

THE UNECE CONVENTION ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS (AARHUS CONVENTION)

TASK FORCE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION TOOLS: CASE STUDY BY BELGIUM (FLANDERS)

CLIMATE PORTAL OF FLANDERS (BELGIUM)

<https://klimaat.vmm.be>

I. Description

- **1. Brief description:** Public webportal with all scientific information on the main issues regarding climate change in Flanders (N-Belgium): heat stress, flooding, sea level rise, draught and the overall state of the climate. The webportal gives information using:
 - interactive maps (of Flanders) on following issues:
 - state: means and extremes of temperature, precipitation, evapotranspiration, wind
 - effects: heat stress, flooding (pluvial + fluvial), sea level rise, draught
 - impacts: on buildings and peoplefor the current climate and for periods around 2030, 2050 (2075) and 2100 (2115)
 - Statistical downscaling of all climate scenario runs available and relevant to Flanders
 - thematic information to the different public stakeholders concerning health, health problems, flooding etc.
 - the Flanders climate policy plan
 - local climate adaptations instruments (local government policy and supporting measures): <http://www.burgemeestersconvenant.be>
- **2. Type:** governmental, Flanders regional authority, with collaboration of local communities
- **3. Scope:** sub-regional, local
- **4. Working language(s):** Dutch
- **5. Target users:** local communities, general public, NGO's, universities ...
- **6. Starting year:** 2018
- **7. Budget and funding source:** 400 000 EUR, funded by the Flanders Environment Agency (VMM)
- **8. Contact:** Brouwers Johan
Research officer & analyst for energy & climate change
Flanders Environment Agency
j.brouwers@vmm.be
phone number: ++ 32 15 45 14 70

II. Implementation

- **9. Policy, legal and institutional context:** Flanders climate policy plan (mitigation and adaptation) + Policy Letter on Environment 2017-2018 submitted by Minister of Environment
- **10. Partner organizations involved:** Regional and local authorities, as members of the steering & monitoring group:
 - European Environment Agency,
 - Departement Omgeving - Afd. Energie Klimaat en Groene Economie + Afd. Planbureau;
 - Waterbouwkundig Labo;
 - Royal Meteorological Institute of Belgium KMI/RMI,
 - Agentschap Zorg & Gezondheid,

- Flanders Research Institute Nature & Forest INBO,
 - city of Ghent,
 - city of Antwerp,
 - Flemish research organisation in the area of cleantech and sustainable development VITO,
 - Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture Fisheries and Food ILVO,
 - Informatie Vlaanderen,
 - Departement Mobiliteit & Openbare Werken – Division Coast,
 - Sciensano
- **11. Stakeholders involved, their expected benefits:** local communities (provinces, cities & municipalities) -> their input was given in several sessions of a user committee to ensure the Climate Portal was easy to use and the output was relevant for them to perform a stress test on climate change.
 - **12. User needs and methods of their assessment:** preliminary study on the needs of local authorities to set up a climate adaptation policy + interaction during the development of the Climate Portal by means of a user committee (including hands on testing of pilot versions)
 - **13. Technology choice:** interactive geoportal, on-the-spot interaction between maps and visualization of key figures, Open Data, open source software. More information on the development in following report (in Dutch + English summary): <https://en.milieurapport.be/publications/2019/climate-portal-flanders>

III. Evaluation

- **14. Results:** The Climate Portal Flanders offers every user a clear image of (actual and possible future) climate change and its effects and impacts on people and society in Flanders
- **15. Efficiency gains:** local authorities, researchers, policy makers etc. no longer need to crawl to a huge amount of data and information in different publications and websites. Getting an accurate view on the actual climate and possible climate change evolution, its effects and its impacts is no longer very time-consuming.
- **16. Risks:** again another/extra website -> to avoid this problem we offer the possibility to other authorities in Flanders to use the Climate Portal as a portal for their climate information to.
- **17. Challenges encountered (please indicate resolved or not):**
 - Distilling the essence from a multitude of scenarios and scenario results, sometimes with different starting points and assumptions (resolved)
 - Data (and knowledge) gaps for impacts on nature, agriculture and health (work in progress)
 - See also the various topics covered in the scientific report drawn up as a result of the development of the portal: <https://en.milieurapport.be/publications/2019/climate-portal-flanders>
- **18. Lessons learned:**
 - limit the number of scenario's to an absolute minimum to pass a clear message
 - interaction between maps and simple graphs helps a lot for interpretation
 - a viewer for maps & graphs is a good and necessary step to pass information, but all material must be available in free downloadable datasets. Availability of these open data guarantees the use of all the material
 - not all indicators wanted and relevant are available yet. Sometimes proxy indicators can help, often extra research is needed (for example on impacts on nature, agriculture and health)
- **19. Conditions for successful replication:** availability of high resolution maps on climate change (state, effects & impacts)
- **20. Overall assessment of the tool:** not available yet