



2016

Kick-Off conference report



BNIP team
Brussels
18-7-2016





Introduction

The LIFE Nature programme of the European Commission is used to boost the Natura 2000 network in Europe. An “Integrated Project” (IP) is a new type of project under the new LIFE Regulation 2014-2020. This type of project aims to support the implementation of national or regional strategies or action plans required by European legislation in relation to Natura 2000, water, waste, air, climate change mitigation and adaptation. With the first call for IPs in 2014 the Agency for Nature & Forests submitted a project proposal for the Natura 2000 strategy together with the Walloon and the Federal administrations. In December 2015 this new project type was started in Belgium with the LIFE Belgian Nature Integrated Project, as one of the six first IP projects in the EU.

The project was introduced by a kick-off conference on the 4th of July. This report summarizes the events of that day.

All the powerpoints of the speakers can be downloaded at the life-bnip.be website.

The kick-off event and report were established with the contribution of the LIFE programme of the European Union.



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1 Summary

The LIFE Belgian Nature Integrated Project or LIFE BNIP held its official kick-off conference on the 4th of July 2016. During the morning session the LIFE BNIP project was introduced and an overall presentation of the regional implementation was given by the regional partners. In the afternoon several testimonials were given by different sectors about their experience with LIFE projects and Natura 2000. The sectors involved are landowners and foresters, industries, farmers, nature organizations and local administrations. Each sector was represented by a Flemish and Walloon guest speaker. This way participants could have a glance across the regional borders, learn about examples of LIFE projects in the other regions or liaise with other sectors contributing to the Belgian biodiversity. During this session there were interesting contributions from participants with some ideas and advises for cooperation with private companies, landowners and local administrations that will be taken into account during the implementation of the LIFE BNIP project. In his conclusions, the representative of the European Commission emphasized the importance of cooperation to integrate the nature conservation objectives into other policies. This cooperation is also important to provide a long-term financing framework. Regarding the enthusiastic response concerning this new project type, we can say that the LIFE BNIP made a good start!

2 The programme

2.1 Morning sessions: Presenting the BNIP project and the regional implementation

During these sessions an introduction to the LIFE BNIP project was given by the project coordinator and the regional implementation was highlighted by the regional partners.

More information about the LIFE BNIP project and the regional implementation can be found in the informative note or on the life-bnip.be website.

2.2 Afternoon sessions: Natura 2000 testimonies

Different sectors shared their project or examples of the implementation of Natura 2000 with the audience. The aim is to take a look across the different regions and learn how the implementation is realized in Flanders and Wallonia. The sectors that were represented are landowners and foresters, industry, farmers, nature organizations and local administrations.

2.2.1 Landowners and foresters

2.2.1.1 Claude de Villenfagne – Flanders – LIFE+ Project 3watEr

Claude de Villenfagne is the vice-president of the NGO Development Pond area Mid-Limburg (“Ontwikkeling Vijvergebied Midden-Limburg” OVML) which consists of a group of landowners and -users. The LIFE+ Project 3watEr focused on the ecological improvement of the pond area at Mid-Limburg, by working together with private and public partners. This private-public collaboration based on the triple-E approach (Ecology, Economy, Education) is what made this project unique. The project received the European Natura 2000 award in 2014 and is thus a model for other Natura 2000 sites that include private lands. Continuation of the collaboration on the long term was confirmed by the undersigning of the after-LIFE agreement by the project partners.



2.2.1.2 Claude de Montpellier – Wallonia – Landowners in Natura 2000 in Wallonia (NTF)

Claude de Montpellier is a forest owner and farmer, a forestry engineer on an expert level and member of the Dinant Conservation Commission as well as the President of the Hunting Board. NTF is the association that represents and defends the moral and material interests of the owners of rural property - forests and agricultural land - in Wallonia.

His presentation focused on the positive aspects of the implementation of Natura 2000 and the desired points of improvement when involving private landowners. Positive points are that there is a certain recognition of past management of private land lying in Natura 2000, there is technical and financial support through a collaboration between the administration and the actors of Natura 2000 brought together in the 'Natura 2000 Forum'. He also addresses some perceived bottlenecks. There could be more efficient and coherent information on Natura 2000 designation and on the requirements of the implementation and that the economic and humane dimension should be taken into account at all levels as Natura 2000 offers a combination between biodiversity and human activities.

2.2.2 Industry

2.2.2.1 Mark Stulens – Flanders – SIBELCO

Mark Stulens is the CEO of SIBELCO, a company that extracts and refines various types of sand and minerals in the Benelux. He showed us that industry and nature can find common grounds. The SIBELCO quarries in Maasmechelen are a good example that biodiversity can be enhanced by the ecological re-development of used quarries. Actions are supported by the establishment of a community platform, setting management criteria and management plans in cooperation with ANB. In addition, an open communication is carried out regarding the key issues to be tackled, the actions taken and also the achieved results. Lessons learned include to look for common interests and to create opportunities to combine mining and nature development.

2.2.2.2 Patrick Jobé – Wallonia – SPADEL

Patrick Jobé is manager of the group environment, water and carbon of SPADEL. SPADEL is leader in the Benelux concerning the production and marketing of mineral water and refreshing drinks. SPADEL belongs to the European top 10 sustainable companies and has a green flag by paying attention to the carbon and water footprint. They also focus on sustainable water management and biodiversity, natural products and responsible sourcing. Pilot actions helped to develop this integrated approach, such as Bee spa, LIFE Ardenne Liégeoise, Modus vivendi and Parc naturel des Sources.

2.2.3 Farmers

2.2.3.1 Davy Noelmans – Flanders – Flemish Land Agency (VLM)

Davy Noelmans is a project coordinator of the Flemish Land Agency (VLM), the government agency responsible for managing open space. VLM helps to shape the rural policy in Flanders, and guides farmers in realizing the objectives of the manure policy. Davy Noelmans showed the initiated farming – nature connection in the Valley of the Zwarte beek and the protection of meadow birds. This is an example of the cooperation with and between farmers for development and management of pools with the financial support of agri-environment contracts under the rural development fund.



2.2.3.2 *Leo Van Santfoort – Wallonia – Grazing in the Viroin valley*

Leo Van Santfoort presented the LIFE project Haute Meuse, which targets the restoration and sustainable management of upper Meuse dry limestone grasslands rich in orchids. Sheeps are used for the management of these landscapes by grazing. Next to the expected benefits in terms of dry grassland species and habitats, the project also improved the natural image of the area and enhanced the local identity, reintroduced traditional farming and pastoral methods and developed local partnerships.

2.2.4 Local administrations

2.2.4.1 *Ronny Van Hoof – Flanders – Lommel*

Ronny Van Hoof illustrated how to build bridges between nature and economy through 4 projects.

- [“Bosland”](#) realizes in a sustainable and socially integrated manner the greatest child friendliest forest of Flanders as a lever for local area development.
- [“LIFE+ Together”](#) stands for “To Get Heath restored”. This project aims to restore heath landscapes in the Lommelse Sahara - Riebosserheide - Blekerheide. This in an area with great fragmentation between coniferous woods and agricultural areas.
- [“Lommelse Ondernemersclub \(LOC\) the butterfly”](#) shows how nature and business parks can be combined, in which the butterflies benefit from the measures taken.
- [“Interreg 2BConnect”](#) focuses on the development of green infrastructure as an important asset to maintain and improve ecosystems and ecosystem services in the border regions of Flanders and the Netherlands. Cooperation of companies is essential to reach the goals of biodiversity. 2BConnect supports those companies opting to integrate biodiversity concerns into their business work.

2.2.4.2 *Josette Fauconnier – Wallonia – La montagne du Deister*

Josette Fauconnier was an eco-consultant and is now working for the municipality of La Roche-en-Ardenne. She has been working on the project ‘la montagne du Deister’ since September. The project’s focus is the restoration of south-facing calcareous grassland and the restoration of terraces of dry stone with both ecological and patrimonial goals. Some deforestation was necessary, but thanks to the good cooperation and communication there was very little critique but instead lots of interest of the public.

2.2.5 Nature organizations

2.2.5.1 *David Beyen – Flanders – Limburgs landschap*

David Beyen is senior planning officer at the NGO Limburgs Landschap. The project ‘Grindproject Randzones van de Maas’ for gravel extraction and nature development along the Meuse, which started in 2016, focuses on the realization of Natura 2000 habitats along the border river Meuse between the Belgian province of Limburg and the Dutch province of Limburg. Nature organizations at both sides of the border are working together with extraction companies and local administrations for the management of relatively large contiguous areas. The goal is to realize cross-border coordination and harmonization concerning legislation, designation of Natura 2000 and connectivity, water management policy and control of recreational pressure.



2.2.5.2 Willy Delvingt – Wallonia – Ardenne et Gaume

Willy Delvingt is professor at the Faculty of agronomy at Gembloux and shared the experiences of Ardenne et Gaume, a Walloon nature conservation association, for two LIFE projects. The first project aimed to restore and install a sustainable management of dry grasslands at the high Meuse region. The second project focused on the restoration and management of limestone habitats in the region of the Lesse and the Lomme river. Ardenne et Gaume is also involved in the After LIFE of five projects.

- [LIFE-Nature "Pelouses sèches de haute Meuse"](#)
- [LIFE "Restauration d'habitats dans les camps militaires en Wallonie"](#)
- [LIFE "Restauration des habitats de la Loutre Européenne"](#)
- [LIFE "Restauration et gestion des milieux calcaires en Lesse et Lomme"](#)
- [LIFE "Restauration des tourbières sur le plateau de Saint-Hubert"](#)

2.3 Questions from the visitors

1) *How will there be cross-pollination between the regions of LIFE BNIP?*

There will be interaction between the regions by the means of workshops, the project steering committee, consultation and coordination meetings. The objective is to set-up a formal structure that also continues after the LIFE project. This will be addressed in the After-LIFE plan.

2) *After LIFE: how will this be addressed during the LIFE BNIP project?*

This is an important question, which has to be viewed in a broad context. There were 20 years of traditional projects, which each delivered a success story. But besides the investments and increased agricultural funds there was still a decline of the environment. The main reason for this is that there is still too often worked in isolation for a specific site, there is a need for a more integrated approach on a wider scale. This is the reason why the EU created the Integrated Project type. The LIFE BNIP is a pioneer project. Europe hopes that this new project type will strengthen the capacity and actions by stimulating a new dynamic for integrated planning, cooperation and peer to peer learning to enhance a wider impact.

2.4 Take home messages

- The core of a project are the team members: positive focus and long term vision are important
- The methodology and financing for the After LIFE program is insufficient at this moment
- Good cooperation with stakeholders is key, this can be achieved by looking for common interests, by creating trust and eliminating prejudices
- Communication at the beginning and during the progress of the project can minimize critique of the public and create interest
- By communicating the results of a project, awareness is created and other parties can get interested and motivated, thus creating a domino effect
- The combination of economics and human aspects with nature objectives have to be considered



- Natura 2000 can offer a combination between biodiversity and socio-economic values such as recreation and enjoying natural environment
- Industry and nature don't have to be opposites, common grounds can be found
- Good projects take time and perseverance
- Cooperation can be strengthened through a joint approach creating win-wins
- Any opportunity to tackle problems and enhance partnerships should be taken

3 Annexes

3.1 Programme LIFE BNIP

When	What
9:30 – 10:00	Welcome with coffee and tea
10:00 – 10:10	Introduction (Els Martens) Opening by Ms. Marleen Evenepoel, AG Agency for Nature and Forest
10:10 -10:30	Presenting the LIFE IP project (LIFE IP team)
10:30 – 11:00	The Flemish implementation (Thomas Defoort)
11:00 – 11:30	The Walloon implementation (Tomy Tchatchou & Luc Derochette)
11:30 -12:00:	The Marine implementation (Mieke Degloire)
12:00 – 13:30:	Lunch and networking (poster session)
13:30 – 14:00	Testimony 1: Landowners and Foresters: Mr Claude de Villenfagne (Flanders) + Mr Claude de Montpellier (Wallonia)
14:00 – 14:30	Testimony 2: Farmers: Mr Leo Van Santfoort (Wallonia) + Mr. Robert Geudens /Mr. Davy Noelmans (Flanders farmer and VLM agri-consultant)
14:30 – 15:00	Testimony 3: Industry: Mr. Mark Stulens (Sibelco, Flanders) + Mr Patrick Jobé (Spadel, Wallonia)
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 16:00	Testimony 4: Nature organisations: Mr David Beyen (Limburgs Landschap, Flanders) + Mr. Willy Delvingt (Ardenne et Gaume, Wallonia)
16:00 - 16:30	Testimony 5: Local administrations: Mr. Ronny Vanhoof (Lommel,



	Flanders) + Ms. Josette Fauconnier (La montage du Deister, Wallonia)
16:30-16:40	Take home message from Mr. François Ghysel (representative of the Minister of Nature Mr René Collin)
16:40-16:50	A thank you to our speakers (Els Martens)
16:50-17:30	Closing drink

3.2 Some impressions of the Kick-Off conference





3.3 Participants list

Last name	First name	Organization
ALOFS	Goerges	HVV- Limburgse jagersvereniging
ALVARO	Perez	SPW - Contrôles Feaga & Feader
Andries	Tom	Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos
Bedoret	Hubert	Natagriwal asbl
Bertieaux	Pierre-François	Ardenne et Gaume
Beyen	David	Limburgs Landschap vzw
Blervacq	Cathy	Sibelco Europe
Budniok	Marie-Alice	European Landowners Organization - ELO asbl
Canturk	Serkan	Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos
Chalmet	Ingrid	Agentschap voor natuur en bos
Christis	Erwin	Regionaal Landschap Kempen en Maasland
Clucas	Deena	Gwynne AG
Cooleman	Stijn	Natuurpunt
COOLENS	Guy	Bosgroep Limburgse Duinen
COOS	William	ULg
Corrado	Alessandro	Regione Lombardia
Daise	Julien	CESW - CCN2000
de Groot	Maurits	Aanspreekpunt Privaat Beheer - Natuur en Bos vzw
de Maere d'Aertrycke	Benoit	Koepel van de Vlaamse Bosgroepen
De Meyer	Erwin	ANB
de Montpellier	Claude	NTF
De Stoppeleire	Lieven	Algemeen Boerensyndicaat
de Vault de Champion	Manuela	Bruxelles environnement
de Villenfagne	CLAUDE	OVML
Defoort	Thomas	Agentschap Natuur & Bos
Degloire	Mieke	FPS Health, Food chain safety and Environment
Delangre	Jessica	Université de Liège
Delvingt	Willy	Ardenne & Gaume
Deneef	Huig	Provinciaal Natuurcentrum Limburg
Deneve	Sonja	Fuuld guide
Derochette	Luc	DEMNA/DGO3
DODEUR	Gwenn	Natagriwal Asbl
Du Seuil	Daniel	INBO
Dumont	Simon-Pierre	NTF
Eeckhout	Jill	ANB BNIP
Elvinger	Nora	Environment Ministry - Luxembourg
Embo	Tom	Natuurinvest
Engelbeen	Mathias	Leefmilieu Brussel
Evenepoel	Marleen	AG Agentschap Natuur & Bos
Fauconnier	Josette	La Roche-en-Ardenne
Fiévet	Vincent	Service public de Wallonie/DEMNA/DNE
Franchois	Leen	Boerenbond
Funcken	Philippe	Natagora



Geertsma	Benno	Natuurpunt
Geudens	Robert	Vlaamse landbouwer
Ghysel	François	repr Minister of Nature - Collin
Godin	Marie-Céline	Bruxelles Environnement
GOFFART	Philippe	SPW / DEMNA / DNE
Goret	Thibaut	Natagora
Goris	Inez	Sibelco
Gorissen	Dries	Agency for Nature and Forests
Groenweghe	Kurt	Belgium Defence
Haarmann	Ulrich	NLWKN-H Niedersachsen
Halford	Mathieu	Natagriwal
Hendrix	Rik	VITO
Herremans	Jean-Paul	PROSPECT - NEEMO
Hoogewijs	Mieke	Provincie Antwerpen
HUGO	Emily	Natagriwal
Jobé	Patrick	Spadel
Huysecom	Joelle	Natagora
Jorens	Lieve	FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
Kempeneers	serge	Bruxelles Environnement/Leefmilieu Brussels
Lafontaine	Dominique	Natagora
Le Roi	Alain	SPW/DGO3/Cellule Intégration Agriculture-Environnement
Ledegen	Ignace	Grenspark De Zoom-Kalmthoutse Heide
Leroy	André	Natuurpunt ZAVENTEM
Louette	Gerald	INBO
Marneffe	Catherine	SPW DEMNA
Martens	Els	ANB
Martin	Youri	Natagora
Meeus	Kim	Kabinet Bart Tommelein, staatssecretaris
Meeuwis	René	Agency Nature & Forests
Michiel	Karolien	Vlaamse Landmaatschappij
Milbau	Ann	INBO
Mulders	Christian	Service Public de Wallonie
Nederlandt	Nicolas	Fédération des Parcs naturels de Wallonie
Noelmans	Davy	VLM
Olivier	Wendy	Ministry Economical Affairs Netherlands
Ory	thierry	Natagora
Padovan	Natalia	ANB
Paelinckx	Desire	Instituut voor Natuur- en Bosonderzoek
Paquet	Jean-Yves	Natagora
Piraux	joelle	Natagora
Ramon	Elke	Departement Landbouw en Visserij
Rosengarten	Dominique	CESW
Rossi	elisabetta maria	Regione Lombardia, Italia
Rousseaux	Sarah	Inverde
Schotsmans	Elfriede	Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos LIFE+ Pays Mosan



Schouttenen	Hermien	departement LNE
Schreurs	Eloi	ANB
Sepulchre	Arnaud	Natagriwal
Smits	Quentin	DEMNA
Smooos	Augustin	SPW/DGO3/Département Environnement et Eau
Sneessens	Alexandre	LIFE in Quarries
Spaas	Jan	Bosgroepen
Stassen	Raf	Regionaal Landschap Zuid-Hageland
Stubbe	Frank	VLM
Stulens	Mark	Sibelco
Taymans	Julien	Natagora asbl
Tchatchou	Tomy	SPW/DGO3/DNF
Therry	Alexander	Inverde
Thys	Piet	Waterwegen en Zeekanaal nv
Toebat	Johan	ANB
Tuytens	Karen	ANB
Uvijn	Jens	Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij
Van Asbroeck	Philippe	Service public de Wallonie
van Besien	Lien	Departement LNE
Van de Keere	Eddy	Defensie
Van de Wiele	Katrien	OVAM
Van den Broeke	Elke	Flemish government, dept LNE
Van Duyse	Nicole	Departement Landbouw en Visserij
Van Gool	Caroline	OVAM
Van Santfoort	Leo	Berger dans le Viroin
Van Vosselen	Astrid	Vlaamse overheid, dept. MOW
Vandenabeele	Valérie	APB-NB / HVV
Vandervelden	Joris	Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos
Vandewaerde	Hanne	Regionaal Landschap Zuid-Hageland
Vangeel	Vicky	Staatssecretaris Philippe De backer
Vanhoof	Ronny	Stad Lommel
Vanhove	Jean-Marie	Field guide
Vanhuyse	Kathleen	Hubertus Vereniging Vlaanderen VZW
Vanonckelen	Steven	Departement LNE
Vanslambrouck	Patricia	Deboscet Recycling bvba
Vassen	Frank	European Commission, DG.ENV.B3 (Nature)
Verbeke	Willy	Inverde
Verboven	Jan	Vlaamse Landmaatschappij
Verhalle	Jesse	FOD Volksgezondheid, veiligheid van de voedselketen en leefmilieu
Verheeke	Jan-Baptist	S.A.R. Minaraad
Versweyveld	Stefan	Natuurpunt, BNIP Team
Vervoort	Jozef	OVAM
Wibail	Lionel	SPW/DGO3/DEMNA