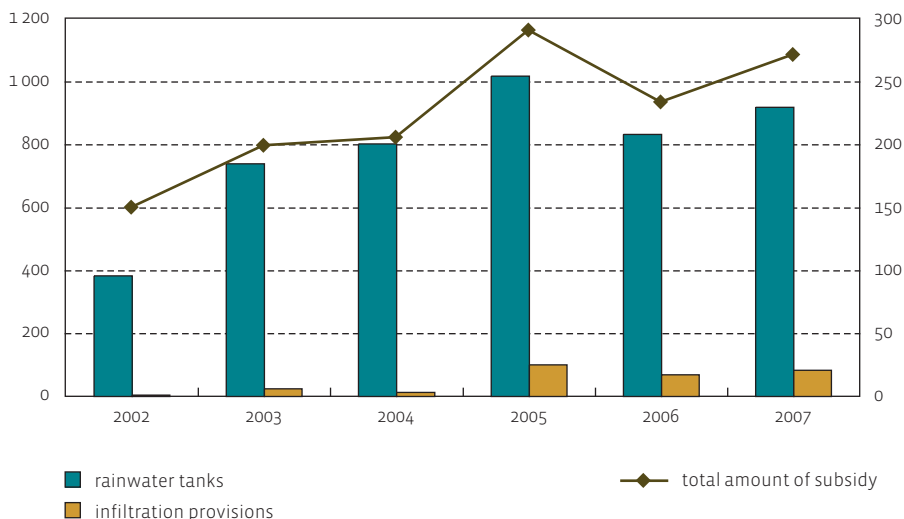




approved requests (number)

subsidy (1 000 euros)



Source: VMM

## Why subsidies for rainwater tanks and infiltration provisions?

The European Water Framework Directive places priority on a balance by 2015 between extraction and replenishment of the groundwater reserves. This balance can come about by, on the one hand, limiting the amount of groundwater extracted and, on the other hand, by increasing the replenishment of the groundwater. Limiting the extraction can be done by reducing water usage and only using high-quality water, such as groundwater, only when it is strictly necessary. For example, for flushing the toilet and for the washing machine, rainwater can be used. The replenishment of the groundwater reserves is done by infiltration of rainwater into the soil. Rainwater tanks and infiltration provisions (e.g. porous tiles for driveways) can therefore contribute to reaching a balance between the replenishment and extraction of groundwater. Hence the reason why they are subsidised.

## Number of applications approved and the total subsidy amount fluctuates

The total amount of regional subsidies for rainwater tanks and infiltration provision increased strongly between 2002 and 2005, since then there have been more fluctuations. The number of approved applications is much larger for rainwater tanks than for infiltration provisions. In 2001, 42.6 % of the houses in Flanders had a rainwater tank. However, this does not mean that the occupants also actually use rainwater, but a minimum use of for example an outside tap can nevertheless be assumed. Individuals who submit a subsidy claim for rainwater tanks at least use rainwater for toilet flushing and/or the washing machine, since this is a requirement for the granting of a subsidy. There is little insight into the impact of financial support programmes such as the subsidising of rainwater wells and infiltration provisions for rainwater.