

Belgium

Nature Value Explorer



TYPE OF TOOL
*Methodology/
Guidelines/
Requirements*



MAIN SECTORS
Spatial planning



THEME
Green



INFRASTRUCTURE GOVERNANCE PILLARS
Evidence-informed decision making

In a nutshell



OBJECTIVE: The Nature Value Explorer focuses on pragmatic methods that value ecosystem services and helps planners, land managers and policymakers to assess nature's socio-economic importance and measure the impact of development plans.



Agency in charge
Agency of Nature and Forests, Government of Flanders



Year of implementation
2011



Levels of government
Sub-national



Current status
Fully operational

Overview

In order to protect natural assets, it is important that countries value the services from these assets. Ignoring the value of these services may lead to overexploitation of natural assets and ecosystems or unbalanced policy and investment decisions. The Nature Value Explorer is an online tool that allows managers, urban planners, landscape developers and governments the possibility of exploring the socio-economic importance of green-blue space, including forests and agricultural land. The tool was developed for and funded by the Government of Flanders, joined by the Government of Wallonia in 2021 to deliver input data for the Wallonia region. The tool scores, quantifies and where possible monetises the effects of a proposed project on the provision of ecosystem goods and services, such as wood production, cooling, water infiltration, air and water purification and benefits for health, recreation and the living environment. The results show the impact of changes in land use, the added value of nature-based solutions, the benefits of management measures or the benefits of green development projects or ecosystems for society. It provides values that can be used in decision making tools such as environmental impact assessment, cost-effectiveness analysis or cost-benefit analysis. End-users of the tool are able to create and save scenarios, share scenarios with other registered users and consult public scenarios. Additionally, the Nature Value Explorer Manual provides an insight on the methodologies used in the tool. It discusses qualitative, quantitative and monetary valuation methods for a range of ecosystem services. For each ecosystem service, the guidance discusses the data requirements, the assumptions made, input data used, and finally illustrates the methods with an example.

REFERENCES:

- Nature Value Explorer, <https://natuurwaardeverkenner.be/>