

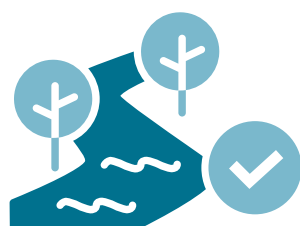


BELGIUM

The joint draft RBMP for the Flemish part of the Scheldt (BE-Schelde_VL) and the Meuse (BE-Maas_VL) was assessed in March 2021. Only 15 out of 195 water bodies (<10%) are planned to have reached good status by 2027, and the number of exemptions has increased since the previous RBMP. 48 cases of “temporary deterioration” due to article 4(6) are reported, but poorly justified, plus 16 cases of “misclassification”. None of the 17 water bodies which were due to achieve good status by 2021 have reached the objective. However, the draft RBMP states that the implementation of the previous RBMP’s measures is well on track. The plan’s rather unrealistic outlook for 2033 is that all except 43 water bodies will achieve good status in 2033. Three assessment topics are included as SWMIs in the draft RBMP,

and the main findings of the assessment are detailed below:

River and wetland restoration: The draft RBMP provides an overall description of the status of protected freshwater ecosystems but does not define the water quantity and quality required to achieve good status. Approximately 150 specific measures of the PoM aim to restore surface water bodies in Special Conservation Areas, but overall criteria and priorities for restoration will only be developed at a later stage. While natural water retention measures should be considered as an alternative or complementary option for all flood risk management infrastructure investment, this does not happen in practice and nature-based solutions are not used to help address the lack of



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	Topic	BE Scheldt and Meuse
1	Removal and adaptation of barriers	
	1. Identification of the problem	
	2. Prioritisation	
	3. Cost-benefit analysis and monitoring plan	
	4. Ambition	
2	Hydropower	
	1. Pressures and sectors	
	2. Inventory of planned projects	
	3. Justification and exemptions	
	4. Criteria and thresholds	
	5. Plans for refurbishment and decommissioning	
3	Inland navigation	
	1. Pressures and sectors	
	2. Inventory of planned projects	
	3. Justification and exemptions	
	4. Criteria and thresholds	
	5. 'Working with nature'	
4	Freshwater ecosystem protection and restoration and NBS	
	1. Protected areas and their status	
	2. Prioritisation	
	3. Restoration targets	
	4. Nature-based solutions (NBS)	
	5. Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM)	
	6. Sound financial mechanism	
5	Water allocation and abstraction control	
	1. Identification of significant water abstractions	
	2. Prospects of new water abstractions, related infrastructure and land uses	
	3. Review of abstraction permits	
	4. Abstraction control	
6a	Drought management	
	1. PoM "climate checks"	
	2. Drought management plans	
6b	Flood management	
	1. PoM "climate checks"	
	3. Link with the Floods Directive	
	4. Land use and flood management	
7	Agriculture	
	1. Assessment of pressures	
	2. Gap analysis and measures	
	3. Diffuse pollution	
8	Coal mines (and combustion)	
	1. Assessment of the problem	
	2. Priority hazardous substances	
	3. Climate change	
	4. Justification and exemptions	
	5. Cost recovery	
	6. Liabilities	
9	Economic instruments and adequacy of budget	
	1. Cost recovery calculation for sectors	
	2. Cost recovery rates and exemptions	
	3. Budget	
10	Exemptions	
	1. Number of exemptions	
	2. Gap analysis	
	3. Art. 4(4) and 4(5) exemption justifications	
	4. Article 4(6) exemption justifications	
	5. Article 4(7) exemption justifications	
11	Review and update on the implementation of the previous RBMP	
	1. Implementation of measures	
	2. Effectiveness of measures	

wastewater treatment in individual housing. It also remains unclear how the cost recovery and polluter pays principles will financially contribute to these initiatives.

Drought management and climate proofing:

The draft RBMP includes a sensitivity analysis of the proposed measures, based on a non-transparent methodology, to evaluate long-term effectiveness and cost-efficiency under changing climatic conditions. A drought management plan is included, but its components are not comprehensively related to ensuring proper action, and it mixes natural factors with human activity-induced water scarcity and overexploitation.

Agriculture: The draft RBMP includes a robust assessment of the main pressures from agriculture and the remaining gaps (e.g. nitrates and phosphorus) but it is only shown at the RBD level and not for each water body. Concrete measures will only be part of the new manure action plan ("MAP 7") from 2022 onwards.

Economic instruments and budget adequacy:

The RBMP provides cost recovery information, but only for remediation infrastructure (sewerage and water treatment). Cost recovery of erosion control and manure processing (agriculture) or additional individual treatment (industry) is not addressed. The PoM contains 12 cost recovery measures, but these are all research assignments that in part were already included in the previous RBMP's PoM and not carried out. Exemptions, such as for agricultural water abstraction from unnavigable waterways, are not justified. The total budget remains unclear: In addition to the €2.7 bn PoM, political decisions for add-ons of €3.9 bn for wastewater treatment and €0.5 bn for drought management have not yet been taken.

		LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE				
		high	good	moderate	poor	N/A
RELEVANCE	Not applicable or relevant for the RBD					
	This problem/ challenge has already been solved in the second RBMP					
	One of the many problems/challenges in this RBD					
	One of the Significant Water Management Issues (SWMI)					
	The main problem/challenge in this RBD					

Table 15: Overview of the performance of the draft 2022-2027 RBMP for the Scheldt and the Meuse (Belgium) on key topics by indicator.