

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

WEBSITE ON THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN WALLONIA

[\[http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home.html\]](http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home.html)

I. Description

- **1. Brief description:** This website presents more than 150 socio-economic and environmental indicators regularly updated. They provide an overview of the state and evolution of the environment in Wallonia: air, water and soil quality, biodiversity, environmental pressures and impacts for several key issues.

The latest paper publication (State of the environment report 2017) is available in a pdf viewer, as older reports or studies.

- **2. Type:** governmental
- **3. Scope:** regional
- **4. Working language(s):** French. The English and German homepages only show the latest static report (.pdf) in each language.
- **5. Target users:** citizens, students, NGOs, press, private sector and public authorities
- **6. Starting year:** 2018 (launch of the new website, the new website replaced a former website that hosted only the reports in pdf format).
- **7. Budget and funding source:** +/- 120K€ - Budget of the Walloon public Service - Agriculture, natural resources and environment.
- **8. Contact:**

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II. Implementation

- **9. Policy, legal and institutional context:**
 - Aarhus convention (first pillar)
 - Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC
 - First book of the [Walloon Environment code](#) (Art. D.32 to D36)
- **10. Partner organizations involved:**

8 authors, more than 250 contributors or reviewer, mainly from the Walloon public Service in collaboration with many partners of the administration, research centers and universities
- **11. Stakeholders involved, their expected benefits:** the stakeholders were not involved in the development of the new website.

The report on the state of the environment 2017 serves as a basis for consultation and discussion within the Economic and Social Council of Wallonia, and more particularly its "Environment" cluster. The latter writes a prospective note for the Walloon Parliament, which is intended to stimulate legislative changes that would be necessary.
- **12. User needs and methods of their assessment:** not evaluated yet.
- **13. Technology choice:** CMS (Jahia). Highcharts for interactive charts.

III. Evaluation

- **14. Results:** Gives more visibility and accessibility to environmental information. The number of different monthly visitors has increased from less than 2000 early 2018 to more than 3000 since March 2019. Indicators are more often updated than before.
- **15. Efficiency gains:** The time between the availability of data and the update of the indicator has been reduced.
- **16. Risks:** Be unable to maintain a large set of indicators regularly updated in the long term if there is a decrease in the number of authors.
- **17. Challenges encountered (please indicate resolved or not):** Legal basis should be adapted to take into account the online diffusion of reports of the state of the environment in Wallonia. The current text only considers a paper distribution.
- **18. Lessons learned:** Well-identified needs and a well-defined project are guarantees of success.
- **19. Conditions for successful replication:** not been studied. Some developments (for interactive graphs e.g.) could be used by other departments.
- **20. Overall assessment of the tool:** largely positive