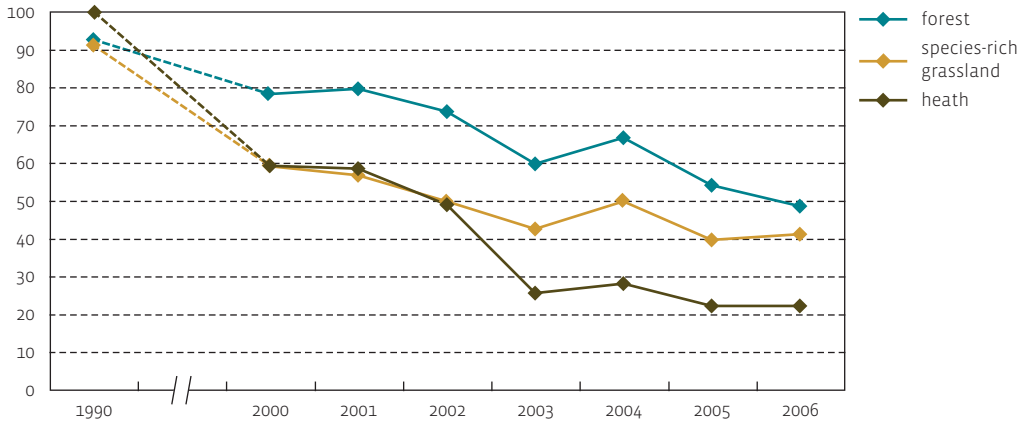




# Nature area with an exceedance of the critical load for acidification

nature area with a critical load exceedance (%)



Source: VMM

## Critical load exceedance leads to damage to vegetation

Acidification causes damage to vegetation. The biodiversity is affected and root damage occurs. 'Critical loads' have been determined for acidification for each type of vegetation. If these deposition limits are exceeded, this leads in the long term to harmful effects on the vegetation. In 2006, the critical load for acidification was exceeded in 45 % of the total area of vulnerable terrestrial ecosystems (forest, heath and species-rich grassland).

## Pressure on ecosystems is decreasing, but there is still a long way to go

The pressure from acidification is decreasing in forest, heath and species-rich grassland. This decrease coincides with a decrease in the acidifying emission and deposition. The temporary increase in 2004 can be attributed to a greater quantity of precipitation. The decreasing trend continued in 2005 and 2006. The pressure on forest is still the largest, but has been the most clearly decreasing since 2002.

The decrease in the pressure on vulnerable ecosystems in Flanders does not result however directly in a proportional recovery of the soil and biodiversity. This recovery is a very slow process, which depends among other things on the duration and the degree of the historical exceedance. Additional efforts continue to be needed to limit the emission of acidifying substances into the air, also after 2010.

nature area with critical load exceedance (%)	1990	2000	2005	2006
forest	92	78	54	49
heath	100	59	22	22
species-rich grassland	91	59	40	41
<i>total</i>	93	71	48	45