and Information Sources   |
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| Nr           | Descr.                                    |  |  |
| 1.1          | Establishment and maintenance by 2010 ... | <p>National (regional) definition of each of the terms comprehensive, ecologically representative and effectively managed developed.</p> <p>National (regional) gap analysis undertaken by 2006 (activity 1.1.5)</p> <p>National (regional) plan (map) for a comprehensive</p> | <p><b>Definitions and terminology</b></p> <p>There are no national or regional definitions adopted in the law or targets assigned for the specific requirements related to PA system with reference to being <u>comprehensive</u> and <u>ecologically representative</u>. These terms suggest that the PA network will contain examples of all ecosystems and all species, in spatial scale and population size large enough for conservation over time. Priorities for area designation and for acquisition of land as reserves aim at protecting in the first place threatened species (red lists) and habitats of international or regional importance and at covering a representation of the natural values of each of the ecoregions. In practice it is not possible to set aside large enough areas to conserve all species within the boundary of protected areas, mainly due to the highly urbanised landscape and due to restriction of land acquisition for nature conservation in certain land use destination areas such as agricultural or industrial destinations. Designation of Natura 2000 areas is evaluated at EU-level on representativeness of habitats and species of the annexes in the EU Habitats Directive and Bird Directive.</p> <p>Effective management of PA can be related to obtaining <u>favourable conservation status</u> of habitats and species as determined in the Habitat Directive, and also included in regional and feral law on environment and nature protection. These law texts for the protection of nature and natural environment provide a definition of “<b>protection</b>” taking into account the necessary protection measures, the restoration needs and the sustainable management of the protected areas. With reference to Natura 2000 the texts provide de definition of the ‘<b>favourable state of conservation</b>’ of species and habitat types for which the sites have been designated.</p> <p>Main law in the regions – texts and specific regulations can be consulted on the regional websites (see under 1.2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal: Law for the protection of the marine environment in the sea (20/01/1999)</li> <li>- Walloon Region: Decree for nature protection (6/12/2001)</li> <li>- Flemish Region: Decree for the protection of nature and the natural environment (21/10/1997, revised on 19 July 2002), government Decision on site specific measures for the protection and development of nature (2003)</li> <li>- Brussels Capital Region: Brussels Law for the protection and the conservation of nature (27 April 1995)</li> </ul> |

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|  | <p>e and effectively managed protected area network established (identification) by 2006.</p> <p>National (regional) progress report on designation (inc. map) by 2008</p> <p>Mechanisms for assessing management effectiveness established by 2010</p> | <p>Evaluation of conservation importance and effectiveness of PA is done by monitoring of management measures and of the status of habitats and species – see further under point 1.4.</p> <p><b>Types of PA</b></p> <p>The IUCN-categories are now under revision and are not used as basis for descriptions given below. Only the nature and forest reserves correspond to the IUCN category IV. The other types of PA could be linked to some of the other IUCN categories, but it was preferred to wait for the new descriptions of IUCN.</p> <p>Through the different categories of protected area different types of ecosystems and habitats are protected. They represent many different types of ecosystems such as pasture, calcareous grasslands, heathlands, forests, caves, wetlands, ... There sizes can go from 0,3 ha to 4 500 ha for a nature reserve, from 7 000 ha to 72 000 ha for a natural park. The management measures of these protected areas are adapted to the site's needs. Some nature reserves are in fact integral reserves which means they are not managed at all.</p> <p><b>1/. PA with a legal status:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- government nature and forest reserve: protected area, laid out on lands belonging to the regional government, leased by the Region or made available to it for that purpose, established by ministerial decision, formal recognition includes approved management plan</li> <li>- forest reserve: a forest or a part of a forest, protected with the aim of safeguarding characteristic or remarkable sites of plantations of indigenous species and protecting the integrity of the surrounding soil and environment.</li> <li>- chartered nature reserve: protected area, managed by a person other than the Region, in most cases an NGO, and recognised by the Ministry, at the request of the owner of the lands and with the agreement of the occupier, recognition as reserve by ministerial decision, formal recognition includes approved management plan, subsidies are granted for the purchase and the management of lands.</li> <li>- Natura 2000 (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas for Conservation): designation for specific habitats or species of the Annexes of the Birds or Habitats Directive, established by regional government decision and by Federal government decision for marine areas</li> <li>- Ramsar sites: designation based upon criteria of Ramsar Convention, established by regional government decision and by Federal government decision for Ramsar site in marine area</li> <li>- protected landscapes and natural monuments: for the protection of high value landscape features, established by ministerial decision</li> <li>- Nature Parks (or natural parks): rural area's with a high biological, landscape and geographical value, specific attention is given to conservation of natural values, sustainable use and tourism and leisure.</li> <li>- wetlands of biological interest: this status allows the protection of wetlands, established by ministerial decision</li> <li>- caves of scientific interest: this status allows underground cavities of scientific (biological, geological, petrographical, mineralogical or prehistoric) interest to be protected</li> </ul> |
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|  |  | <p><b>2/ PA managed as nature reserves:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- nature areas managed by NGO's or by the government agencies but without a legal status as reserve as the formal recognition has not yet been processed</li> </ul> <p><b>3/ Other areas with protected status:</b></p> <p>Flemish region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- VEN (= Flemish Ecological Network that includes core areas of the Flemish ecological structure): included in regional spatial land use plans, designation restricted to 'green land use categories' but other uses can also be present, with a strict protection regime to prevent damage to nature values but derogation possible</li> <li>- Coastal dune areas: protected by law through the Dunes Decree of 1993 to prevent any further development (urbanisation, camping, tourism etc.) of all dune areas along the coast. This included all geomorphological landscape elements that can be classified as dunes (grasslands, meadows, forested areas, ruderal areas, decalcified fossil dunes, etc.).</li> </ul> <p>Brussels region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sites "B" : sites received the official status of "high biological value" on the regional zoning plan, official but general recognition, but not always adapted management (Brussels region)</li> </ul> <p>Walloon region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agricultural ecosystems: traditional grazing practices with rustic cows or sheeps are encouraged in protected area's in order to preserve specific ecosystems that depend</li> </ul> <p><b>Established PA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- table with number and area for the main types of PA: in annex</li> <li>- overview map of the main types of PA with a legal status in Belgium: in annex</li> </ul> <p><b>Biomes represented in PA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- marine and coastal, lakes and rivers, wetlands - marshland and peatlands, grasslands, heathland, forests, agricultural landscapes</li> </ul> <p><b>Additions of PA since COP 7 (2004):</b> number and area of PA added in the period 2005-2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wallonia: 22 (269ha) new RNA, 21 (312ha) new RND, 2 new caves, 5 (57 ha) new wetlands</li> <li>- Brussels Region : In the period 2005-2006, no new protected areas have been added, but a project has been prepared and submitted for advise to public and consultative bodies (High Council for Nature Protection). Formal establishment will be finalised in 2007.</li> </ul> |
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|  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flemish region: 15 private nature reserves (2339 ha) and 2 public nature reserves (1948 ha), 5 forest reserves (305 ha), 1 Natura 2000 site (SPA of ca 480 ha)</li> <li>- Federal marine area: 5 Natura 2000 areas (42.090 ha) and one protected marine nature reserve (670 ha)</li> </ul> <p>Overall total for the additions for Belgium since 2004: 66 reserve areas for ca 5843 ha, 6 Natura 2000 sites for 42.570 ha, 5 wetlands for 57 ha - but the surfaces of different types of PA are in some cases overlapping.</p> <p><b>Additions planned by 2010 – terrestrial, by 2012 – marine</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flemish Region: objective in MINA-plan for the acquisition of land to establish nature and forest reserves of 3000 ha/year by Government &amp; NGO's</li> <li>- Walloon Region: There are no special plans for establishing additional protected areas or special management plans by the year 2010. The Nature direction of the Walloon region will continue to designate new nature reserves, wetlands (ZHIB) and caves (CSIS) (with an increasing rate of 350 hectares a year)..</li> <li>- Brussels Region : In 2007, the extension of Nature and Forest reserves, as well as the creation of an “integral” reserve in the Sonian Forest will be official. In 2007 is also foreseen the creation of a new private nature reserve. In the framework of the Natura 2000, the objective is to designate several Natura 2000 sites as nature reserve.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management effectiveness</b></p> <p>Several instruments have been developed or are in development and being tested for evaluating effectiveness of management measures – monitoring of management measures, monitoring of outcome: status of habitats and species – see under point 3.1</p> |
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| 1.2 | Integration into the wider landscape and other sectors, connectivity | Measures taken on, and progress made towards integration into the wider landscape, connectivity and integration with other sectors | <p><b>1/ For the development of a coherent ecological network system</b> several instruments are implemented to ensure connectivity between PA and to enhance integration of PA into the wider landscape:</p> <p>Actual results and trends over the years can be consulted on the regional websites:<br/> <a href="http://environnement.wallonie.be/">http://environnement.wallonie.be/</a> for Wallonia,<br/> <a href="http://www.ibgebim.be">http://www.ibgebim.be</a> for Brussels region,<br/> <a href="http://www.mumm.ac.be">http://www.mumm.ac.be</a> for the Federal marine area<br/> <a href="http://www.anb.be">http://www.anb.be</a>, and <a href="http://natuurindicatoren.be">http://natuurindicatoren.be</a> for the Flemish region (information given per indicator, also in English)</p> <p><b>- Establishment of ecological network</b></p> <p>Natura 2000 sites have been designated based on the criteria given in the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive – numbers and surfaces are given in the overview table in annex.</p> |
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|  |  | <p>Flemish Region:</p> <p>Besides the Natura 2000 network which covers about 12,1 % of the regional territory, a Flemish ecological network system is also being established – both are partially overlapping. This network structure is composed of two main parts. The first one is the Flemish Ecological Network (Vlaams Ecologisch Netwerk, VEN), that includes Large Nature Units (Grote Eenheden Natuur, GEN) and Potential Large Nature Units (Grote Eenheden Natuur in Ontwikkeling, GENO). The second part is the so-called Integral Interweaving and Supportive Network (Integraal Verwevings- en Ondersteunend Netwerk IVON) and is composed of Nature ‘Interwoven’ Areas (Natuurverwevingsgebieden) and Nature Corridor Areas (Natuurverbindingsgebieden). The basic concept of this integrated approach is that VEN provides the core biodiversity areas within the region, being based primarily on designated areas (for a large part including nature and forest reserves and Natura 2000 sites) and that IVON identifies components of the landscape which mostly have primary functions other than nature conservation and/or elements that connect these core areas together. Identification and designation is based primarily on a detailed spatial planning map that outlines the land use classes for the entire region. In principle this approach of identifying core areas (VEN) and connecting structures (IVON) through an integrated spatial planning perspective offers a practical method to implement connectivity. It is based on the principle of identifying the primary functions of the areas involved. VEN areas must have nature conservation as their primary function; this could include nature-oriented recreation or limited production (nature friendly forestry) as secondary functions. The IVON however utilises areas that are identified for use and production and states that a secondary function can be nature conservation. Examples of such areas include agri-environmental schemes and traditional connecting structures such as small rivers or hedgerows. In practice the process has experienced resistance and difficulties implementation.</p> <p>The Nature Decree sets the targets for VEN to 125.000 ha and the Interweaving Areas to 150.000 to be established by 2003. Till now 87.022 ha of VEN and 934 ha of ‘interwoven’ areas have been designated. Establishment of corridor areas is the responsibility of the provincial authorities and are now in preparation – see also under 1.2. Information can be found on <a href="http://www.ven-ivon.be">http://www.ven-ivon.be</a> and on <a href="http://www.natuurindicatoren.be">http://www.natuurindicatoren.be</a></p> <p>- Walloon Region:</p> <p>The designation of the Natura 2000 sites for the protection of priority species and habitats as meant by the Birds and Habitats Directives covers 220 944 ha for 240 sites in the Walloon Region which corresponds to approximately 13 % of the territory. These designation mostly happened in 2002. The network is based on the hydrological network.</p> <p>- Brussels Capital Region :</p> <p>The green network plan is the masterplan for the ecological network. An specific ecological networkplan has been developed and has been accepted as general guidance. The practical implementation in the field is however not very</p> |
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|  |  | <p>easy. The implementation of the Natura 2000 network, which is based on the concept of core areas and connecting areas, however is already a major contribution to the realisation of the network and covers about 14,3 % of the regional territory.</p> <p><b>=&gt; designation of nature corridors to ensure spatial and functional connectivity between PA</b></p> <p>With reference to network coherence and connectivity the Natura 2000 network was developed mainly on the basis of the hydrographic network to ensure a good connectivity between the different sites and coherence between core areas and connecting areas.</p> <p>The Brussels Capital Region being highly urbanised, also developed the concept of green and blue network, as strategic vision in the concept, development, realisation and management of its greens spaces and (semi)natural areas. The green network emphasizes the cohesion and continuity of green spaces and semi-natural areas in the urban environment. The intention is to integrate the scenic, esthetical, social, recreational and ecological functions of the green spaces and to develop of their interconnectivity by greenways and new green areas. Simultaneously, work is being done to implement the blue network. Its purpose is to have an integrated, durable and ecologically-justified management of the open waterways and associated wetlands in the Region.</p> <p>In the framework of the development of the Flemish Ecological Network Structure (see above) the areas with important natural value or with potential value have been mapped and about 433 connective zones or nature corridors identified – to be consulted on the website under the indicator ‘corridor areas’. Provincial authorities are developing designation and management plans for the corridor areas – 11 pilot projects are in process.</p> <p><b>=&gt; for the protection of small landscape elements</b> which have an important function as stepping stones and migrating corridors several types of measures are taken by the government, promoted and financially supported for private owners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delayed mowing of road embankments (« fauchage tardif des bords de routes » ) and ecological management of road and waterways verges;</li> </ul> <p>In Flanders about 998 km of road-side verges and 636 km of river and canal verges are now under nature-oriented management schemes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial incentives are given to private and public landowners to plant or restore hedges, for ecological management of borders of plots, for enhancing botanical values of grasslands (see also under agri-environment measures)</li> <li>- On the basis of an ecological network map or of an environment policy plan, ‘Municipality plans for nature development’ develop actions to maintain and restore biodiversity at the city or municipal level.</li> <li>- The Natural Parks intend to protect nature of an area of high biological interest in harmony with the population concerns, rural and economic development. There are 9 Natural parks in the Walloon Region covering 306 971 ha,</li> </ul> |
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|  |  | <p>and 1 National Park in Flanders covering about 4.500 ha.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fitting out of roofs and church towers for bat populations, installation of nesting boxes for birds and roosts for bats, nest box actions for raptors and owls (« Opération Combles et Clochers » in Wallonia)</li> <li>- in urbanized areas: active promotion to develop green roofs, green walls, development of more natural gardens</li> </ul> <p>In Flanders about 560 municipal projects are being carried out with the objective of conservation and development of nature, forest or green spaces.</p> <p>=&gt; <b>in river basin management plans</b> include conservation and restoration of natural values through the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and through specific waterway schemes (Contrats de Rivières in Wallonia, implementation of the “blue network” in Brussels Region, floodplain restoration and development in Flemish Region)</p> <p>=&gt; <b>construction of fauna passages</b><br/> The construction of “eco-tunnels” and “eco-passages” in fragmented habitats and now also as mitigating and compensatory action in various construction projects. A project for the constructing of an eco-passage in the most important natural site of Brussels, the Sonian Forest, is under study.<br/> In the Flemish Region 15 % of 193 known barriers for amphibian passages are neutralized till now, while 2 large ecoduct-projects and 17 ecotunnel-projects have been implemented.</p> <p>=&gt; <b>ensuring fish migration by de-fragmentation of rivers</b><br/> Inventories of the obstacles for fish migration have been compiled for the Walloon and Flemish Region, measures for restoring migration passages are included in the river basis management plans and also form the implementation of a Benelux Agreement.<br/> In the Flemish Region 110 of 796 (14 %) of known barriers are neutralized till now.</p> <p>=&gt; <b>spatial planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flemish Region: designations of the Flemish Ecological Network areas are integrated into the spatial land use destination plans, implying specific regulations for the protection and management</li> <li>- Brussels Region: In the regional zoning plan of 2001, a category “B” (sites of high biological interest” has been added in the general category of green spaces. This is a very important recognition. Also the concept of “ecological network” has been accepted, but has no legal force until now.</li> <li>- Federal marine area: The Masterplan North Sea foresees the spatial planning of the Belgian marine areas and takes into account (at least to a certain extent) the integration of the marine protected areas in other sectorial policies. A Royal Decree has been approved for user agreements in protected areas (KB14 October 2005). A Royal Decree concerning protection of ship wrecks has been proposed (Chamber of Representatives – November 2006).</li> </ul> |
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|  |  |  | <p><b>=&gt; urban parks and green buffers</b><br/> Public parks also contribute to nature conservation. Some large landscape parks including forests, grasslands, ponds,...in Brussels Region do present a very rich flora and fauna and received the status of Natura 2000 site. Park management plans include zoning of the park area in order to have different area's dedicated to different functions: recreational, walks, nature.... The administration gives advices to municipalities for ecological management to develop natural values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flemish Region : Handbook for harmonised park management + training sessions</li> <li>- Brussels Capital Region: regional public green spaces (parks, gardens, ...) are managed following the principles of "differentiated management", which implies ecological management where there are potentialities</li> </ul> <p><b>2/ sectoral integration is being stimulated and supported through:</b></p> <p><b>=&gt; agri-environment measures</b> and other measures for the agriculture sector encourage the conservation of landscape elements, ecological network elements (such as hedges, tree rows, isolated trees, fruit tree, grove, pounds); natural grasslands; well managed borders and grassland buffer zones; high nature value grasslands; actions under the programme a Fallow for fauna ("jachère-faune") and delayed mowing of grasslands for meadow bird protection schemes.</p> <p><b>=&gt; management agreements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In the regions management agreements are established with Ministry of Defence for nature and forest management in the Natura 2000 sites on military domains (about 15.000 ha for Flanders and Wallonia together), with Infrastructure Departments for the ecological management of road and waterways verges</li> </ul> <p>Federal marine area: legislation concerning marine protected areas requires that 'user agreements' are negotiated and approved between competent authorities and sectors (yachting and angling in particular). At present there is no integration of the commercial fishing sector or tourism sector in management of marine protected areas – although stakeholder networks exist to exchange information and to prepare sectorial integration. Belgium reported in 2006 its implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (Recommendation 2002/413/EC) (Nationaal Rapport van België inzake de aanbeveling 2002/413/EC. FOD, DG 5 Leefmilieu : 40 pgs). The ICZM also foresees and facilitates inter-sectorial cooperation.</p> <p>Information can be consulted on : <a href="http://www.de-Noordzee.be">www.de-Noordzee.be</a></p> |
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|  |  | <p><b>=&gt; forest certification</b></p> <p>About 42% of the forest area in Wallonia is ecocertified under the PEFC scheme. This process includes a regional plan to improve the forest management and practices, and commitments for the owners and managers participating to the process ; internal and external audit are scheduled every year.</p> <p>Information available on <a href="http://www.pefc.be">www.pefc.be</a></p> <p>In Brussels Region, the whole Sonian Forest, 1650 ha and about 10 % of Brussels surface, is ecocertified with the FSC label.</p> <p>In Flanders about 14% of the public forests has a FSC certification.</p> <p>The federal Council of Ministers approved in November 2005 a public procurement policy on timber and timber products. Federal public services and institutions have to procure wood and wood products from sustainably managed forests. Both FSC and PEFC are accepted as a guarantee that wood and wood products are coming from sustainably managed forests. Equivalent certifications schemes are also accepted after assessment by an expert panel. More information is available on <a href="http://www.guidedesachatsdurables.be">http://www.guidedesachatsdurables.be</a></p> <p><b>=&gt; concertation with forest groups and game management units</b> to ensure integration of biodiversity concerns in their management plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Walloon Region: different tools are available to improve sustainable forest management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The “Circulaire relative aux aménagements dans les forêts soumises au régime forestier” is a normative tool for the management planning in public forests (255.000 ha in Wallonia). At this stage, about half of the forest area is covered by new plans following this circulaire. The other half should be covered in the next 3 years.</li> <li>* A new tool is just published: “Normes de gestion pour la préservation de la biodiversité forestière en Wallonie”, with the aim of improving the biodiversity consideration in the forestry practices. Clear target are included for the forest protected areas.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Brussels Region: Nature and forest department of the BCR are integrated in the same division, which ensures the integration of biodiversity in the forest management. Further more, as all Brussels forests are Natura 2000 , a specific biodiversity Natura 2000 management plan has been made or it will be.</li> <li>- Flemish region: financial and technical support is given to forest groups (12 established) and game management units (171 established) for management planning and implementation. Criteria for sustainable forest management are provided by a ministerial decision of 2003 and guidelines for management plan development and measures have been published and are available from the website, technical advice is given by the government administration. Game management units are supported to develop a management plan and have to report on the monitoring of game and of hunting data.</li> </ul> |
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|     |  |   | <p><b>- Ecosystem approach</b></p> <p>The ecosystem approach is being applied as far as possible for the development and implementation of management plans. The basis of these plans include ecological functions, specific habitat and species requirements and take into account actual land use and services. For coastal and marine areas the overall management approach is based on the ICZM principles which are guided by the ecosystem approach. Both Federal marine authorities and Regional authorities are now in negotiation for implementation of ICZM.</p>   |
| 1.3 | Establish and strengthen regional networks and transboundary protected areas | Measures taken for the establishment of regional networks and transboundary protected areas. Number or percentage of protected areas that are integrated into a regional network. Number and location of transboundary protected areas. | <p><b>- Transboundary protected areas</b></p> <p>The regions have developed formal interregional as well as formal bilateral cooperations with neighbouring countries on the integrated management of transboundary ecosystems, such as river ecosystems and protected areas.</p> <p>For the Zoniën Forest area a joint management plan is under development by the tree regions based upon a global “vision plan”, and will be implemented through joint actions.</p> <p>The ‘Three Countries Parc - Open space without borders’ (Belgium-The Netherlands-Germany) aims to improve transboundary cooperation to maintain and strengthen the functioning of rural zones as well as to conserve open space in an urbanised environment.</p> <p>The ‘Transboundary Ecological Basis Plan’ between Flemish Region and The Netherlands identifies several transboundary nature areas that include PA. Commissions have been set up to start with the development of a common management plan and a joint action plan for implementation.</p> <p>The Flemish region and the Netherlands have formal bilateral cooperation agreements for the management planning and implementation of the Schelde river (Natura 2000), the transboundary nature reserve Kalmthout-De Zoom and border river Grensmaas. Transboundary corridors for migration of large grazers have been identified and proposal for actions were developed but are not yet implemented.</p> <p>The ‘Plan de Base Ecologique et Paysager Transfrontalier’ (PBEPT) between Walloon Region-Luxembourg is being implemented through joint actions.</p> <p>The “Vallée de la Haute Sûre” is a transboundary Ramsar site (Wallonia-Luxembourg).</p> <p><b>- Type of transboundary cooperation</b></p> <p>=&gt; development of common management plan and joint implementation</p> <p>=&gt; transboundary joint committees/working groups for EIA procedures of projects planned by one of the countries/regions at the border side (Grensmaas, Schelde)</p> |

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| 1.4 | Effective management of all protected areas. | See goal 1.1  | <p>Management planning, implementation, evaluation of the actions taken and monitoring of biodiversity is being done on an important scale but is not covering all the PA effectively due to insufficient financial and personnel capacity and insufficient public and political support.</p> <p><b>- format and criteria for development of management plans</b> for nature reserves, forest reserves, parks and urban green areas, river basins have been compiled and include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>=&gt; planning process</li> <li>=&gt; guidelines for management measures</li> <li>=&gt; surface/nr PA with management plan</li> <li>=&gt; monitoring plan for monitoring management measures, specific habitats and species</li> </ul> <p>A computer based tool has been developed for management planning and monitoring of management measures to be used by the administration.</p> <p><b>- guidelines for private use of PA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>=&gt; guidelines exist for agri-environment management practices</li> <li>=&gt; guidelines for recreational use</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Protocol with youth groups for recreational activities in nature and forest areas: established in Flemish Region, under development in Brussels Region,</li> <li>* Federal marine area: user agreements have been adopted for the marine Natura 2000 areas. These user agreements focus on arrangements with yachting and sea-angling societies. User groups who signed these agreements committed themselves to support the conservation goals of the protected areas, to actively inform their membership and clients, to minimise disturbance during sensitive periods (foraging areas and periods), and promise not to pollute the marine protected areas. The competent authority contributes by means of public awareness raising campaigns. The user agreements, which are valid for 3 years, will be assessed in view of the management plans that are presently being prepared.</li> </ul> <p>(see also 'codes of conduct')</p> |
| 1.5 | Prevent and mitigate key threats             | Effective mechanisms to identify and prevent key threats in | <p>Several instruments and mechanisms have been installed to prevent destruction of natural values, and to promote effective management:</p> <p><b>- the EIA procedures:</b> The EIA regulations and procedures for projects and plans and the Strategic Environmental Impact (SEA, implementation of the EC-Directive 2003/35) for plans and programmes are included in the</p>  |

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|  |  | <p>place (prerequisite to achieve effective management – see goal 1.1)</p> | <p>jurisdiction of each of the regions and of the Federal Authority. In case of projects and plans or programmes in (or affecting) protected areas, these projects, plans or programmes are also assessed in view of their potential effect on the conservation status of the habitats and/or species. Specific guidelines for the implementation of the EIA for projects have been developed, for SEAs they are presently being prepared by development screening methodology. In Wallonia these aspects are included in the Environment Code and in the Decree on conservation of Natura 2000; in Flanders in the Decree for Nature Conservation and in the EIA law and guideline books; in Brussels Region in the Decree for Nature Protection; for the Federal marine areas in the Royal Decree of 9 September 2003 and in the Federal Law of 13 February 2006.</p> <p><b>- development of strategies for the control and prevention of IAS:</b> IAS working group has been established on national level and has compiled all existing information on IAS in Belgium and organises concertation between the regions and federal authorities. Strategies and measures for controlling specific species(groups) have been developed and are implemented on regional level.</p> <p>Federal marine area: deliberate introduction of non-native species into the Belgian marine areas is forbidden by law (Law of 20 January 1999) unless specific permission by Royal Decree and after appropriate assessment of the consequences of the introduction of non-native species for the native fauna, flora and habitats and risk assessment towards neighbouring areas. The IMO treaty on Ballast Water, which was signed by Belgium, has not yet been ratified.</p> <p><b>- codes for good conduct/practices :</b> regional authorities developed codes of conduct or for good practices for ecological measures in agricultural uses, for nature management measures, for use of pesticides, for forest management.</p> <p><b>- measures for restoration, compensation:</b> regulations are included in regional and federal law and are mandatory for projects and plans affecting natural values in protected areas. Regional and Federal authorities are presently preparing the transposition and implementation of the EU-Directive 2004/35/EEC of 21 April 2004 on “Environmental Liability with regard to the prevention and remediation of environmental damage”.</p> <p>In the Flemish region specific Nature Development Projects are initiated for Natura 2000 sites to restore and enhance nature values and develop public access infrastructure; an overall programme has been approved by Decision of the government for the restoration and nature development for flood plains of the Schelde estuary.</p> <p><b>- cross compliance:</b> evaluation of agricultural use and practices in Natura 2000 is carried out in the regions through the EU cross compliance system to ensure compliance to EU environment and nature regulations, implementation is done in the framework of the EU Rural development Programme.</p> |
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|  |  | <p><b>- Federal: marine action plan for pollution control</b></p> <p>Bio-accumulating, persistent and toxic pollutants are tackled through the Hazardous Substances Strategy of the OSPAR Convention. According to this strategy, emission to the marine environment of such hazardous substances will be reduced to background levels by 2020. Specific action plans exist for a number of priority substances (see website OSPAR).</p> <p>The Law of 20 January 1999 is the main legal instrument for the protection of the marine environment in the marine areas under Belgian jurisdiction. It provides measures to prevent and reduce the pollution caused by economical activities carried out at sea. It is linked with the Law of 6 April 1995 dealing more specifically with the prevention of the pollution of the sea by ships (MARPOL) .</p> <p>Concerning legislation and actions to combat oil pollution and other pollution resulting from accidents at sea Belgium is a contracting party to the Bonn Agreement, a regional agreement dealing with operational cooperation between all North Sea countries in the fields of surveillance and combating marine pollution.</p> <p>Under IMO, Belgium is presently implementing or ratifying various conventions (such as the International Convention on Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation of 30 November 1990 and its protocol on preparedness, Response and co-operation to pollution incidents on ships of 2000, the International Convention on the Control of harmful anti-fouling Systems on Ships (2001), etc. (see website <a href="http://www.imo.org">www.imo.org</a>) .</p> <p><b>- pesticide reduction plan:</b> regional and local authorities are implementing reduction plans for the use of pesticides in the management of buffer zones, green spaces in urbanised areas, road and waterways verges. For the marine area pesticides are tackled through the Hazardous Substances Strategy of the OSPAR Convention. According to this strategy, emission to the marine environment of hazardous substances (including pesticides) that are persistent, toxic and bioaccumulate will be reduced to background levels.</p> <p><b>- a Manure Action Plan</b> has been approved by government decision in the Flemish region to control manure use in so called 'fragile areas' which include PA.</p> |
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| 2.1 | Promote equity and benefit sharing | Mechanisms for equitable sharing of both costs and benefits arising from the establishment of protected areas | <p><b>- socio-economic cost-benefit assessments for PA</b><br/> =&gt; study on public awareness<br/> Flemish Region: report on a public awareness study and development of specific indicators was published in 2005, and public conference day organised in 2006.<br/> Brussels Region : public awareness of biodiversity is under study<br/> Federal marine area: study on public awareness - F. Maes et al. 2005. Een Zee van Ruimte – naar een ruimtelijk structuurplan voor duurzaam beheer van de Noordzee. Uitg. Federaal Wetenschapbeleid 204pg. (CD in English)</p> <p><b>- regulations and measures to promote for public access to protected areas</b><br/> =&gt; regulations (law) and /or guidelines for public access are integrated in users agreements and often included in the management plan of the area – private and public reserves are open for public for leisure<br/> =&gt; several visitor centres and education centres are present in the 3 regions with information sets on the surrounding areas and on biodiversity issues, brochures and guided visits are made available for the public<br/> =&gt; public information : websites of regional, federal and local authorities and NGO's developed portal websites under which specific themes such as nature conservation or protected areas or scientific studies can be consulted, for most protected areas information panels are set up on site and area specific brochures are published often at the establishment of the protected area, brochures on specific species(groups) or habitats and newsletters are published on a regular basis or at the occasion of a certain public event, guided tours for the public are organised by the administrations and especially the NGO's on weekly basis.<br/> An important project in the Brussels Region is the “green walk” at the periphery of the Brussels Capital Region which promote the controlled and “sustainable” access to green spaces and protected areas.</p> <p><b>- support to NGO's for acquisition, management, public access of PA:</b> regional authorities give financial support for NGO's for the acquisition of land to be established as a nature reserve, for the management of the reserve and for the development of infrastructure for public access</p> |
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| 2.2 | Enhance and secure involvement of indigenous people, local communities and relevant stakeholders | Enabling environment (legislation, policies, capacities, resources, governance types, tools) developed. Plans and initiatives developed for participation in decision making in the identification, designation and management phases of the protected-area network— level of participation achieved. | <p><b>Enhance/ensure participation of stakeholders in development and management of PA.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- participation of stakeholders + public consultation procedures are mandatory for overall designation and management planning processes such as for Natura 2000, river basins, marine areas</li> <li>- technical and financial support is given to private owners to develop and implement forest management plans, nature area management plans</li> <li>- cooperation agreements for management measures are established between the regional authorities and the provincial/municipal authorities, ministry of Defence, water management departments,... (see under point 1). For the marine area cooperation agreements exist between local, regional and federal authorities (Kustwacht and Coordinatiepunt Beheer van de Kustzones).</li> </ul> <p>In Flemish Region: cooperation with and financial support of Regional Landscape Organisations – till now 10 formally approved for registration, each including min. 3 municipals, registration based on action plan that includes nature and landscape conservation, ecologically sound tourism and leisure development, awareness actions.</p> |
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| 3.1 | Review and revise policies to provide an enabling environment for protected areas | Main impediments (see activities under this goal) to effective establishment and management of protected areas (by 2006) identified. Measures taken to overcome these impediments. | <p>Main impediments for effective establishment and management of PA are financial capacity, political support, public awareness and support. Effectiveness of management efforts is still strongly impacted by inferior quality of the environment due to nitrification, acidification, fragmentation, pollution – critical loads for the majority of sensitive ecosystems are still exceeded. Another threat that is becoming more important is recreational use.</p> <p><b>- Monitoring and reporting to provide a basis for revising policies</b><br/> =&gt; monitoring of management effectiveness in nature reserves<br/> =&gt; monitoring of Nature Development Projects, of agri-environment schemes</p> <p><b>- studies on effectiveness of existing instruments/measures for PA management</b><br/> Nature reserves are most successful in sustainable management of high nature values, but are susceptible to negative effects from the surrounding land use, mainly due to fragmentation, eutrophication and desiccation. Small reserve areas require more intensive management measures due to remaining higher border effects from environmental quality. But as nature reserves become larger intensive nature management is slowly shifting to more extensive grazing management and more attention for natural dynamic forces in order to preserve biodiversity. However, consequences of this shift still needs to be documented on a larger scale.</p> <p><b>- main obstacles/needs for establishment/management of PA</b> are human and financial resources, environmental quality, un-sustainable use especially tourism and leisure in general while for marine areas also fishing and angling. For the marine area obstacles occur also at management policy level as being one of the most densely used marine areas in the world and with the fact that some competences (eg. Fishing policy) is a regional (Flemish) competence whereas most other marine competences (such as the management of marine protected areas) are federal competences.</p> <p><b>- legislation and policy information on PA:</b><br/> Legislation on PA is included in regional law on nature conservation. Policies or strategies are included in the regional environment and nature policy plans, and in the National Biodiversity Strategy.</p> |
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| 3.2 | Capacity for the planning, establishment and management of protected areas | Comprehensive capacity building programmes implemented   | <p><b>Capacity building programmes and initiatives on establishment/management of PA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- training sessions: internal for administrations, external for land users and owners – by government institutions, training is also provided by nature associations such as Natagora, Natuurpunt,</li> <li>* Flemish Region: INVERDE (institution supported by government for training on nature and forest law, policies, management practices, monitoring); JNM (nature education of youth groups), CVN (training of nature guides)</li> <li>* Walloon Region: There is a network of ONG's local representatives to manage protected area's</li> </ul> <p>Advices and assistance can be given to managers of public protected area's by regional coordination structures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- technical and financial support for NGO's, local authorities, private land owners, private forest owners, game management units</li> <li>- research institutes organise workshops to inform administrations and organisations on the outcomes of research studies, monitoring reports, evaluation procedures,...</li> </ul>  |
| 3.3 | Technology transfer  | Appropriate technologies and innovative approaches for the effective management of protected areas developed, validated and transferred. | <p>To support management planning and evaluation of nature, forest and marine areas several types of information systems have been developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>=&gt; GIS, satellite images (ICONOS), habitat maps, species atlases, landscape maps</li> <li>=&gt; information is accessible through websites, reports, seminars (websites given below)</li> <li>=&gt; CHM: website on biodiversity issues and information in framework of Convention of Biodiversity (Natural Science Institute)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flemish Region: computerized management planning and follow-up system (GIS-linked) for PA managed by government Agency, evaluation reports for establishing conservation status of Natura 2000, reports on nature typology including measures for restoration and management; maps of designated areas are publicly available and can be consulted on specific websites of the Information Centre : <a href="http://gisvlaanderen.be">http://gisvlaanderen.be</a></li> <li>- Walloon Region: online database system for with measures for habitat restoration/management; regular media event</li> <li>- Brussels Region : management plans linked with GIS and species databases are under development for Natura 2000 sites.</li> <li>- Federal marine area: Coastal atlas ("Kustatlas") has been recently published as part of the ICZM. A collaborative research project (GAUFRE) between federal and regional institutes compiled scientific data on the use of the marine area and developed a strategic vision (based upon sustainable development criteria) of an optimal spatial plan of the Belgian marine area of the North Sea.</li> </ul> |

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|     |                          |  | <p>The Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs prepared in 2006 a map that indicates the overlay of protected areas, military areas, economic activities (san extraction areas, pipelines, communication cables, energy network, windmills, etc.).</p> <p>The SADL unit of the KU Leuven hosts the EU-database of Natura 2000 areas and is as such in the position to provide a map of all protected areas in Belgium (regional and federal).</p>  |
| 3.4 | Financial sustainability | <p>Amount of financial needs identified (2005). Sustainable financing plans established. Amount of funding provided by public and private donors to protected areas.</p> | <p>Studies on ecosystem services and values are restricted to specific areas: for the Schelde river area, Heverlee forest area, Marine areas</p> <p>Identification of financial needs for Natura 2000 has been published in the EC report on art 8 of the Habitats Directive – available from EU website</p> <p>- government budgets allocated for nature conservation (OECD report 2006)</p> <p><u>Public expenditure on biodiversity and landscape protection</u> in Belgium amounted to EUR 130-150 million annually during 2000-03, an increase from EUR 90-110 million a year during 1996-99. The share of investment expenditure steadily increased, from 11% in 1996 to 44% in 2003.</p> <p>- international cooperation projects<br/>=&gt; Flemish Region supports projects in developing countries for forest protection and management through the Flemish forest fund, and re-introduction projects of Saharan-Sahel antilopes in protected areas in Tunisia and Algeria through the Bonn Convention Programme.</p> |

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| 3.5 | CEPA                                 | Measures taken to increase public awareness, understanding and appreciation of the importance of protected areas. Strategies and programmes elaborated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- communication strategies on PA</li> <li>=&gt; in the regions several information days and conferences have been organised on Natura 2000 designation, management and protection regimes</li> <li>=&gt; public info sessions on specific PA are organised on regular basis through visitor centres activities, public awareness materials (newsletters, brochures), media happenings, fairs and other public events</li> <br/> <li>- organisation of public events</li> <li>=&gt; yearly : environment day, biodiversity day, Ramsar Day, Park day, week of the forests, earth day, European bat night,</li> <li>=&gt; Nature NGO week-end activities and holiday camp programmes</li> <br/> <li>- regular consultation sessions with landowners, forest owners, hunter organisations, port authorities, water management agencies, tourism and recreation, defence,...</li> </ul> |
| 4.1 | Minimum Standards and best practices | National (regional) standards, criteria, and best practices for selecting, establishing, managing and governance of PA developed                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- criteria for selection and establishment of PA</li> <li>=&gt; guidelines on designation of Natura 2000 areas are based on the criteria of the Habitats and Birds Directives, for each site a designation form is completed and includes the habitats and species for which the site is designated</li> <br/> <li>=&gt; priorities for acquisition of land to be established as are based on occurrence of protected species or habitat types, representativeness and geographic distribution, and the aim to enlarge existing protected areas</li> <br/> <li>- guidelines for management: description of various nature types and recommended management measures is available on the regional websites</li> </ul>  |

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| 4.2<br>+<br>4.3 | Effectiveness of PA management<br>+<br>Assessment and monitoring PA status and trends | Methods, standards, criteria and indicators for evaluating management effectiveness of protected areas adopted (2006). Frameworks for monitoring, evaluation and reporting protected-area management effectiveness at site, national and regional system level implemented. Percentage of each country protected areas evaluated. | <p>- <b>methods for monitoring</b> of PA for evaluation of management effectiveness<br/>Pilote studies for monitoring management effectiveness have been carried out to determine methodology and time planning and are now implemented in several nature reserves. A general monitoring for the evolution of habitats and species is carried out in most protected areas, as well as monitoring of nature development projects, monitoring of agri-environment measures, hunting bag monitoring, reporting on forest certifications. For NGO's monitoring of specific species and habitats and management measures and reporting is mandatory in the approved management plan.</p> <p>- <b>evaluation of habitat and species conservation status</b> Natura 2000 is now being carried out based on the guidelines developed for the implementation of art 17 of the Habitats Directive concerning reporting obligations. Reports will be made available on the EU website.</p> <p>- <b>status and trends of protected areas:</b> reports are published by the regions on regular basis and made available on the respective websites. An overall report was published by the CBD National Focal Point on biodiversity in Belgium which also includes a chapter on protected areas: Biodiversity in Belgium 2004 (in French and in Dutch)</p> |
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| 4.4 | Scientific knowledge | Scientific results (in particular on Interdisciplinary research on ecological, social and economic aspects of protected areas) disseminated and shared (e.g. to the clearing-house mechanism). | <p>- <b>Scientific publications on ecological aspects of Natura 2000</b> sites have been published by each of the regions and the federal authority. The Institutes for scientific research in the different regions and the NGO's also publish on a regular basis reports on the evolution of nature reserves and management implications and on the status of nature, forests, water systems– information available on respective websites given below.</p> <p>- Scientific information exchange and networking – via platform on biodiversity research: EBPRS – BE:<br/> <a href="http://www.biodiversity.be">http://www.biodiversity.be</a></p> <p>- The <b>Belgian Clearing-House Mechanism for CBD</b> handled by the National Focal Point at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences provides an overall website for information on biodiversity aspects in Belgium and for indicating the links to regional and federal authorities as well as to NGO's : <a href="http://www.bch-cbd.naturalsciences.be">http://www.bch-cbd.naturalsciences.be</a><br/> As of May 2007, the new address of the website will be <a href="http://www.biodiv.be">http://www.biodiv.be</a></p> <p>⇒ Flemish Region: 2-yearly Nature Reports NARA, 2-yearly environment reports MIRA, yearly update of nature indicators and publication of report on the EU Headline Indicators for Biodiversity<br/> <a href="http://www.natuurindicatoren.be">http://www.natuurindicatoren.be</a>; <a href="http://www.nara.be">http://www.nara.be</a><br/> <a href="http://www.mira.be">http://www.mira.be</a><br/> <a href="http://www.natuurenbos.be">http://www.natuurenbos.be</a></p> <p>⇒ Walloon Region: Etat de l'environnement wallon<br/> <a href="http://natura2000.wallonie.be/">http://natura2000.wallonie.be/</a> ;<br/> <a href="http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/sibw/sites/home.html">http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/sibw/sites/home.html</a> ;<br/> <a href="http://environnement.wallonie.be/">http://environnement.wallonie.be/</a></p> <p>⇒ Brussels Region: Etat de l'Environnement – Report 2004-2006 – To be published in 2007.<br/> <a href="http://www.ibgebim.be">http://www.ibgebim.be</a></p> <p>⇒ Federal marine area: monitoring of ornithological importance of marine areas to prepare designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) took place by the MUMM (Management Unit of the North Sea Mathematical Models), reports and atlases on the North Sea area of Belgium<br/> <a href="http://www.mumm.ac.be">http://www.mumm.ac.be</a><br/> <a href="http://www.VLIZ.be">http://www.VLIZ.be</a><br/> <a href="http://www.interregnorthsea.org">http://www.interregnorthsea.org</a> or <a href="http://www.euregioscheldemond.be">www.euregioscheldemond.be</a></p> |
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**ANNEX: TABLE AND MAP WITH MAIN TYPES OF PA****Overview table with numbers and surface of various types of PA**

An overall total surface for PA cannot be given as surfaces of PA of several types are overlapping totally or partially.

The total Natura 2000 surface in terrestrial zone comes to 12,6 % of surface of Belgium, in marine zone about 12% of the Belgian territorial sea and it's exclusive economic zone is designated as Natura 2000.

|                                      | Brussels-Capital |          | Flanders |                    | Wallonia |          | Federal marine |          | Belgium |          |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------|----------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------|---------|----------|
|                                      | Number           | Area(ha) | Number   | Area(ha)           | Number   | Area(ha) | Number         | Area(ha) | Number  | Area(ha) |
| Nature reserves                      |                  |          |          |                    |          |          |                |          |         |          |
| public nature reserves               | 9                | 89       | 263      | 13458 <sup>1</sup> | 133      | 6866     | 1              | 670      | 406     | 21083    |
| private nature reserves              | -                | -        | 641      | 18506 <sup>2</sup> | 126      | 1926     | -              | -        | 767     | 20432    |
| Natura 2000                          | 3                | 2375     | 62       | 163499             | 240      | 220944   | 5              | 42090    | 310     | 428908   |
| Forest reserves                      | 6                | 1735     | 43       | 2273               | 12       | 548      | -              | -        | 61      | 4556     |
| Wetlands of biological interest      | -                | -        | -        | -                  | 49       | 1045     | -              | -        | 49      | 1045     |
| Caves                                | -                | -        | -        | -                  | 63       | -        | -              | -        | 63      | -        |
| Natural parcs                        | -                | -        | 1        | 5700               | 9        | 306971   | -              | -        | 10      | 312167   |
| Ramsar and other wetlands            | -                | -        | 4        | 5572               | 4        | 38528    | 1              | 1900     | 9       | 4600     |
| Dune Protection Act: protected dunes | -                | -        | ±117     | 1088               | -        | -        | -              | -        | ±117    | 1088     |

**The overview map of main types of PA in Belgium:** compiled by Valérie Goethals – INBO (Institute for Nature and Forest Research, Flemish Region)

<sup>1</sup> Of this total area being managed as a reserve 5.491 ha (nr = 75) has a formal recognition by ministerial decision as nature reserve

<sup>2</sup> Of this total area 11.378 ha (nr = 315) has a formal recognition by ministerial decision as nature reserve

