Flanders
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The use of SEA for long term spatial policy planning

Flanders (Belgium) in 2050: How can SEA influence the decision making process for a long term spatial policy plan, and what methodology can be used?

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Spatial planning in Flanders: context

Hierarchial and tiered spatial planning proces

Spatial 'structure' plan (= spatial policy plan) : no SEA

↳ Spatial zoning plan: SEA (screening) required

↳ building permit: EIA (screening) required

Spatial policy plan: 1997 – present: long term spatial vision on Flanders

Development of a new, long term spatial policy plan of Flanders (time horizon 2050)

Spatial policy plan: why and how SEA?

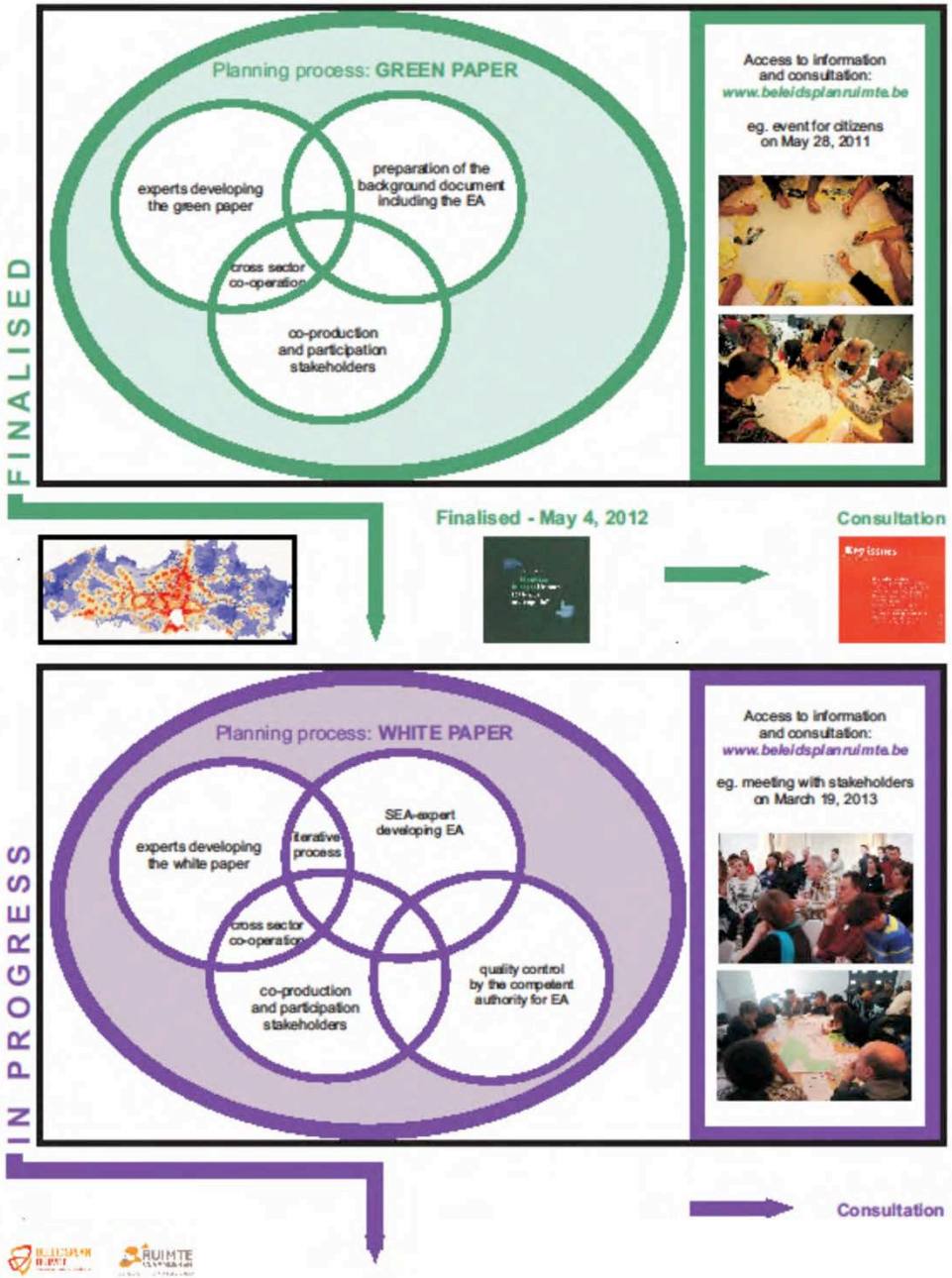
- Sustainable development = required value in spatial planning
- SEA on high policy level = start of an efficient environmental tiering system in decision making
- SEA = process integrated, environment taken into account in every ‘formal’ decisionmaking
- Three parallel processes interacting:
  - Policy planning process
  - Impact assessment process
  - Participation process: government, stakeholders, public

The planning proces : partnerships and evolving plan development

- Start 12/2010: round table discussion: interactive brainstorm with 100 stakeholders (experts, government, universities…): Flanders: green and dynamic city region
- 6/2012: presentation green paper: key issues spatial vision
- 12/2012: from green paper to white paper

An SEA for a policy plan: SPATIAL POLICY PLAN FOR FLANDERS

PLANNING PROCESS ADAPTED FOR A POLICY PLAN + SEA



Key issues in the green paper

1. Restricting the sealed surface area in the open space
2. Renovating the residential environment
3. Deploying human scale in the Metropolis
4. Connecting Flanders with the world
5. World-class environments
6. Widening the meaning of open space
7. Developing a robust open space
8. Doing more with less space
9. The right activity in the right place
10. Making choices in the suburban areas
11. Making way for renewable energy

The SEA report: methodological preconditions

2 levels of SEA:

1. report of the workshops ('environmental glasses') - how environmental issues are taken into account in the spatial planning process;

2. More 'classic' EIS (report) on the white paper of the spatial policy plan.

   White paper = high level policy plan with 'principles' how the space in Flanders should be 'developed' -> SEA on spatial principles

THE FUTURE IN 2050

illustratie door Gilles Vranckx

Methodology SEA

The process:

- involving environmental aspects in the different steps of the planning process: how is the environment taken into account?

- Involving a lot of (environmental) partners and stakeholders during the planning proces: workshops, round tables, discussion forums, internet forum,…

Methodology SEA

Report:

- ‘real old fashioned’ Environmental Impact Statement (on SEA level) of the white paper (= initial spatial policy plan)

- Established by the planning team together with the EIA authority (and EIA experts) in Flanders

SEA methodology

- Time horizon: 2050: reference for impact prediction = science fiction -> no ‘classic EIA’

- Use of scenarios instead of alternatives:
  - strong Europe,
  - global economy,
  - transatlantic market, and
  - regional communities

Future challenges: megatrends in global interaction: how does the spatial policy plan interfere with the impact of megatrends? Expressed and located in the DPSIR frame

SEA methodology

- Use of global megatrends: what is the impact on the environment in Flanders in 2050?
- Environmental Impact assessment = interference of the spatial policy plan on the impact of the megatrends
- Impact prediction using a system model of Flanders and DPSIR-frame, qualitative impact description

SEA methodology

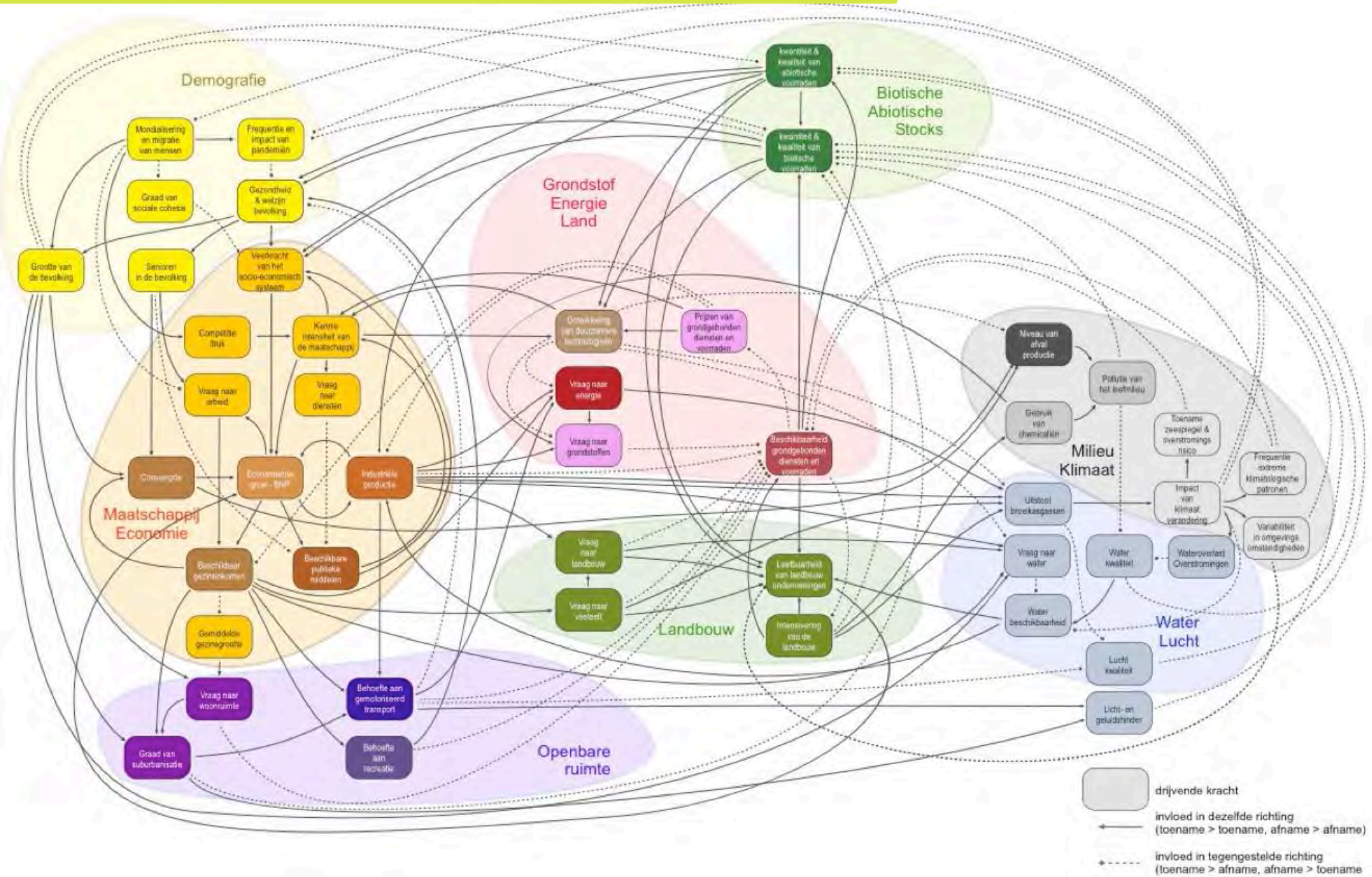
- 6 megatrends were withhold: (1) demographic increase and balance, (2) technological development (and unexpected impact), (3) shortness of resources, (4) multipolar society, (5) climate change (6) increase fragility of systems

- Impact on the environment is estimated on a qualitative way through impact components such as energy production, energy mix, social cohesion, transport, consumption, waste management, recreation, industrial production, agriculture, …

SEA methodology

- The final environmental impact of these megatrends is then estimated on air quality, water quality and quantity, soil quality, biodiversity, …
- The spatial policy plan ties to give an answer to the (negative) environmental impact of the megatrends.

System model of Flanders: an aid for qualitative impact description (with the aid of the DPSIR frame)



Conclusion

SEA is feasable for high level strategic spatial policy planning, but:

- Alternatives -> scenario's
- Maximise integration of IA in the planning process
- Maximise participation
- Do not forget Reporting
- Formulate recommendations and preconditions for further decision-making (tiering!!)

Keep the SEA on policy level:
qualitative impact description – avoid details

Thank you for your attention