

# 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

#### Databank Ondergrond Vlaanderen (Flanders Soil and Subsurface Database)

<https://www.dov.vlaanderen.be>

## I. Description

- **1. Brief description:** Flanders Soil and Subsurface Database (DOV, <https://www.dov.vlaanderen.be/portaal>) is the public web portal through which regional administrations of Flanders deliver (INSPIRE-compliant) Open Data, available for re-use, concerning geology, natural resources, soil, hydrogeology, geotechnical characteristics, groundwater and groundwater licenses. Geographical data is directly accessible through OGC webservice (WMS, WFS or WCS) and documented via metadata reachable via a catalog service (CSW).
- **2. Type:** [governmental, non-governmental, municipal, other] governmental
- **3. Scope:** [international, sub-regional, national, local] regional
- **4. Working language(s):** Dutch
- **5. Target users:** a wide range of target users is involved (government at different levels, construction sector, industry, nature, agriculture, public, education, research, ....)
- **6. Starting year:** 1996
- **7. Budget and funding source:** co-financing by partners; annual average over the entire period ca. 600.000 euro (is cost for development of all applications in use for data management en data publication)
- **8. Contact:**

Marleen Van Damme

DOV-coördinator

Departement Omgeving

[marleen.vandamme@vlaanderen.be](mailto:marleen.vandamme@vlaanderen.be)

+32478.79.51.06

## II. Implementation

- **9. Policy, legal and institutional context:** open data policy in Flanders, legislation on public access to environmental information, legislation on reuse and e-government, INSPIRE, GDI-decreet, ...
- **10. Partner organizations involved:** Departement Omgeving, Departement Mobiliteit en Openbare werken, Vlaamse Milieumaatschappij
- **11. Stakeholders involved, their expected benefits:** a wide range of stakeholders is involved (government at different levels, construction sector, industry, nature, agriculture, public, education, research, ....)
- **12. User needs and methods of their assessment:** data and information on soil and subsoil needed for a wide range of purposes (stability, natural resources, ground water levels, soil characteristics, ....)
- **13. Technology choice:** since renewal of applications (development started in 2011): open data via open standards (OGC - WMS, WFS, WCS), a viewer (Java-application) facilitation easy access to a wide audience, an open python package “pydov” offering machine access to the data especially developed in co-creation with private companies for use scientific context

### III. Evaluation

- **14. Results:** ca 1600 datasets (maps) are available as open data; huge amount of underlying point data (drillings, cone penetration tests, groundwater data, soil data, ...)
- **15. Efficiency gains:** important time savings and reducing of costs for the stakeholders when collecting data for various use cases
- **16. Risks:**
- **17. Challenges encountered (please indicate resolved or not):**
- **18. Lessons learned:** continuous interaction with users/stakeholders is important to keep track of users needs
- **19. Conditions for successful replication:** sustained governance and involvement of thematical experts, stability and continuity in IT supporting team
- **20. Overall assessment of the tool:** very great satisfaction