

BELGIAN BEST PRACTICES / INNOVATIVE APPROACHES WATER AND SANITATION

Flemish Region: The Flemish Decree on Integrated Water Policy.

The Decree of 18 July 2003 envisages the integration of the existing water policy into one framework decree on integrated water policy in the Flemish Region. The starting point is the division of the Flemish territory, based on hydrographic conditions. The Flemish territory is divided into two major **river basins districts** in accordance with the European Water Framework Directive. These river basin districts, i.e. the Scheldt and the Meuse, are further divided into 11 **sub-river basins**, which are subdivided into smaller catchment areas on the **local level**.

For each of this 3 hydrographic levels the Decree introduces organisational structures and management plans. The **integrated water management plans** contain the highlights of the water policy for each hydrographic level, indicating the destinations for use (taking into account the principles of **sustainable and multifunctional use of water resources**). The plans will be elaborated on a coherent, integrated way, using the bottom up and the top down approach.

For the elaboration of the plans on the 3 hydrographic levels, the Decree introduces **organisational structures** on each level, where the Flemish Co-ordination Commission for Integrated Water management (CIW) ensures the co-ordination between the different hydrographic levels. On the international river basin level, there is co-operation with the International Scheldt and Meuse Commissions, two joint bodies of the Scheldt and Meuse Treaties (Gent, 2002). Each sub-river basin will have its own sub-river basin committee, bringing together the different competent authorities, which works together with an advising committee containing all the stakeholders. On the local level appropriated forms of co-operation, composed by the competent local authorities, are foreseen.

A main point in the elaboration of integrated water policy is the **public consultation** on each hydrographic level. The bottom up and Top down approach is the guarantee to handle questions on the right level.

Brussels Region : The urban management of water in the Brussels Capital Region

The management of water in urban zones constitute one of the challenges of society at the dawn of the 21th century. This is particularly the case for the collection and treatment of waste water and the prevention of intra muros floods, where financial and technical issues are of great importance.

The migration of the populations towards the urban metropolis as well as the resulting waterproofing of the urban surfaces seem an irreversible phenomenon!

The art of the engineer will have to adapt itself to this change of society, while striving to humanize and socialize the life in the new cities by his good management of the water, encompassing their hinterland and loosing therefore vital spaces for the establishment of the water management tools!

A key focus point will be to keep the water visible and integrated into the urban fabric while being of "good quality". This action will be carried out in the city by the restoration of portions of the river system having survived to the urbanization (sanitation measures, flood protection, urban development, road infrastructures,...) as well as by developing new "spaces for surface waters" (re-creation of artificial beds for rivers, separation of sewage water and rainwater by connecting the latter into new or existing surface water network,...).

The ongoing efforts will have to allow the cities to collect wastewater via sewer system networks, treat it by cost effective measures affordable for the citizens and by means of Best Available Technologies.

Walloon region : Price of water

In the Walloon Region of Belgium, the real cost price of water is legally established: the new pricing of water distributed by net includes the real cost price of the treatment of waste water, with all costs linked to the collection of domestic waste water, and the real cost price of the distribution with all costs linked to the production and distribution, as well as a tax on the protection of water catchment. The price of distributed water shall be around 4\$/m³. This dissuasive price is an incentive for a rational use of drinking water and leads to strong decreases of the domestic consumption.

The water bill will also include a sum of 0,0150\$/m³ on all water bills in order to be a source of revenue for the "Fonds Social Wallon de l'Eau de la Région wallonne de Belgique" (Walloon Social Fund).

The first goal to set up a social fund in Wallonia is to be able to help the underprivileged private consumers having problems to pay their bill and who cannot assume the high cost of the drinking water. A part of the water bill of that target population is paid by the Social Fund.

Federal government (development cooperation) Enhancing the assessment capacity of Moroccan scientific and technical institutions in the field of sustainable water management

Cooperation between Belgian universities and universities in the South has over the years evolved from financing ad hoc research programmes, mainly driven by the interests of the Belgian researchers to long term partnership between Belgian universities and universities of the South. Enhancing the academic performances and the building of a scientific network is the main purpose of this cooperation. For each country, the partners of the network negotiate a specific 5 year programme (several Belgian universities and local universities, research institutions and government institutions). The end result is a balance between the priorities of the host country and the answering capacity of the Belgian universities.

The programme with Morocco focuses mainly on capacity building, research and information sharing in the field of water management and protection of this vita resource, mainly for agricultural production.

In a first phase (1995-2001) diagnostic methods to measure and control the quality of water and soil under irrigation was established together with monitoring system that could be used by technicians in charge of agricultural intensification programs ("Atlas – Qualité des sols et des .eaux"). Another specific programme is oriented on the transfer of technology in the field of hydrogeology. This contains the establishment of a method to identify the quantity and the quality of the underground water and its vulnerability to pollution. The third component of the 5 year programme is mainly oriented to the translation of this results and the development of information tools and training of agricultural extension workers so that they become agri-environmental instead of pure agricultural advisors.