



Flanders
State of
the Art

Activities Report 2014

TOGETHER WE
MAKE TOMORROW
MORE BEAUTIFUL

OVAM

www.ovam.be

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Henny De Baets, Administrator-General of OVAM

“Those who do not adapt to change, lose their relevance”

2014 was a turbulent year. Both on the international stage and in Flanders we still have not freed ourselves from the aftermath of the economic crisis. And the environmental barometer has also been indicating instability. International reports have shown that Flanders is achieving good results when it comes to recycling and waste management, but that the fight against climate change requires more effort.

How influential has this turbulent context been for OVAM?

Henny De Baets: ‘Not the context itself makes a difference, but the way in which you deal with it as an organisation. A modern government organisation needs to perform efficient and relevant work. This means that one needs to be well aware of the social and economic context in order to be able to offer adequate solutions. This is a rule in the business world, but it is just as

true for government institutions. Those who do not adapt to new trends, evolutions or insights will lose their relevance.’

“If we want to respond to the changing world around us, we must have the courage to put our working methods up for discussion.”

‘In 2014, we took a number of actions which were strongly oriented towards the changed context, and offered solutions. I am thinking, for instance, of the accelerated asbestos elimination policy which has been approved by the Government of Flanders. Or of the custom-made solutions we offer companies in order to fulfil their sorting obligations, and of the socio-economic instruments we have developed in order to deal with soil contamination faster.’



The Board of Directors of OVAM (left to right):
Herman Gobel, Danny Wille, Henny De Baets, Eddy
Van Dyck, Ann Cuyckens en Rudy Meeus

‘Our employees, especially the younger generation, find it important not to work on cases on their own, isolated from everyone else.’

Without a doubt, this approach will have consequences within the organisation as well.

It requires a high degree of flexibility and an open mind. Those who want to adapt to the changing world around them in an efficient way also need to have the courage to question their own working methods, and modify them where necessary. For instance, in 2014 we started a process to optimise the work of our soil management department. Flexibility also means that, as an organisation, we need to be innovative and not afraid of participating in less conventional models of cooperation – such as the Flemish Materials Programme, in which OVAM and its partners give

shape to the Flemish circular economy, sharing responsibilities. And it also has consequences for the HR policy. In 2014, we continued the IMPACT process (the acronym stands for ‘developing and monitoring an Inspiring Model for Performance, working Differently and Competence and Talent management’). This perfectly fits into our vision that a flexible organisation should make the inner entrepreneurs in its employees come out and offer people the opportunity to take on new challenges.

Is this approach appreciated?

‘I think so. Our employees, especially the younger generation, find it important not to work on their own, isolated from everyone else. They want to be able to work together in an open environment, within the organisation but also with external stakeholders. And we want to give them the necessary space and trust.’

‘But the outside world is also positive about our approach. In 2014, OVAM was nominated as

‘government organisation of the year’ – precisely because of that open approach, and because our aim is always to respond adequately to developments in society.’

What does this mean for 2015?

‘That we must continue in the same direction. For a whole year we will be campaigning together with our partners in the framework of the International Year of Soils. There will be a new approach in the battle against litter, in close consultation with our stakeholders. In this context, we will also take into account new insights and issues, such as how to deal with marine waste or the need for a system of returnable packaging. And in 2015 we will be preparing a new Plan for Household Waste, which will determine the future of our separate collection and recycling policy. We are of the opinion that we can still recycle 15 percent more, and at the same time achieve a positive impact on the climate. This, too, is a way of taking into account the context.’



New OVAM objective: 15 percent less residual waste in 2022!

The Flemish waste policy has been among the best worldwide for years. Over 70 percent of our waste is recycled, and barely 0.5 percent ends up at a landfill site. Even so, we can still do better. By the year 2022, OVAM wants to achieve a 15-percent decrease in the residual waste of households and companies. How? By making an even greater effort when it comes to recycling and reuse.

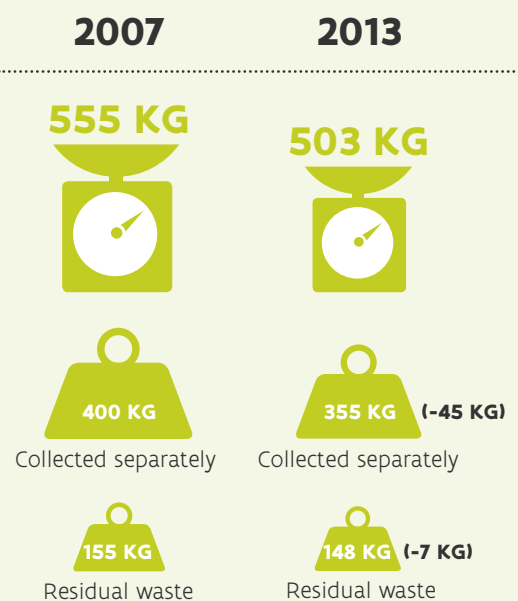
503 kg: this was the amount of household waste produced by each inhabitant of Flanders in 2013. This was 10 kg less than the year before, and 52 kg (!) less than in 2007. This reduction has been achieved thanks to good collection and a strong focus on prevention, reuse and recycling. And for some waste streams with a positive economic value, such as textile, also thanks to an alternative collection system – even theft of waste is a contributing factor. Since 2011, when the Waste Decree was replaced by the Materials Decree, the emphasis on the closing of material cycles has been even stronger. This means that waste is reused as raw materials.

Closing even more cycles

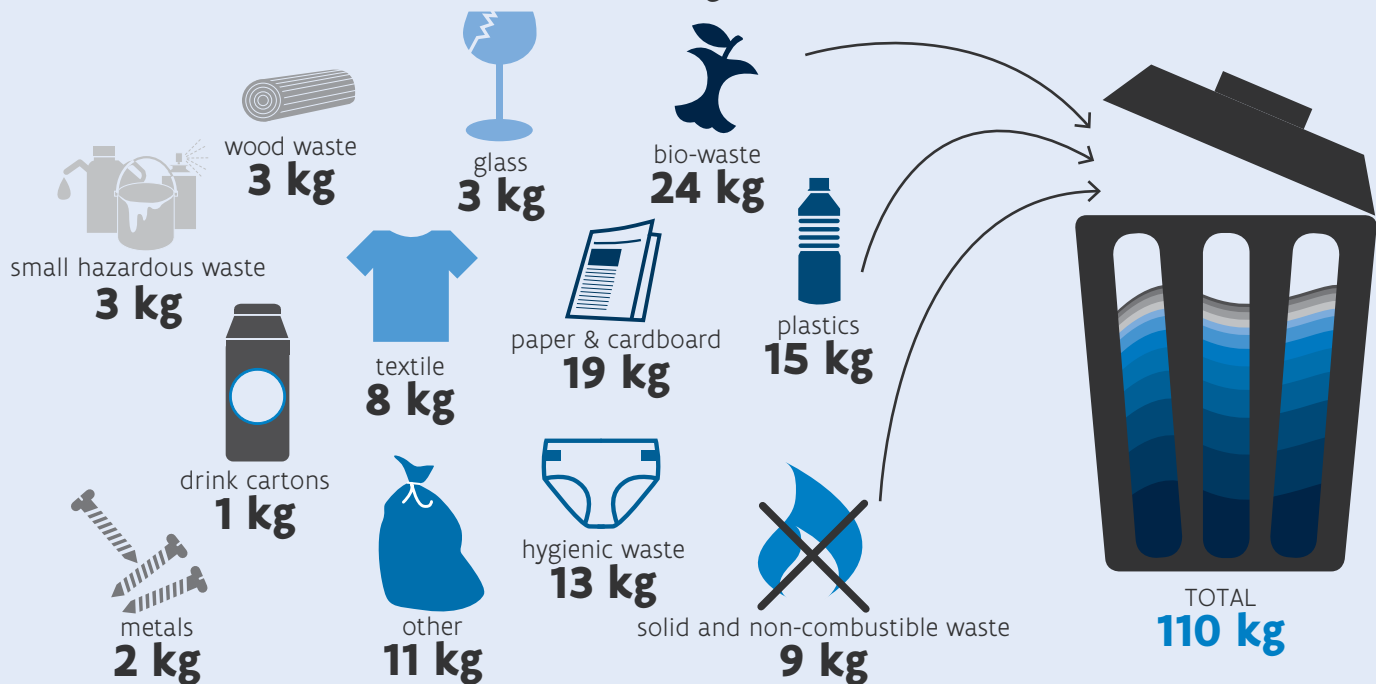
The fact that we produce less and less waste is a good thing. However, this decrease has occurred mainly in separately collected waste: PMD (Plastic bottles and flasks, Metal packaging, Drink cartons), glass, paper and cardboard waste, green waste, etc. The amount of residual waste per person is decreasing much more slowly. That is why OVAM is once more taking on a challenge: can we produce 15 percent less residual waste in Flanders in the coming years? To achieve this goal we need to close even more material cycles and reuse as much waste as possible.

Household waste per inhabitant of Flanders

The amount of residual waste we produce is decreasing much more slowly than the waste that is collected separately. Therefore, OVAM wants to improve separate collection even more.



Contents of the household waste bag



Specifically, OVAM sees the following possibilities:

- **to improve the separate collection of plastics.** This can be done via a general separate collection system, like the ones already in place in some places in Flanders, or via an extension of the PMD bag. The latter method would also make separating the waste easier.
- **to collect more bio-waste.** This can be done, for instance, by having people separate their green and kitchen waste, including food waste, in VFG bins, and collecting it from their homes – something which is already being done today by many Flemish municipalities. In the Netherlands and Germany this method is used as well.
- **to further reduce the amount of bulky waste.** More than 50 percent of our bulky waste can still be reused. Recyclable waste (e.g. wood waste) and reusable goods need to find their way into the cycle more easily.
- **to pursue a custom-made policy:** each local situation has its own challenges: a dense or highly dispersed development, small or large households, an older or younger population, more or less interest in recycling,

etc. OVAM wants to set up more cooperation projects with local authorities.

Households and companies are participating

The decrease in residual waste strived for, is intended to be achieved through households (one third) and companies (two thirds). Based on an extensive study performed in 2014, OVAM sees room for improvement especially in the hotel and catering industry and in specific retail trade (bakeries, electrical shops and furniture shops). The federations of both sectors want to participate via awareness campaigns, aimed at their members, in 2015. Among other things, articles about separating waste will be published in the magazines for their members, and OVAM will also distribute a poster that provides information about the different residual fractions in waste.

New challenges

Now that our society is evolving towards a circular economy, the value of waste is steadily increasing. Our scarce raw materials are becoming more expensive and demand for waste that is

easy to recycle is increasing. This results in new challenges, to which OVAM wants to respond fast. For instance, clear agreements need to be made on how waste management can be organised more efficiently at the local level. Both local administrations, private collectors and the distribution sector play a role in the collection of waste. How can we optimise the collaboration between those parties, and thus guarantee that citizens and companies are offered maximum support when it comes to waste prevention or separate collection for reuse and recycling? How can we introduce new collection systems that are better adapted to a local situation or a specific target group?

Another – harder to solve – problem is the theft of waste. Waste is increasingly being stolen: textile from containers, paper and cardboard waste during door-to-door collection, waste deposited at recycling centres, etc. In 2013, OVAM received over 140 reports of theft, but the real figure is probably much higher. To stop this theft, OVAM is collaborating with the police as much as possible. There is also a registration form on the website which citizens and companies can use to report theft.



Winner
 OVAM Ecodesign Award for students
 category 'thesis'
 Jeroen Op de Beeck

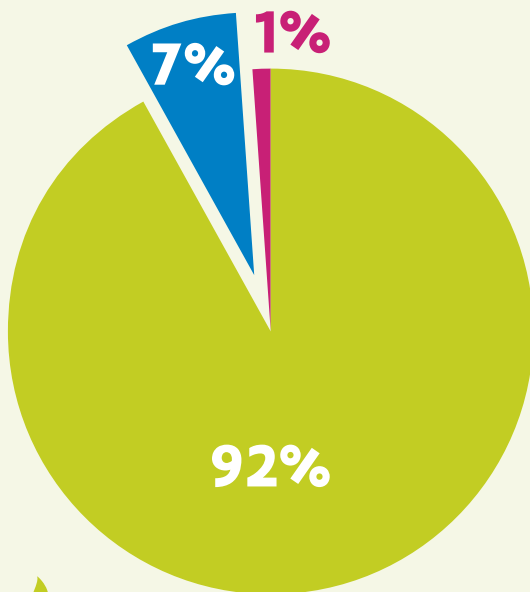


How is residual household waste processed?

950,000 TONNES



This is the amount of non-separated residual waste collected in Flanders each year.



incinerated with energy recuperation



dried or separated



to landfill site

URBAN COMPOSTER

The Urban Composter is a pre-composting installation for VFG (Vegetable, Fruit and Garden) waste. A slowly revolving cylinder reduces the volume of the waste, thus reducing transport costs. The whole concept is sustainable, with easy-to-replace standard parts, and hardly consumes any energy. This results in a lower environmental impact.

Flemish Materials Programme sets Flanders on its way to a circular economy

A study that calculates that the circular economy could create 27,000 jobs, a crowdfunded e-book that shows how companies are already working in material cycles, and designers and recyclers who join together to think about a design that makes the repair, reuse and recycling of electronics and plastic products easier: in 2014, the partners of the Flemish Materials Programme in the business world, knowledge institutions, government bodies and civil society contributed further to achieving a circular economy.

The aim of the Flemish Materials Programme is to take Flanders to the European top five when it comes to sustainable materials management by 2040. In 2012, partners from all corners of society made a commitment to close the materials cycle as much as possible. Meanwhile, the Flemish Materials Programme has grown into a recognised public-private coordination platform which is preparing Flanders for the transition to a sustainable use of raw materials and materials in a high-performance circular economy.

The Flemish Materials Programme is based on **3 complementary pillars**:

1. Vision, networking & experiment

Plan C, the Transition Network for Sustainable Materials Management, is working towards the breakthrough of sustainable materials management via the creation of a vision, networking and transition experiments.

e-book about the new circular economy in Flanders

In 2014, Plan C launched the e-book 'Product <=> Service – New business models in the circular economy'. In a circular economy, the way in which we use raw materials changes in a fundamental way. A discarded product is no longer waste, but a source of valuable materials that re-enters the cycle. This switch to life-cycle thinking can take place in many creative ways, which are explained in this e-book. The e-book was written thanks to crowdfunding – for the technical work – and crowdsourcing – for the content.

<http://eboek.plan-c.eu/>



Circular economy can provide Flanders with 27,000 new jobs

In a circular economy we all use materials more efficiently. If we make the jump to a circular economy, approximately 27,000 new jobs can be created in Flanders by 2020. This was calculated by SuMMA, the Sustainable Materials Management Support Centre. In addition, the circular economy creates an added value of 2.3 billion euros for Flanders. By reusing materials from consumer goods again and again, and closing cycles, we become much less dependent on foreign raw materials and price fluctuations in the international market. We repair products that are broken and companies exchange their residual waste streams.

2. Research

SuMMA, the Sustainable Materials Management Support Centre, is researching how material flows are moving in our economy, how we can measure sustainable materials management, and how taxes, subsidies and legislation can encourage a more sustainable use of materials.



Where is the gold in your laptop?

Designers often have too little insight into how they should design a product to enable a recycler to dismantle it quickly and efficiently afterwards. Likewise, recycling companies are not always aware of the barriers faced by designers and producers when they want to use recycled materials. If we want products to be designed today with a view to their future reuse and recycling, knowledge exchange is crucial. In 2014, the Flemish Materials Programme brought designers, producers and recycling companies together to look at how a well-thought-through design could make the reuse, repair and recycling of electrical and electronic equipment possible. The plastics sector also accepted the challenge. The problem is that recyclers often do not know where exactly in the discarded PCs or mobile phones the valuable materials can be found. OVAM is now studying this together with the Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO), KU Leuven, UGent, the Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre (IMEC) and the sector.

3. Agenda 2020

Together with a broad group of partners, the Flemish Materials Programme sets up ambitious projects on the crossroads between materials management and other societal challenges. The starting point for those actions in the field is a dynamic action plan, Agenda 2020. In a roadmap the Flemish Materials Programme has defined the steps that need to be taken when it comes to technological development, infrastructure, legislation, education, the labour market and competencies in order to close the cycles in important economic sectors.



Winner
OVAM Ecodesign Award PRO
category 'product on the market'
Brecht Bonte and Hans Delabie



SMAPPEE

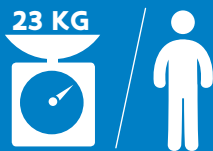
Snappee is a smart electricity monitor with an app with which consumers can monitor their energy consumption and adjust it when necessary. The box also contains a socket with which you can switch a device on or off remotely.



Good food does not belong in the bin

Each person in Flanders wastes up to 23 kg of food each year. Especially bread, vegetables and fruit often end up in the bin. All this thrown away food is costing us an average of 475 million euros a year, or 180 euros for a family with two children. That is a waste of food and money. In the project 'Food waste from a chain perspective', OVAM looks at four ways to fight food waste. These are: clear information about the shelf life, innovative packaging that can keep food fresh for longer, donating leftovers to social causes and reducing production losses. This way, we can reduce food waste in every part of the food chain.

How much food are we wasting?



Flemish consumers waste up to 23 kg of food per person each year.



For Flanders as a whole the amount is between 94 and 142 million kilograms.



With this amount of food 30,000 football teams can be fed for one year.

Food waste occurs in every part of the food chain: a crop failure, a technical failure of cooling equipment... In addition, figures of the interdepartmental working group on food waste show that people in Flanders throw away between 94,000 and 142,000 tonnes of food each year. Because it does not look perfect, because it does not look fresh, or because the consumer just does not feel like it.

Thrown away unopened

60 percent of the food we throw away is bread and pastries, fresh vegetables and fruit. These products often end up in the bin because they are no

Can you still eat food after the expiry date?

An important step in the fight against food waste is the correct interpretation of the expiry date. Many people do not understand the difference between 'Use by' and 'Best before'. Food products that go bad quickly, such as fresh meat or prepared foods, are given a 'Use by' date. After this date you can no longer eat them. Food products that do not go bad so fast, such as pasta or tinned vegetables, are given the label 'Best before'. These products can still be eaten for quite some time after the 'Best before' date, on condition that they are stored correctly and the packaging has not been damaged.



Use by
↓
must be used
by this date

Pre-packed meat, pre-packed fish, sliced cold meat, salads, yoghurt, etc.

DO NOT USE
after this date!



Best before
↓
can be consumed at
least until this date

Uncooked pasta, biscuits, UHT milk, tins, etc.

CAN BE USED
after this date!
On condition that the product has been stored correctly and the packaging has not been damaged.

longer perfectly fresh: the last slices of yesterday's bread, an apple that is turning yellow... Other food products, such as dairy, meat, fish, chicken and desserts, are sometimes even thrown away unopened. In 45 percent of these cases the shelf life of the product has not expired. This food wastage is costing around 76 euros per person per year. On the whole, Flemish consumers throw away an average of 475 million euros each year.

The Commitment Statement

In order to continue to tackle food waste in Flanders, on 31 March 2014 all chain partners signed a Commitment Statement. It was signed by representatives of food producers, distributors, the hotel and catering industry, consumers and the Flemish authorities. The objective: to create a roadmap to reduce food wastage. In the course of 2014, consultations were held on the roadmap. This will be launched at the beginning of April 2015.

What can you do yourself?

As a private person, you can also make a contribution. Consumer research by the Environment, Nature and Energy Department (LNE) has shown that 77 percent of people in Flanders try to limit the amount of food they throw away. A first step in the right direction is to make a shopping list. This will prevent you from buying more food than you need. Estimating the serving size correctly is also important: children eat less than adults, women (usually) eat less than men. In case of doubt you can just follow a recipe. Finally, it is always a good idea to keep leftovers and eat these the next day.



Winner
OVAM Ecodesign Award
for students
category 'end-of-year project'
Niels Kinds, Korneel De
Viaene and Sam Van Landuyt



BREADY

The BREADY is a terracotta container that keeps bread fresh longer. The terracotta regulates the humidity inside the box, thus increasing the shelf life of the bread from 3 to 5 days. A big advantage in a country where bread is the food that is thrown away most.



2015: International Year of Soils

Can a healthy soil help you prevent burn-out? How can your child's development benefit from a clean soil? With these interesting questions the Flemish Government urges everyone to think about the importance of a healthy soil.

We walk on it every day, but we hardly ever stop to think about it: the soil beneath our feet is of vital importance to all of us. A clean soil is a condition for producing healthy food and clean drinking water. A healthy soil also provides the space we need to live, work and set up enterprises. Moreover, a clean soil is decisive for the vitality of nature and its ecosystems.

20 years of the Soil Decree

In 2015, the Flemish Soil Decree has existed for 20 years. For these 20 years, by preventing soil contamination, making an inventory of cases and remedying it where necessary, the Flemish authorities, together with their partners, have been contributing to a healthier living environment. In addition, United Nations have declared 2015 the International Year of Soils. The Flemish Government will use this occasion to draw attention to the importance of a healthy soil.

With the launch of www.bodembewust.be on 5 December 2014 – World Soil Day – the Flemish environment administrations (OVAM, the Environment, Nature and Energy Department, the Flemish Land Agency, the Flemish Environment Agency, the Agriculture & Fisheries Department and the Nature and Forestry Agency)

inaugurated the soil campaign. On the new website you can find carefully documented background information and cases, as well as information about all planned activities. Via the website you can also keep informed about all initiatives in the framework of the International Year of Soils. Subscribe via www.bodembewust.be.

Dream situation in 2036: no more historical soil contamination

By 2036, OVAM wants to at least have started with the remediation of all historical soil contamination in Flanders. To realise this ambition, soil investigations and remediations need to be accelerated. In 2014, OVAM defined how it is going to do this.

Together with the municipalities, OVAM wants to speed up the making of an inventory of all land with historical high-risk activities, a task it wants to complete by the end of 2017. This inventory is complementary to the inventory of land with a VLAREM permit which has already been mapped by the municipalities. This way, serious risks can be detected as soon as possible. Priority is given to vulnerable areas, especially protection areas for the production of drinking water from groundwater. Land with serious historical soil contamination that is currently uninhabited is mapped faster and will be remediated as soon as possible.

7 instruments to deal with soil contamination faster

A contaminated soil involves health risks: for the people who live, work or go to school on it, and for the crops growing on it. With a set of specific soil instruments, OVAM is accelerating the process of dealing with high-risk contamination. This way, by 2036 the remediation of all historical soil contamination should at least have been started.

OVAM is responsible for a healthy soil in Flanders. It locates (historical) contamination and deals with it in the best way possible. The goal: starting the remediation of all historically contaminated sites by 2036.

To map all contaminated sites in Flanders, the soil certificate is an effective instrument. A soil certificate is required for anyone selling or buying a plot of land. This certificate states all information OVAM has about the land: have high-risk activities ever taken place there? Have these led to soil contamination? Has this contamination been dealt with?

Moreover, owners or sellers of land where high-risk activities have taken place must comply with a set of obligations: they must have a preliminary soil investigation carried out and submit the corresponding report to OVAM. When it is found that the land is contaminated, a more thorough investigation and possibly a remediation will be required.

These legal obligations do not only protect the buyer; they also turn the transfer of land or premises into a crucial moment in the protection of our soil and our environment. This way, OVAM is able to identify contaminated land and deal with it sooner.

By 2036, OVAM wants to at least have started with the remediation of all historical soil contamination in Flanders. To reach this deadline, it has, in addition to the standard regulations on transfers, developed seven specific instruments intended to accelerate soil investigations and remediations.



1. Municipalities locate land where high-risk activities have taken place

In 2014, 275 Flemish municipalities mapped high-risk activities on their territories. This information is important as it allows to deal with contaminated sites much faster.

Since 2012, municipalities have been sharing all information about activities which may be harmful to the soil via the OVAM Web Portal. By the end of 2014, 275 municipalities had provided OVAM with information about the high-risk activities within their territories. We now know for a total of 100,000 plots of land whether there is a risk of the soil being contaminated.

30 municipalities have shared the complete inventory of plots where high-risk activities have taken place with the Web Portal. Together with these municipalities, OVAM is now developing a custom-made approach for the remediation of brownfields, urban blight or other historical legacies and the protection of vulnerable areas.

The municipalities have mainly exchanged information about land where high-risk activities have taken place for the period from 1991 until now, for activities for which a VLAREM permit was issued. The next step is to also exchange information about high-risk activities dating from before 1991. OVAM wants to help the municipalities with this, for instance by sending teams of experts. This approach should allow all municipalities to complete their inventory of land where high-risk activities have taken place by the end of 2017.



2. Cooperation agreement protects schoolchildren

A leaking fuel oil tank, a metal workshop: quite a few schools are faced with soil contamination on their grounds. When this is the case, they have to have a soil investigation and remediation carried out. Not an easy thing for a school. That is why OVAM is helping them. In 2014, all schools received an invitation to apply for support.

On September 5th 2013, the Ministers for the Environment and Education signed a cooperation agreement. The objective: to map contaminated school grounds and assist and financially support schools with soil investigations and remediations. From the descriptive soil investigation onwards, OVAM performs the soil investigations and the remediation.

At the end of 2014, OVAM launched a new website. There, schools can find all information related to their rights and obligations. When is a school required to have a soil investigation performed? What does the school have to do when it wants to sell its land? What support do schools receive from OVAM and the Agency for Infrastructure in Education (AGIO)? Until when can schools apply for this subsidy?

In the autumn of 2014, OVAM sent all schools an e-mail inviting them to sign up for the project. Schools faced with contamination on their grounds are eligible for considerable subsidies from OVAM and AGIO until 30 June 2015.

For more information: www.ovam.be/onderwijssector

3. OVAM co-finances the remediation of historical soil pollution

Since 1 September 2013, private persons, companies and public administrations can apply to OVAM for financial support for the remediation of serious historical soil contamination.

Companies are eligible for a 35 percent subsidy, private persons and public administrations for 50 percent. The maximum amount of the subsidy is 200,000 euros, spread out over a period of three years.

At the end of 2014, OVAM was already co-financing 36 remediation projects, for a total amount of 3,382,842 euros. This comes down to an average subsidy of 93,968 euros per case.

Those who wish to apply can do so via the application form on www.ovam.be/cofinanciering.



4.

One approach for contamination in residential areas



An old landfill site where there is now a residential area, a brickworks that was demolished to make room for a block of flats: in quite a few places in Flanders people live on land which may be contaminated. OVAM is dealing with these residential areas in groups.

Separate residential plots where a high-risk activity took place in the past are grouped by OVAM by means of a so-called site decision. As a result, only one soil investigation needs to be performed for all these plots. Thanks to this global approach both the cost and the administrative burden are reduced for residents and owners.

In 2014, ten new locations were recognised as residential areas eligible for support in Flanders. This way, the investigation and remediation obligation was eliminated for 347 plots. For 2015, OVAM is even more ambitious, and it is also making available additional funds: for at least 400 plots a residential area project must be started. OVAM wants to increase this target every year.

For more information: www.ovam.be/woonzones

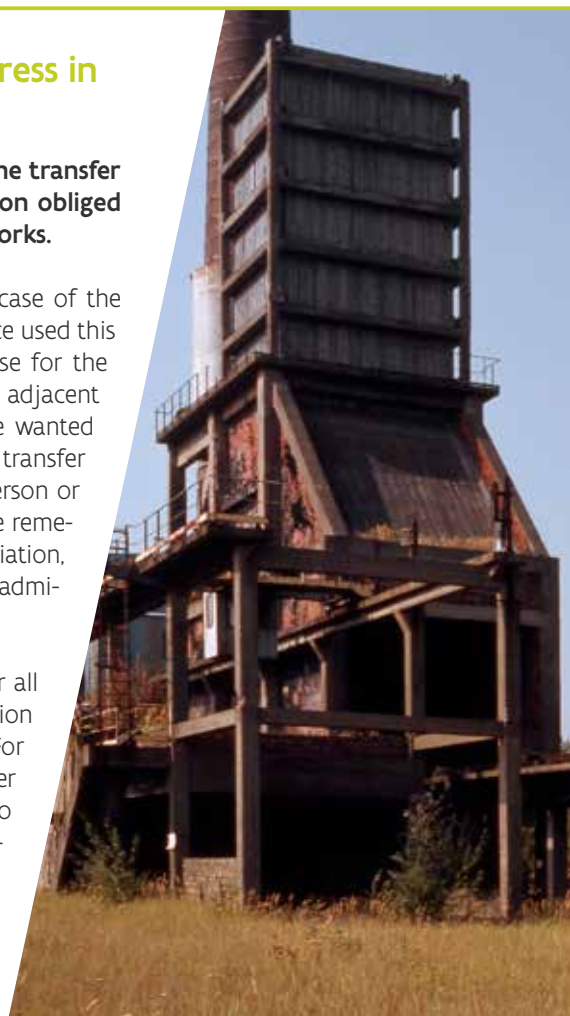
5.

Transfer of obligations allows for progress in cases that seemed hopeless

Progress is finally made in some difficult cases thanks to the transfer of obligations. This implies that the person or organisation obliged to remediate pays OVAM to carry out the remediation works.

In 2014, the transfer of obligations option was used in the case of the Zeematex site in the port of Zeebrugge. The Ministry of Defence used this site between the 1950s and the early 1990s as a back-up base for the Navy. These activities, together with the contamination on the adjacent Carcoke site, contaminated the soil. The Ministry of Defence wanted to leave the site as soon as possible, which is why it made a transfer of obligations agreement with OVAM. This implies that the person or organisation obliged to remediate pays OVAM to carry out the remediation works. In addition to the estimated cost of the remediation, the Ministry of Defence paid compensation for the risk and an administrative fee.

The transfer of obligations option offers many advantages for all parties involved. After the transfer, the person or organisation obliged to remediate is fully released from his obligations. For instance, at the Zeematex site the Ministry of Defence no longer needs to pay a concession fee or assign staff to a site it no longer uses. For OVAM, this agreement means that it can optimise the coordination between the soil remediation of the site and the soil remediation of the Carcoke site.





6.

Symbolic euro breaks deadlock due to bankruptcies

Bankruptcies often put a brake on the remediation and redevelopment of industrial sites. In order to break this deadlock OVAM concluded a liquidators' protocol with the Flemish Bar.

Is the cost of remediation higher than the value of the land and is the liquidator unable to find any interested investors in the private market? If so, the liquidator can sell the site to OVAM for the symbolic amount of one euro. OVAM then becomes the owner of the land and is in charge of the remediation and subsequent selling of the land. As the owner of the land, OVAM can then optimally coordinate the remediation with the redevelopment.

OVAM has already purchased nine plots thanks to this liquidators' protocol. At six of these, the soil investigation or remediation was started in 2014. Two other cases have already been closed. In 2015, OVAM is increasing its efforts to sell these sites after their remediation.

www.ovam.be/protocol-curatoren

7. Large-scale approach of gas sites

Spread out across Flanders there are still a large number of former gas plants and gas holders. The OVAM has developed a joint approach to deal with these contaminated sites.

In the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century gas was extracted from coal in and around cities, for instance for street lighting. During the production of the gas, toxic substances, such as tar and cyanide, were released. As a result, the soil and the groundwater at those locations are often heavily contaminated. Over the past years, OVAM has mapped the gas sites in Flanders.

This way, OVAM's attention was drawn, for instance, to the former gas plant on Gazometerstraat in Sint-Truiden. This site is heavily contaminated with cyanides, PAHs and mineral oil. In 2014, OVAM thoroughly prepared the remediation. Soon, a new neighbourhood will be developed at the clean site, comprising flats, a youth centre, a primary school and a municipal youth service. OVAM is working closely together with AGOST, the municipal redevelopment company of Sint-Truiden, in order to optimally coordinate the remediation and the new plans.

**For more information:
www.ovam.be/gassites**





Cooperation with sector federations makes waste separation campaigns more efficient

In 2014, OVAM launched its first waste separation campaign aimed at one sector. All Flemish garage owners and bodywork repairers were sent a parcel in the post containing a letter, a brochure and a poster with tips to better separate the waste in the workshop. The contents of the parcel were chosen after consultation with FEBEM, producer responsibility organisations and the sector federations Federauto and Febelcar. The campaign went so well that OVAM will work with the sector federations again in future.

At the beginning of 2014, OVAM sent its mailing to all 8,000 garage owners and bodywork repairers in Flanders. To find out whether the 'Separate more' campaign had brought results, a few months later 200 addressees were called up for a quick evaluation. Who had (not) received the letter? Who had read it? Had the brochure and poster

actually been distributed among employees? And had the campaign led to better waste management?

Well received

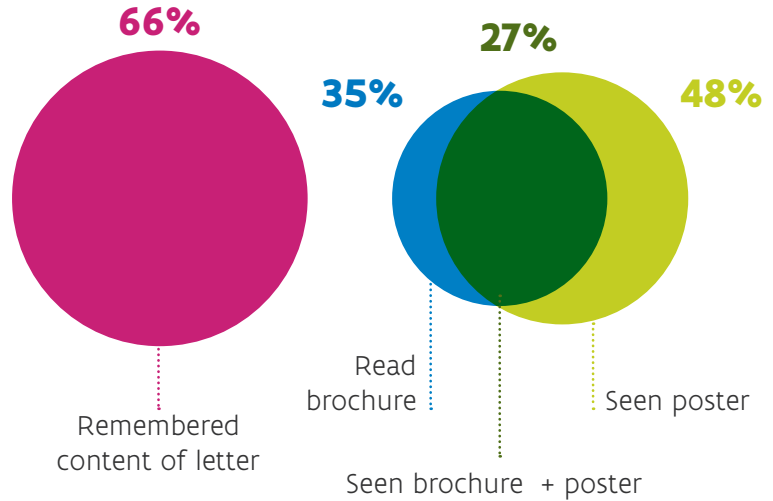
The evaluation provided quite a bit of useful information. For instance, 66 percent of addressees remembered the contents of the

letter. The poster and brochure were well received: garage owners thought they were positive, clear and well-structured. Moreover, the campaign really convinced them to improve their waste management. This means that the communication channels that the sector federations had recommended had been a good choice.

Collaboration with the sector

Based on the evaluation, the 'Separate more' campaign has been improved over the past months. A message that is sent via the sector itself, is more efficient and more convincing. At the end of 2014, OVAM set up a 'Separate more' campaign for the agricultural sector. In consultation with the Farmers' Union and the General Farmer's Trade Union it was decided not to send separate postal parcels, but attach a brochure to the magazines for the members of the two associations.

Impact of the waste separation campaign among garage owners and bodywork repairers



Increased waste separation in the hotel and catering industry and bakeries

In 2015, the campaign is aimed at the hotel and catering industry and bakeries. Once more, the magazines for members of the sector federations are central, but this time the collaboration goes even a step further. OVAM provides the input in terms of content and points of attention; the editorial staff contact persons, conduct interviews, take care of layout, etc. This way, the 'Separate more' campaign is even better embedded in the world of the hotel and catering industry and bakeries.



Waste policy and sustainable materials management: **Flanders and Europe cross-fertilise each other**

Better collection and processing of discarded electrical and electronic equipment, new definitions for hazardous waste, European cities and regions comparing their waste figures... At the European level there is a lot going on when it comes to waste and materials.

Is Europe still fully behind the circular economy?

In July 2014 the European Commission approved a series of proposals that mark the switchover to a circular economy. Only a few months later, the new Juncker Commission withdrew this *circular economy package* again, promising instead to develop a more ambitious plan in 2015. OVAM advocates the integration of clear goals for sustainable materials management into this plan as well.

With the objectives of the *circular economy package*, Europe is opting for an entirely new economic model. In a circular economy, prevention, reuse and recycling are the standard and waste is a thing of the past. These ambitions are familiar to Flanders. During the Belgian Presidency of the European Environment Council in 2010 the Flemish Minister for the Environment, Joke Schauvliege, gave sustainable materials management a prominent place on the agenda. The objectives defined by Flanders at that time have been taken over by Europe and were translated into the concrete legislative proposals of the *circular economy package* in 2014.

From the beginning, Flanders has advocated the maximum integration of the Flemish vision and policy on sustainable materials management into the European legislation. Now that the European Commission is working on a new plan, OVAM is following the developments closely and continues working towards a transition to a sustainable use of raw materials in Europe.

Hazardous waste? New definitions for greater safety

In 2014, the European List of Waste and the hazardous properties of the Waste Framework Directive were updated.

The European Framework Directive on Waste describes, among other things, whether certain waste is hazardous or not. This terminology and classification are important, for instance, to guarantee a safe transport and management of waste, to issue the correct licences to waste processing plants, and to be able to compare waste production in different European countries.

Producers of waste have to investigate themselves whether their waste is hazardous or not. To do so, they must check whether the waste has any of the fifteen hazardous properties listed in the new regulation: explosive, oxidising, flammable, etcetera. From now on, 'specific target organ toxicity' is also one of these hazardous properties: the question whether waste is hazardous to certain human organs or not.

In the European working group, OVAM presented a study performed by VITO (the Flemish Institute for Technological Research) on the impact of the new definition of ecotoxicity, in other words: how hazardous is a waste product to the environment. The results of this study did not go unnoticed. The European Commission is now continuing in the line of this study and consulting OVAM in the process.





Stricter rules for the collection of discarded equipment

In 2014, the regulations on the collection and treatment of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) changed. Solar panels now also fall under electrical and electronic waste.

On 24 July 2012, Europe published a revised Directive on the collection and treatment of WEEE. All Member States had to integrate this Directive into their legislation before 14 February 2014. In Flanders this legislation is called VLAREMA (the Flemish Regulation on the sustainable management of material cycles and waste). Also new is that, from now on, photovoltaic solar panels fall under electrical and electronic waste, and that final points of sale with sufficient space are obliged to accept very small WEEE without charge, even if the consumer does not buy new equipment.

In Flanders (and in all of Belgium) Recupel organises the collection and treatment of waste electrical and electronic equipment. Recupel was created in 2001 by the importers and producers of this equipment. OVAM supervises its correct functioning. Flanders is at the forefront in Europe when it comes to the collection and processing of WEEE. That is why, in the implementation of the WEEE Directive, Flanders has opted for continuing and optimising its efficient collection and treatment system. The only exception is for solar panels, which are collected via a separate channel.

Flanders has adapted the new collection targets as much as possible to those stated in the European Directive. From 2016 onwards, 45% of the amount of WEEE in weight must be collected. From 2019 onwards, this becomes 65% of all equipment that has been put on the market. For the treatment of the collected WEEE, Flanders even sets the target 5 percent higher than the targets in the European Directive.

For more information: www.ovam.be/aeaa

World Waste Congress 2015 to be held in Antwerp

From 8 to 11 September 2014, OVAM was present at the World Waste Conference in Sao Paulo. The presentations of OVAM and Philip Heylen, President of ISVAG, the intermunicipal partnership for waste treatment of Antwerp and some surrounding municipalities, resulted in an interesting debate about the transition from a waste to a materials policy.

This is promising for the 2015 edition, which will be held in Antwerp from 7 to 9 September 2015. Over 1,000 experts and persons with high responsibility in the waste sector from all over the world will be coming to Antwerp for the conference titled 'Let's make the most of our resources and waste, it will be organised by the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA).

The ISWA conference is known as the top annual event of the waste management sector worldwide. It is a perfect opportunity to highlight the know-how and strengths of Flanders with regard to waste and materials management.

**For more information:
www.iswa2015.org**



Cities and regions learn from each other in a European project

For three years, OVAM has worked together with twelve European cities and regions in the European Interreg IVC project 'Regions for Recycling'. The objective: to learn from each other how we can recycle more household waste. The result: an efficient online instrument that allows cities and regions to compare and improve their performance.

By 2020, 50 percent of household waste in Europe must be recycled. Regional and local authorities play a key role in achieving this target. That is why seven European regions, five cities and one international organisation have joined forces in the European Interreg IVC project 'Regions for Recycling' (R4R). From 2012 to 2014 they exchanged data on waste policy and shared good practices.

Statistics under examination

In Europe, Flanders is the leader in the separate collection of household waste. This experience and expertise has not escaped the notice of other European regions. That is why they asked OVAM to lead the technical aspect of the project.

OVAM developed a common methodology and an online tool to report waste data in a uniform way. This enables European countries, regions and municipalities to better compare their statistics for household waste between them.

Exploring

But that is not all! Via the tool, municipalities and regions can also explore forty examples of good practices in the area of separate collection and recycling. For example, OVAM contributed the PMD collection, the Flemish landfill and incineration policy and the application of the principle that 'the polluter pays' as examples of good practice.

Today, regions and cities from all over Europe can learn from each other through the R4R tool in order to further increase their share of recycled household waste and similar industrial waste.

For more information:
www.regions4recycling.eu

Regions for Recycling (R4R)

R4R fits into the INTERREG IVC programme, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Project partners: Flanders, Ile-de-France (France), Odense (Denmark), Limerick (Ireland), Styria (Austria), Catalonia (Spain), Ilfov (Romania), Exfini Poli (an association of 30 communities spread throughout Greece), Lisbon (Portugal), Tallinn (Estonia), Sofia (Bulgaria), Zagreb (Croatia) and the Association of Cities and Regions for Recycling and Sustainable Resource Management (ACR+)

Period: 2012-2014

Budget (of OVAM): 313,840 euros, 75% of which is financed by ERDF





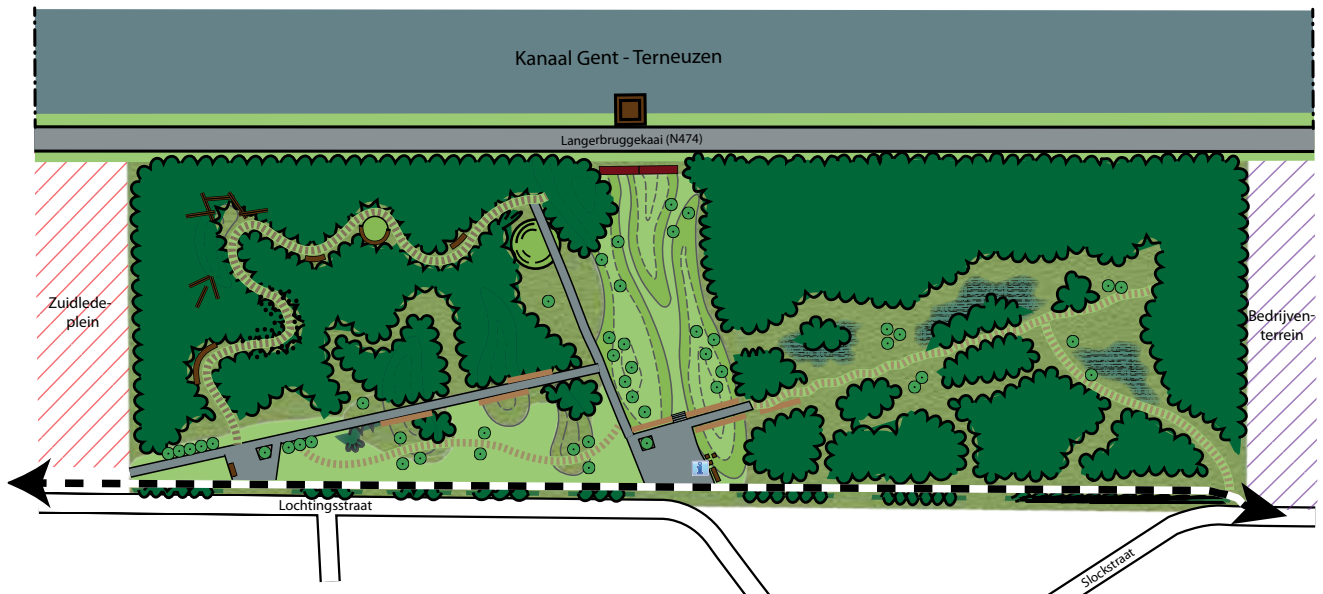
Residents of the Ghent canal area think along in remediation and redevelopment process

Until recently, nobody knew that the deserted and overgrown industrial site on Langerbruggekaai between Ghent and Evergem was heavily contaminated. Many residents of the area regularly went for walks or took their dogs out there. This will soon be possible again. In 2014, OVAM remediated the site. In consultation with the residents of the area and the Flemish Land Agency (VLM) it adapted the works to the future use: a lively neighbourhood park with an adventurous play forest and a cycle path through the green.

From the beginning of the last century, there had been heavy industry on the site on Langerbruggekaai. The impact is still noticeable today. OVAM has found heavy metals, mineral oil and asbestos in the soil. In the autumn of 2014,

OVAM started the remediation. This was preceded by extensive consultations with the residents of the area and the Flemish Land Agency (VLM), who will be redeveloping the site.

OVAM and VLM started by setting up meetings with residents to explain the plans. Residents were able to share their objections and remarks. For instance, some people asked for the hill between Zuidledeplein and the future



Pleasant living right next to the Port of Ghent

The site on Langerbruggekaai is part of the Ghent canal villages. These are located right in the middle of the Port of Ghent. In 2005, the Flemish Government defined the perimeter of the Port area. This provided the inhabitants of the Ghent canal villages with the certainty that their village would continue to exist. And

what is more, the intention was for the residential areas to remain a pleasant place to live. To this end, the Flemish Government marked out 'link areas': green areas that separate the canal villages from the activities in the port. This can be pastureland, but also a nature area or a park. In these buffer zones there is room for playing

and recreation: a petanque field, an adventurous play forest... Quiet roads cross the area and safely take residents to their workplace in the port. The site on Langerbruggekaai was labelled as a 'buffer zone'. The Flemish Land Agency (VLM) is now going to redevelop it.

neighbourhood park to be maintained, as this offers them privacy. Following this request, VLM modified the plans: after the contaminated hill had been excavated, it was rebuilt with clean soil.

Concerns

OVAM and VLM were present at a neighbourhood festival for the Ghent canal neighbourhoods, to which the area around Langerbruggekaai belongs. During the event residents were able to share all their questions and concerns

about the remediation and the new use the site will soon be given.

The residents personally handed a memorandum to the Mayor of Ghent, Daniël Termont. In this memorandum, they stated all their concerns and demands about their neighbourhood: a new play area, more safe cycle paths, more green areas, etc. The project on Langerbruggekaai is now answering those concerns.

In the spring of 2016, VLM will be starting the redevelopment of

the site. Near the houses, there will be a park with a picnic area and natural play equipment. On the other side, near the adjacent industrial area, nature can have its way. The old railway bed that runs along the site will become a cycle path through the green. This will connect to the new long-distance cycle path through the canal area.

Sustainable use of space and materials

aims to give Limburg a boost

Since the closure of Ford Genk, the economy of the province of Limburg is struggling. That is why the Flemish Government has developed an action plan to attract investors. Via the Flemish Materials Programme, OVAM supports the project and helps the Genk area evolve towards a circular economy and a sustainable use of the available space. This switchover is intended to give the region a boost.

Limburg has been under pressure for some time. The closure of Ford Genk has increased the problem of unemployment even further, and only few new companies are being created. That is why the Flemish Government has created the investment programme SALK, which (in Dutch) is short for 'Strategic Action Plan Limburg Squared'. The aim of this plan is to reinforce the economy and create more sustainable jobs.

OVAM does its bit

SALK also has a spatial component, the Territorial Development Programme (T.OP) Limburg. The T.OP is intended to ensure that optimal use is made of the available space. The final goal is a new, sustainable economy in a Limburg that is a pleasant place to live, work and relax. This ambition has been called – with a wink to the region's mining past – RE-MINE. Within RE-MINE different

partners and experts are working on three main strategies to get Limburg back on track: the promotion of walking and cycling tourism, the urban network as a motor of a social dynamic, and the evolution towards a sustainable, multi-productive economy. In the area around Genk OVAM is using its expertise to create a circular (or recycling) economy. The main goals: to reuse more raw materials, to create more employment, to make better use



Who participates?

The exploratory study 'Potentieel Circulaire Economie in de Genkse Regio' ('Potential of the Circular Economy in the Genk area') is a joint project of OVAM, Ruimte Vlaanderen (Spatial Development Department Flanders), Enterprise Flanders, UHasselt, cities and municipalities in the Genk area, the Province of Limburg and NV De Scheepvaart. Companies established in the area and companies which are already applying the circular economy principles are also involved in the study.

The project partners are studying what spatial and other conditions need to be fulfilled in order to stimulate the circular economy in Genk and encourage investments. Concretely, three cases are being developed at different spatial scales, which can later serve as examples. In May 2015, the first results are expected.

of the available space, and to have companies work together in new ways.

The city plays a central part

In 2014, OVAM took part in an exploratory study aimed at mapping the potential of the circular economy in the Genk area (see box on previous page). The use of space plays an important role in this: how can we find a balance between living and working? And how can we reactivate underused sites? Cities and large urban areas become the driving force behind the new economy, which is why spatial and economic development must be well coordinated. An economy based on exchange and cooperation requires a completely different use of residential and industrial land than a traditional linear economy.

In 2015, the exploratory study is reaching a concrete phase. The project partners will be looking for opportunities among business managers who are already active in Limburg and among foreign companies which fit into the concept of a circular economy. In doing so, they want to map the spatial and other expectations of companies that want to invest in Genk. The final objective is to better close the cycles of materials, energy and knowledge in the area. This way, Genk will become a hub of recycling activities and a lever for economic development.



Steel factory APERAM becomes recycling hub

Steel producer APERAM is a world player in stainless steel. Ten years ago, its Genk establishment was much criticised because it caused a lot of noise nuisance, waste and fine dust. Today, the factory has evolved into a sustainable company that supports the circular economy. The steel company recycles metal waste from scrap metal companies. The scrap metal is melted, refined and cast into steel slabs. These slabs go to Charleroi to be hot rolled. The hot rolled steel then goes back to Genk to be cold rolled, cut and sold. The transport between Genk and Charleroi, but also to end customers, takes place by different means: road, but also inland shipping and rail. After the production, companies such as Recmix process the residual waste of APERAM (mainly furnace slag) into new raw materials for the construction sector and the asphalt and concrete industry. The dust from the steel factory and the cold rolling plant is recycled as a raw material for the steel factory.

Flanders wants to get rid of asbestos faster

Over 3.7 million tonnes: this is the estimated amount of asbestos that is still in circulation in Flanders. The hazardous fibres are present in construction materials, flower pots, sewage pipes, etc. Without measures it may take until 2070 to eliminate all remnants. That is why the Flemish Government has opted for an accelerated elimination policy. In the coming years, OVAM will coordinate and partly finance the removal of asbestos. Schools and other vulnerable places will be given preference. By 2040 all of Flanders should be asbestos-proof.

Breathing in asbestos fibres is harmful to our health. They cause lung cancer or asbestosis (a disease that affects the lung tissue). This is why the production of asbestos-containing materials has been prohibited in Flanders since 1998. But this does not mean that all asbestos has disappeared. Many older buildings still have construction, roofing or insulation materials that contain asbestos. As long as the products used are not broken and the house is not renovated, the hazardous material stays where it is.

Hazardous to health

Asbestos products are divided into 'non-friable' and 'friable' asbestos. Friable asbestos, which is found, for instance, in asbestos insulation around heating pipes, is the most dangerous variety. The fibres are not firmly attached to the carrier material and easily come loose. Non-friable asbestos, which is firmly attached to e.g. sewer pipes or corrugated sheets, is safe as long as the material is intact. As soon as the materials crumble, erode or are removed unprofessionally, there is a risk to health. Without active measures OVAM estimates that it will take until 2070 before all asbestos-containing products are eliminated via renovation and demolition works. That is why the Flemish Government is launching an accelerated elimination policy. Depending on the needs and the (financial) strength of a target group OVAM will either support the removal of asbestos or take care of the entire process. Priority target groups, such as schools and sports facilities, come first. The asbestos that is removed will be taken to landfills. By 2040, all of Flanders should be asbestos-proof.

Advantages of fast removal

- Lower health costs
- Lower remediation costs for soil and sediment
- Lower cost of demolition and recycling of buildings
- Asbestos material is less damaged -> safer
- More employment
- More innovation in dismantling and treatment technology

Estimated amount of asbestos in Flemish buildings



Schools

15,000 tonnes



Houses and flats

910,000 tonnes



Agriculture and horticulture

245,000 tonnes



Companies

724,000 tonnes



Public buildings

6,000 tonnes



Utility pipes (under the ground)

1.8 million tonnes

TOTAL

3.7 million tonnes

Fight against litter requires new approach

Teenagers who throw away coke cans, tourists who leave picnic waste behind, fishing boats that throw broken nets overboard... Litter exists in many forms, but there is increasing awareness that they are all linked to each other. A discarded crisp bag can contaminate our environment kilometres away. That is why OVAM, the 'Indevuilbak' ('In-the-bin') campaign and the Flemish Government are aiming for an integrated approach of litter. This way all actions are grouped into one project.

The 5 pillars of the anti-litter policy

The Flemish anti-litter policy has five important pillars:

1

Communication and awareness-raising: effective campaigns to remind people that litter belongs in the bin.

2

Infrastructure: bins in the right places (along walking routes, not in a corner of a playground), cleaning up sufficiently, etc.

3

Enforcement: control by police and city guards, fines or cleaning-up penalties, social control by family, friends, colleagues, etc.

4

Participation: involving residents and other partners in the setting up of a policy aimed at keeping public spaces clean. This can be done, for instance, by means of a sponsoring system, hotels and catering businesses providing ashtrays, etc.

5

Surroundings: in clean surroundings, without derelict or vacant sites, people leave less waste.

Nuisance caused by littering is approached in an integral way, with sufficient consultation between all parties involved. The 'Cleanliness Network' of 'Indevuilbak', which helps local administrations deal with litter in the best possible way, plays an important role in this.



How efficient are inspections and fines?

Are fines and inspections (or social control) a good way to tackle littering? This is what the Flemish Government wants to test during the coming years. The emphasis in the policy on littering is no longer only on communication, but also on enforcement. The reason for this: over the past years, it was found that the major campaigns did appeal to people, but did not lead to a change in behaviour. A survey among the general public showed that many people are in favour of increasing penalties to tackle littering.

Focus on social control

In practice, enforcement is complicated. Inspections are expensive and time-consuming, and fines for throwing away an empty drink can or crisp bag generate negative reactions. It is cheaper and less controversial to increase social control. This 'soft' interpretation of enforcement could involve, for instance, the visible presence of city guards, encouraging social control within families and circles of friends, having cleaning personnel and volunteers clean up in a highly visible way, etc. Municipal administrative fines are also an option. These do not necessarily have to be monetary fines: an obligation to clean up litter for a few hours is also a possibility. Another option, which is being considered at the Flemish level, is to introduce short periods during which there are strict controls of littering, in analogy with the 'BOB' campaigns (against drunk driving) and the 'flashing marathons' (against speeding). These actions reduce the sense of impunity and increase support for the battle against litter. In the province of West Flanders, such an enforcement week is already being prepared.



Waste at sea requires a solution on the shore

80 percent of marine waste comes from the mainland. Fish choke on litter that was carried for miles by rivers. The fish and shellfish we eat contain microplastics, which are not only the result of the photodegradation of macroplastics, but also of toothpaste, scrubs and shampoos we have drained away with our waste water. The waste in the sea is a problem that affects us all. That is why fifteen European countries are joining forces to take on marine pollution.

Pioneering role of OVAM

Belgium takes part in the Regional Action Plan (RAP) Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic, which was approved in 2014. The plan comprises thirty measures aimed at preventing waste at sea and tackling littering. OVAM has been appointed as leader for five issues, because Flanders is already playing a pioneering role internationally when it comes to marine litter. Among other things, the focus is on a harmonised approach to shipping waste and the elimination of microplastics. OVAM will further develop the measures adopted in the RAP and complete them with specific directives and recommendations. For instance, there will be local measures to improve the collection of floating litter on waterways and in ports. There will also be negotiations with the cosmetics industry about the replacement of microplastics with less contaminating materials, and extra measures will be implemented for fishing and shipping waste.

Can a deposit system reduce littering?

Less litter in the streets and more recycling of PMD waste: that sounds great. The introduction of a deposit system for cans and plastic bottles could achieve this. Only: would it really work? That is what OVAM and the Flemish Government want to find out by means of an extensive impact analysis. The study focuses on all single-use drink packaging: plastic, glass, cans and drink cartons.

What and how much?

In a first phase the practical aspects of a possible introduction of a deposit system are described. What packaging will be collected? How high should the amount be? Then the expected impact of the different scenarios at the ecological, economic and social level will be studied. The analyses should be ready by the end of May 2015. Only then will it be decided whether a concrete proposal for a deposit system will be prepared, including financing and measures to counter possible negative side effects.



Cleanliness Index exposes problem locations

Whether an environment is 'dirty' is something people may have different opinions about. People also attach greater importance to the cleanliness of their own neighbourhood or of the playground around the corner. In other words, to a certain extent, cleanliness is a subjective concept. With the Cleanliness Index OVAM, Fost Plus and VVSG (the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities) want to define this subjective perception. The Cleanliness Index is based on random checks in forty municipalities, complemented with measurements in motorway car parks. The result: objective 'cleanliness figures' for all of Flanders.

Anonymous places

The first Cleanliness Index in 2013 already revealed that there is a substantial difference in cleanliness between the various environment types. This difference continues to exist in 2014. Residential areas and public areas for sports, recreation and tourism obtain good scores, around 90 out of 100. Littering mainly occurs around glass and textile waste containers, in car parks along motorways, at stations and at bus and tram stops. These are all anonymous places for which nobody really feels responsible. At the same time, they are places where many people can see the littering. As a result, Flanders appears to be dirtier than it actually is. That is why these problem locations are given priority in the fight against litter. In the meantime more than one hundred municipalities are using the measurements of the cleanliness barometer to define their cleanliness policy.

FACTS & FIGURES



Staff



men
134



women
234



diversity
6.24%



Waste



total household waste
3,200,000 tonnes



total industrial waste
14,800,000 tonnes



Budget

Budget 2014

Revenue

Surplus	6,181,424.32
Own income (e.g. soil certificates)	13,219,500.77
Income transfers from companies (e.g. UMICORE)	1,858,958.40
Income transfers from EU institutions	175,573.61
Income transfers within the public sector (operational subsidy and MINA subsidies)	29,028,209.41
Capital transfers within the public sector (investment subsidies and MINA subsidies)	26,289,701.91
Withdrawal from the Soil Protection Fund	27,588,478.33
Total	104,341,846.75

Management of MINA fund

VLABOTEX	627,835.34
Subsidies for animal waste	8,173,329.21
Subsidies to accredited recycling centres	898,000.00
Income transfer to local administrations (prevention and separate collection)	223,930.00
Subsidies to local administrations (prevention, separate collection and installations)	5,574,176.00
Income transfers to NPOs (Plan C)	150,000.00
Total	15,647,270.55



household waste per inhabitant
503 kg



residual waste per inhabitant
148 kg



separately collected waste per inhabitant
355 kg

Expenditure

Surplus	5,481,291.58
Staff	23,909,068.44
Available budget	6,628,302.70
Research	2,425,010.76
Communication	1,104,099.39
Remediations	32,414,784.35
Operational subsidies VLACO, IVC and Summa	1,375,309.77
Damage payments	1,101,835.76
Contribution to the Soil Protection Fund	29,902,144.00
Total	104,341,846.75

Number of soil certificates delivered **236,076**

Number of raw material certificates delivered **162**

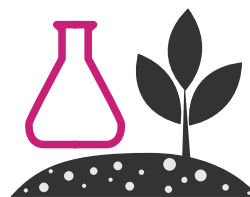
Number of cases in which advice on an environmental licence was issued **619**

Number of decisions taken with respect to notifications of cross-border transport of waste **1,350**

Number of notifications of cross-border transport of waste processed **198,975**



Soil



There are (approximately) **85,000** high-risk plots



42% of those high-risk plots have already been surveyed



16% of these require remediation



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