

## River basin management plan for the River Scheldt in Flanders

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### Introduction

The Water Framework Directive divides the European rivers in river basin districts. Flanders is involved in two river basin districts namely for the river Meuse and for the river Scheldt. The groundwater and the large surface water systems are taken up in the river basin management plan (RBMP). The river basin district of the Scheldt is almost 36500 km<sup>2</sup> of which one third is laying in Flanders. A brief overview about the RBMP for the Scheldt will be given here containing the measures to obtain good water conditions as enforced by the Water Framework Directive.

### How does it work?

The surface water and the groundwater in the Scheldt basin are split up into water bodies in function of specific categories. The surface water bodies are classified in terms of natural or artificial bodies, a distinction which is very important in view of the goals to be achieved. The groundwater is divided into 6 groundwater systems depending on the depth of the water layers. After summing up all the standards that have to be met for good water conditions, each sector that has an influence on the quality is analyzed and ranked.

Analyses showed that with only the basic measures the good water conditions won't be obtained in 2015. Therefore, a list of additional measures is made which is divided into 8 groups so that the environmental conditions will be obtained.

Before carrying out a measure, a cost/benefit analysis is done to see which way is the best possible one to follow. Also the influences on the involved sectors are being investigated. The follow-up is done by analyzing the water at different points in the water district.

### Results

The network of measurements created by the Flemish environmental agency makes it possible to evaluate the effect of measures e.g. manure decree, on the quality of the surface water (since 1999) and the groundwater (since 2004). For the surface water quality a decline is noticed in the percentage of measurements points that were above the limit of 50 mg NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>/l : from 59% in 1999 to 37% in 2008. The biggest improvement was found in the upper and lower Scheldt. The measurements of the groundwater indicate very little changes in the quality of the groundwater.

### References

All information is obtained out of documents created by the Flemish environmental agency and the co-ordination commission integral water policy.