

TARGETED ANALYSIS //

**DIGIPLAN – Fact sheet on digital
plan data in Belgium (Wallonia)**

Annex 2.2 of final report

Final delivery // June 2021



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This deliverable does not necessarily reflect the opinions of members of the ESPON 2020 Monitoring Committee.

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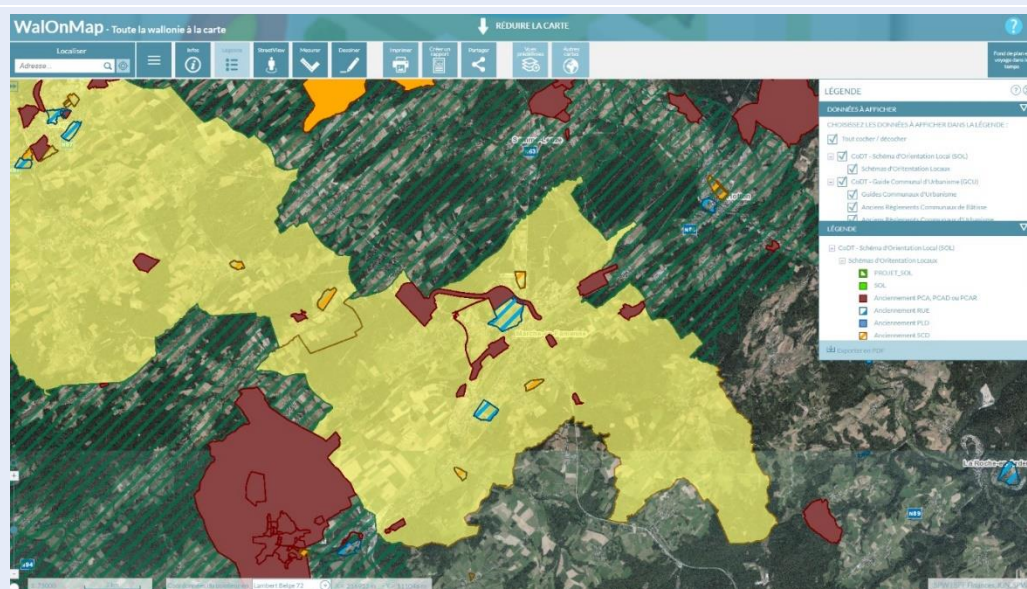
This fact sheet summarises the experience in digitisation of plan data in Belgium (Wallonia). This explorative investigation includes information on the digitisation of plan data, on the digital platform that contains plan data, the current uses of digital plan data as well as foreseen developments of the investigated platforms. The inputs are based on both a desk study and interviews with GIS experts, geomaticians and communication manager at the Public Services Department of the Government of Wallonia.

Belgium (Federal; three levels of government)

Spatial planning in the federal state of Belgium is decentralised to the three regions of Brussels-Capital, Flanders and Wallonia. The latter is the focus in ESPON Digiplan due to their advanced and well-established region-wide geoportal that contains, among others, digital plan data with information at regional, sub-regional and municipal levels. Both the regional and municipal authorities in Wallonia have competences in spatial planning.

The Walloon Territorial Development Code (French: *Code du développement territorial - CoDT*) entered into force in June 2017. The Code has two main objectives: support for the economic development of Wallonia and the fight against urban sprawl. The list of planning instruments has been updated, of which only two instruments at regional level remain regulatory, whereas the others have an “indicative” value.

The digital plan data portal investigated is WalOnMap (geoportail.wallonie.be/walonmap)



Background information

Main stakeholder(s)	Public Service of Wallonia
Level of digitalisation of the geoportal	Intermediate: the user can make a limited number of simple operations based on the available data (e.g. download shapefiles, add external data). Advanced: the user interacts with the planning authority and the digital plan data (e.g. creation of a document linking planning instruments and metadata based on a point, polygon or parcel)

The digitisation of plan data

Main purpose(s)	The main purpose is to provide an easy access to all geodata, including plan data, on one single platform for any actors who needs such plan data (municipalities, consultancies, citizens, etc.).
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Belgium (Federal; three levels of government)

Added value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The easy access and the details of information (transparency) provided by metadata sheets (French: <i>fiches descriptives</i>) done by one person working full time at the Department of Geomatics (linked to Inspire) helped by producers and facility-makers. For instance, they explain the value and aim of each planning instrument. - Harmonised plan data - improves the uses of resources and the workflow
Main driver(s)	The regional level through the internal organisation at SPW: thanks to the transversal function of the Department of Geomatics since 2010, allowing dialogues between the different actors. It. Notions of transversality and cooperation. In fact already done since 2000 with a supra structure known as the Mapping Technical Committee who is the base of Department of Geomatics. The INSPIRE Directive was also a factor in speeding up the process.
Main obstacle(s)	<p>The main obstacle used to be the lack of financial resources at the beginning since digitalisation was not a priority. It was hard to find a consensus from all partners at the beginning, or at least it took some time for a common agreement. However, the process took another dimension when digitalisation was higher on the agenda in Wallonia.</p> <p>Other obstacles: data privacy, rapidity of the change, the fact that the paper maps are still the reference document (legally binding), risk of errors during the transformation of the data into its digital format.</p>
Standards and methods	It is staff from the Department of Geomatics that enters the data in a manual way. It will be done in a more semi-automatized way in the future to make it easier to publish the geodata. For instance, the manager of a specific geodata enters the data into the system of the geoportal. It is then a staff at the Department of Geomatics that enters the metadata. This metadata is validated by the manager of that specific geodata. It will then be published in the geoportal.
The current platform	
Type of digital plan data included	<p>Vector layers of the sectoral plans, instrument that has a regulatory value, are included and cover the entire territory of Wallonia.</p> <p>Digital plan data from other planning instruments are partially included in the geoportal. That is due to both the recent reform (on-going process to update the information) and the fact that it is not mandatory for a municipality to add such information in the geoportal</p>
Legal status of the digital plan data	<p>The digital plan data included on the geoportal is not legally binding, e.g. it cannot be used in court. However, the plan data should be seen as an information with very high-quality data, that can be used as reference.</p> <p>A disclaimer (“mentions légales”) can be found in the footer of the geoportal. The metadata sheets (<i>fiches descriptives</i>) also inform the user on how to use each data and states the non-legal character of the plan data.</p>
The current uses of digital plan data	
Type of users	<p>Main users are (self-assessed from the interviewees; no clear statistics):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities (municipalities): local plan data to create reports on planning permits/licences (“permis d urbanisme”) and regional administration - Private sector: consultancies, architects, surveyors, NGOs. Helping public actors to acquire data for planning applications. - Also: individual users (citizens), e.g. land-owners to get information on their parcels. - Also: universities, research centres, students (conventions and specific license for wide datasets; e.g. land cover and land use; satellite data; agriculture/PAC: higher user of satellite images). Note that this kind of licences will disappear later this year in connection with a move towards open access data (Public Sector Information Directive).

Belgium (Federal; three levels of government)

Number of users	<p>The numbers are for the entire tool and not only the section containing plan data. They correspond to the number for the year 2019: ca. 535 000 visitors, ca. 1 660 000 open sessions and 4 787 000 page views.</p> <p>Local plan data (French: <i>plan de secteur</i>), one plan data among others, was the 4th most consumed data in 2019.</p>
Example of evaluation of planning practices or innovative practices	<p>Not common yet. Possible crowdsourcing (e.g. waste management?). It is also technical possible to cross digital plan data with additional datasets on the geoportal, and it can therefore be seen as both a decision support tool and informative tool.</p> <p>Users of the geoportal can generate a report with geodata and non-geographic data for a specific geographical address. Such report can be used for “environmental licence” (French: <i>permis d’environnement</i>) via the following website (http://permis-environnement.spw.wallonie.be/fr)</p>

Foreseen developments

- To get all municipal and regional plans from all municipalities in the geoportal. It is already quite advanced.
- To facilitate the entry of digital plan data into the system (e.g. without the support of the technician).
- Increase the number of geodata in the catalogue: central object of the portal (e.g. all schools).
- Make crowdsourcing and editing possible through geoportal.

Levels	Planning instruments (Name in English)	Planning instruments (Name in local language)	Included in the geoportal?
Sub-national (regional)	Territorial development scheme	Schéma de développement territorial	No.
	Sectoral plan	Plan de secteur	Yes, full coverage (digital version of the vector sector plan)
	Regional planning framework	Guide régional d’urbanisme	Yes, the areas covered by the plan are highlighted and further information is available for each area (metadata and link to the planning document)
Sub-regional (inter-municipalities)	Intermunicipal development scheme	Schéma de développement communal	No.
Local (Municipalities)	Communal development scheme	Schéma de développement communal	Yes, partially (including only the pre-2017 instrument equivalent). The geoportal highlights the pieces of land who added the information into the geoportal. It is not mandatory: the information is available for about half of the municipalities (situation in June 2020).
	Local orientation scheme	Schéma d’Orientation Local	Yes, partially (including the pre-2017 instrument equivalent). The areas covered by the plan are highlighted and further information is available for each area (metadata and link to the planning document).

Levels	Planning instruments (Name in English)	Planning instruments (Name in local language)	Included in the geoportal?
	Municipal planning framework	Guide communal d'urbanisme	Yes, partially (including the pre-2017 instrument equivalent). The areas covered by the plan are highlighted and further information is available for each area (metadata and link to the planning document).



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