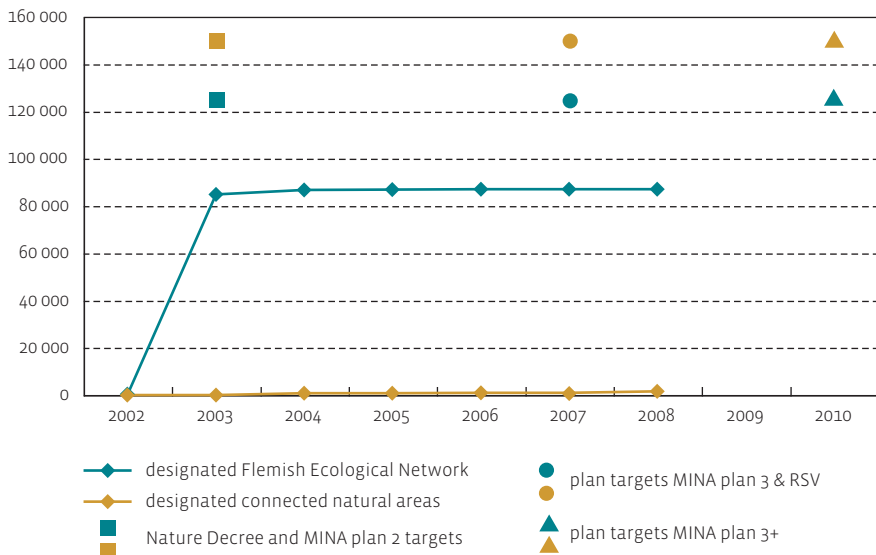




Area of the Flemish Ecological Network and nature areas with mixed functions

surface area (ha)



Source: www.biodiversityindicators.be (2009), based on figures from the Land Use, Housing and Immovable Heritage Department (RWO)

Demarcation is lagging and has stayed as good as unchanged since 2005

To counter the fragmentation of nature areas and to create larger and better connected habitats for plants and animals, the Nature Decree, successive MINA plans and the Flanders Spatial Structure plan foresee in the demarcation of 125 000 ha for the Flemish Ecological Network (VEN) (9.2 % of the Flemish land surface), with an additional 150 000 ha of nature areas with mixed functions and an indefinite size of nature connection area.

Five years after the target year of the Nature Decree and the MINA plan 2 (2003) and one year after the target year of the Flanders Spatial Structure Plan and the MINA plans 3 and 3+ (2007), 70 % of the Flemish Ecological Network (87 025 ha) and 1 % of the nature areas with mixed functions (1 529 ha) have been demarcated. The demarcation is behind schedule and between 2003 and 2008 no significant progress has been made. The surface of the nature areas with mixed functions has increased by more than 60 % compared to 2007, but the total demarcated area remains negligible in comparison to the target.

Since 2007 the Spatial Planning Administration has been coordinating the systematic development of regional Spatial Implementation plans. Since the Decree on Spatial Planning (1999), these plans have replaced the previous system of regional plan modifications. They are based on the vision expressed in the Flanders Spatial Structure plan and should be open for public review in 2010. This means that the demarcation of the Flemish Ecological Network and nature reserve will still not be complete in 2010. The delay in defragmentation of nature forms a serious obstacle to halting the loss of biodiversity in Flanders.