

# Belgium

## Planning, design and management of green-blue spaces



**TYPE OF TOOL**  
*Methodology/  
Guidelines/  
Requirements*



**MAIN SECTORS**  
*Spatial planning*



**THEME**  
*Green*



**INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE PILLARS**  
*Long-term strategic vision;  
Transparent, systematic and effective  
stakeholder participation*

### In a nutshell



**OBJECTIVE:** Flanders has developed a handbook for planning, design and management of green-blue spaces as building blocks of healthy and resilient living environments.



**Agency in charge**  
**Department of Environment and Spatial Development Flanders; Flemish Agency for Care and Health**



**Year of implementation**  
**2022**



**Levels of government**  
**Sub-national**



**Current status**  
**Fully operational**

### Overview

The contribution of green and blue spaces both towards climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as health promotion is increasingly recognised. In Flanders, the Spatial Policy Plan includes health as one of the 10 core qualities for a high-quality design and optimal management of the environment. Similarly, planning green and blue spaces as part of health promotion and disease prevention is widely recognised in the health sector. In 2022, Flanders developed a handbook for spatial planning, design and management, focusing on green-blue spaces as building blocks of healthy and resilient environments. The handbook provides scientific and practical insights on how the region can realise health gains and reduce health risks by deploying quality green and blue spaces in and near living environments, both urban and rural. It is based on research combining knowledge, insights and expertise from several scientific and professional disciplines. The research entails definition of a typology of green and blue spaces, and extensive literature review of the health impacts of the defined types, components and characteristics of green spaces. The profound knowledge base and insights gained were then translated into a handbook containing ambitions, interventions and guidelines for spatial policy, design and management targeting spatial, health and nature professionals. The handbook presents an overview of the main research insights, an analytical framework connecting green and blue spaces with cognitive, mental, physical and social health promotion, and both general guidelines and concrete examples for strategic interventions. It also presents a case study on the application of the guidelines proposed in Borsbeek, a municipality in the fringe of Antwerp, in close cooperation with local stakeholders, local government administration and politicians, which resulted in mapping of opportunities for improvements better tailored to professionals putting the knowledge into practice.

#### REFERENCES:

- Agentschap Zorg en Gezondheid/Departement Omgeving (2022), *Groenblauwe ruimtes als bouwsteen van gezonde en veerkrachtige leefomgevingen: Handboek voor planning, inrichting en beheer*, <https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/groenblauwe-ruimtes-als-bouwsteen-van-gezonde-en-veerkrachtige-leefomgevingen-handboek-voor-planning-inrichting-en-beheer>.
- Vervoort, P. et al. (2022), *Health promoting and climate proof green and blue spaces in Flanders (Belgium): Developing a manual for spatial planning, design and management*, 58th ISOCARP World Planning Congress, Brussels.