



Flanders
State of
the Art

Heritage Master Plan

A new participative planning instrument for heritage and landscape in Flanders

Nineteenth Council of Europe Meeting of the Workshops for the Implementation of the
European Landscape Convention

Workshop 4: Local democracy for the landscape: participation and commitment

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Content

1. **Heritage Master Plan and Action Programme**
 1. Legal framework
 2. Methodology

2. **Pilot projects**
 1. Traditional orchards in the region of Haspengouw
 2. Historical limestone quarries and mines in the town of Riemst

3. **Conclusion**



1. The Heritage Master Plan and Action Programme



Legal Framework

- ▶ Immovable Heritage Decree 12/7/2013
- ▶ Evolution of limited participation to cross-sectoral consensus to **landscape democracy**
- ▶ Heritage Master Plan = new instrument
 - integrated landscape approach
 - general landscape care
 - participation on governmental level but also with all stakeholders, including local communities and land owners
 - not legally binding but an agreement: Action Programme



What does the Decree say?

- ▶ Thematic or geographic
- ▶ Heritage values as starting point
- ▶ Vision on future development
- ▶ Implementation by an Action Programme and a broad range of instruments (not only heritage instruments)
- ▶ Approval of the vision by the Flemish Government, revisable at any time
- ▶ Sectoral proposal for spatial planning and land development

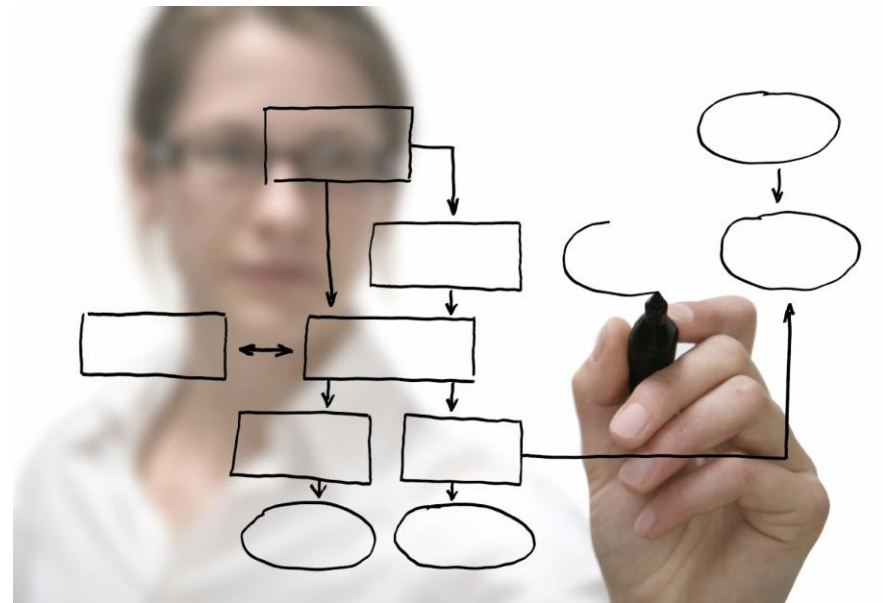
- ▶ **Aim:**
 - **more participation and transparency in decision-making**
 - **generate supported solutions for more complex challenges**

Methodology

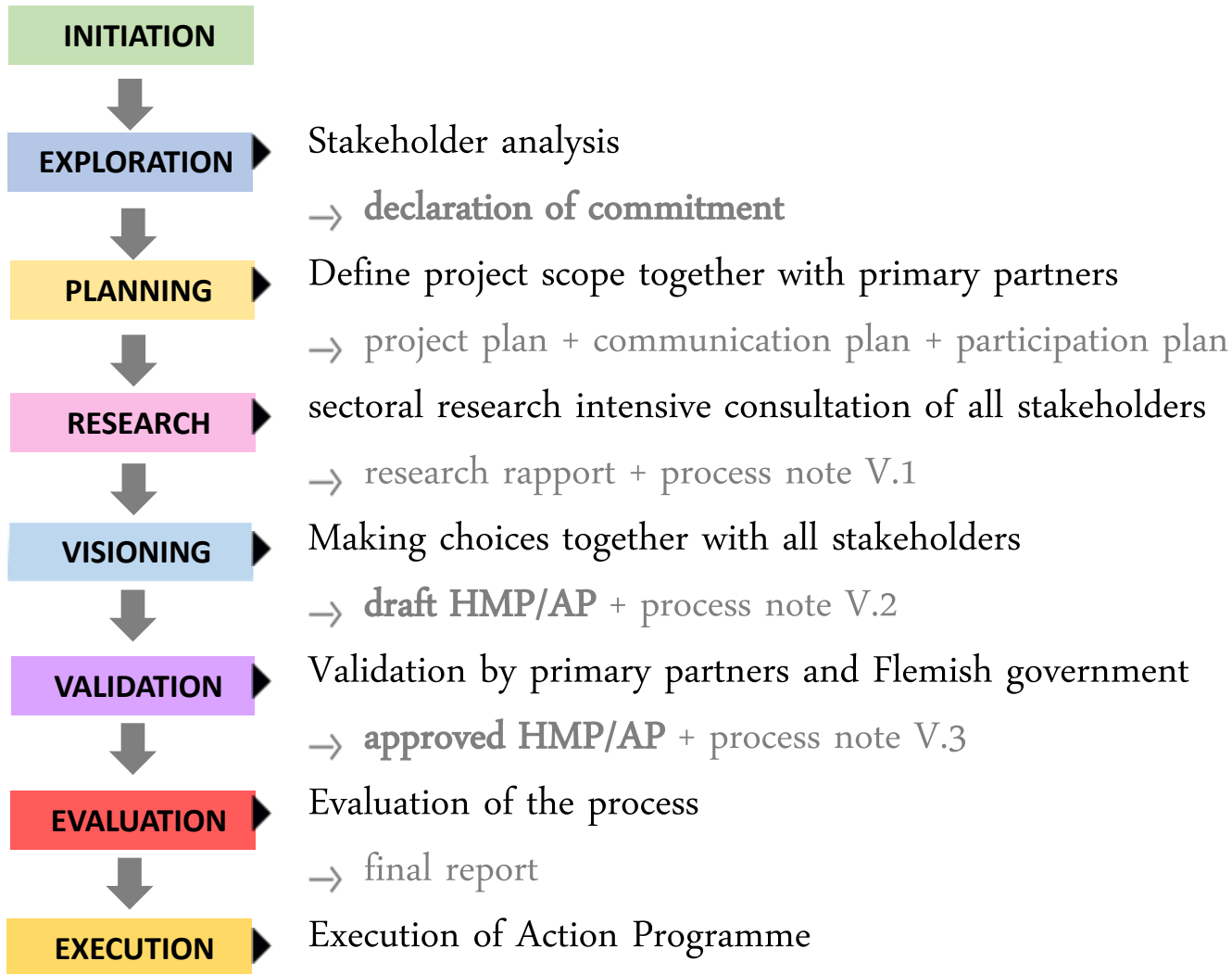
► Challenges:

- General methodology for all Heritage Master Plans but allowing for enough flexibility to adapt the approach to specific needs (themes/areas)
- Involvement of stakeholders early in the process
- **transparency**

► Validation by the minister in October 2016



How to draw up a HMP?





2. Pilot projects



When will we use the Heritage Master Plan?

- ▶ Broad interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach is paramount
- ▶ The landscape is not assigned a purely cultural-historic interpretation
- ▶ More complex situations involving different interests and stakeholders and need for innovative solutions
- ▶ Two pilot projects
 - Traditional orchards in Haspengouw
 - Limestone quarries and mines in Riemst





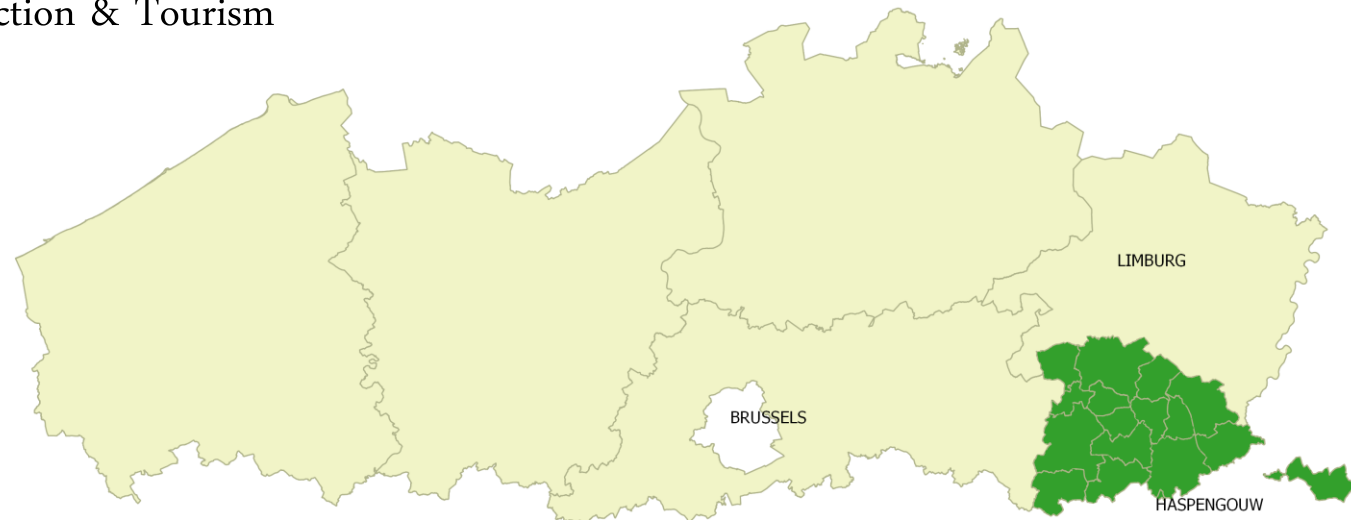
Traditional Orchards in Haspengouw



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Haspengouw

- ▶ Rural Region in the South-East of Flanders
(Province of Limburg)
- ▶ 17 municipalities
- ▶ 868 km²
- ▶ Fruit production & Tourism



Landscape evolution



Orchard belts around the villages:
orchard pastures



Landscape evolution



- Agricultural intensification (low-stem)
- Urbanisation



Problems

- ▶ Loss of landscape quality
- ▶ Shift in appreciation → 'Policy Gap'
- ▶ Lack of economic value → uneven distribution between benefits and burdens
- ▶ Neglect and management problems
- ▶ Little Cherry Disease



Initiation



- ▶ Many stakeholders have different interests

- ▶ Need for an integrated approach adapted to the specific regional singularity and needs of the traditional orchards

- ▶ Need for a shared vision
 - Heritage
 - Nature
 - Agriculture
 - Tourism
 - Farmers / owners

- ▶ Need for cross-sectoral actions



Exploration: Stakeholderanalysis



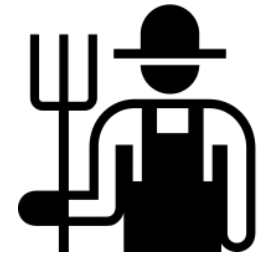
Government



Sectoral Organisations



Individuals



Exploration



▶ Primary partners: 2 steering committees = decision making

→ Regional committee:

× Flemish departments, agencies and research institutions of Heritage, Nature and Forest Conservation, Land Management, Agriculture, Spatial planning and Tourism

× Experts: National Orchards Organization, Regional Landscape Organization of Haspengouw

→ Local Committee

× Provincial administrations

× Regional Tourist Organization

× Local governments (17)

→ Cross-sectoral Research group

× Heritage Agency

× Institute of Nature and Forest Research

× Institute of Agricultural Research

× 'flying' researchers

Declaration of commitment

- ▶ **Scope:** “We want to *cherish* the traditional orchards as valuable region-specific landscape elements and work *together* on a *sustainable preservation* of these orchards in a *dynamic landscape*”
- ▶ **Press conference:** political commitment



Planning



- ▶ the Declaration of Commitment is the kick-off for the communication and participation process
- ▶ Project Plan:
 - 2017: Research
 - 2018: Visioning and Action Program
- ▶ Communication Plan and Participation Plan
 - not yet developed
 - Use communication channels of all partners
 - General ideas for participation process:
 - × E-platform for all stakeholders
 - Consultation
 - Crowd sourcing
 - × offline participation moments with special emphasis on owners

Research



- ▶ Cross-sectoral Research Group + thesis students + ...
- ▶ Research topics
 - Overall overview of landscape evolution and current situation
 - Appreciation of traditional orchards and landscape
 - × Sectoral appreciation (Heritage, Nature)
 - × Ecosystem Services approach
 - × Aspects of traditional orchards
 - × Local appreciation of orchards (as part of the traditional landscape)
 - Screening of (policy) instruments
 - × Evaluation of existing instruments
 - × Bench marking
 - (Motivational research)



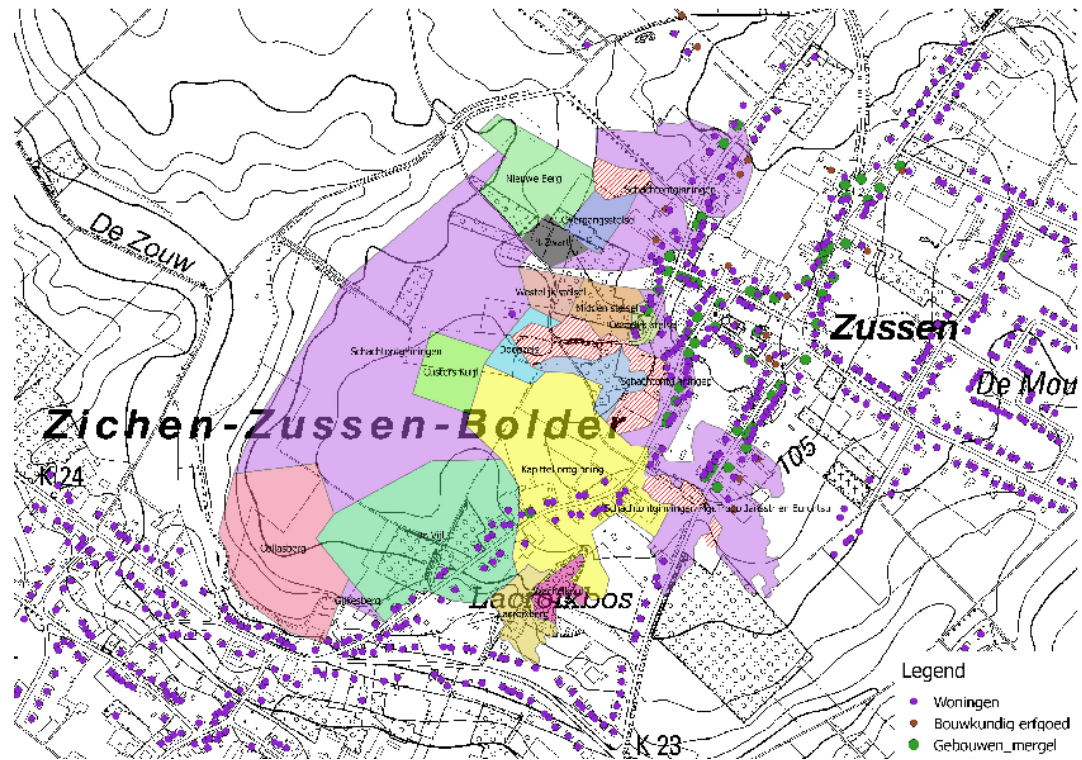
Historical limestone quarries and mines in the town of Riemst



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Situation

- ▶ Small municipality in the South-East of Flanders
- ▶ Only region in Flanders with historical limestone quarries and mines
- ▶ Located underneath the houses



The limestone quarries

- ▶ Late medieval origin, used as local building stone
- ▶ Later uses:
 - refuge in times of war
 - stock food
 - grow mushrooms



The limestone quarries

► Values:

- Mining landscape (historical as well as aesthetic value)
- Inscriptions and drawings
- Home for bats: nature!



Problems

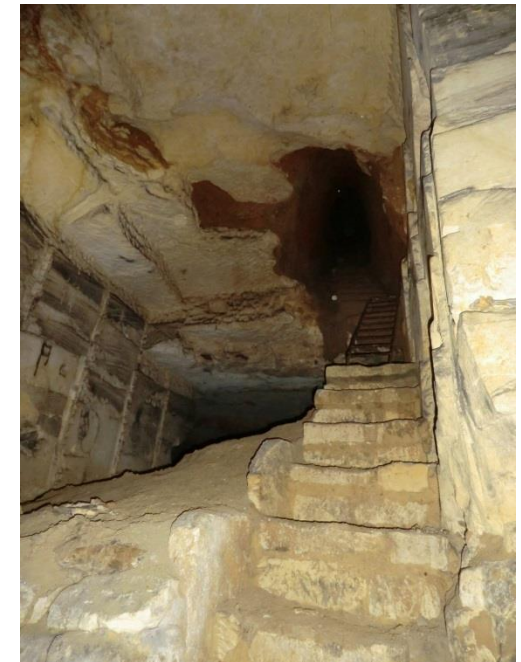
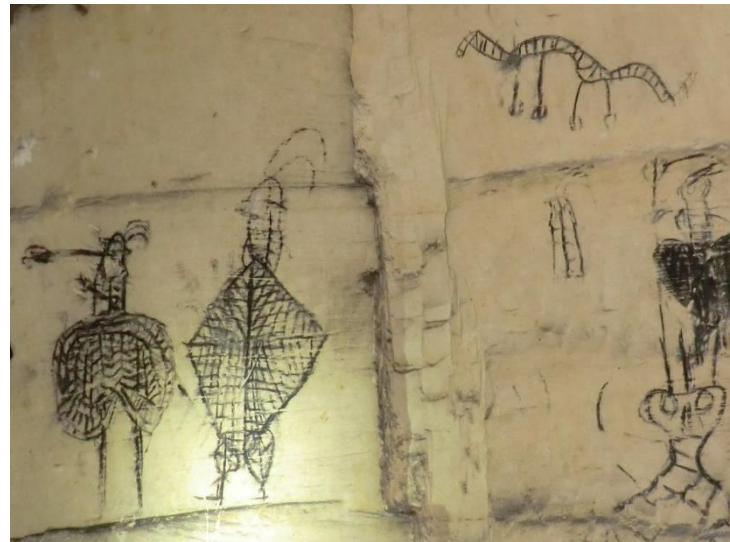
- ▶ Some parts of the mines are instable: risk to collapse
→ public safety
- ▶ Impact on people when applying for building permit
→ condition of stabilization
- ▶ Filling the mines impacts their heritage value and is very expensive



Initiation



- ▶ Main goal: Develop a vision that strives for a good balance between stabilisation and preserving heritage at a reasonable cost
- ▶ Clarify choices between heritage, nature and public safety



Exploration



- ▶ Only two direct partners (governmental level):
 - The council of Riemst
 - Agency of Nature and Forestry (Bat protection)
- ▶ Key group
 - Volunteers research of the mines
- ▶ Other stakeholders:
 - Stability experts
 - Inhabitants (including owners)
 - Other local groups

Exploration



- ▶ Declaration of commitment: december 2016
 - Clear distribution of tasks and agreement of the publication of data
 - × Flanders Heritage Agency: Heritage Values
 - × Municipality of Riemst: stabilization
 - Agreement on publication

- ▶ Agency of Nature and Forestry: habitat value
 - In preparation

Planning



▶ Project planning

→ Communication- and participation plan:

× Introduction to public on press conference of book

× Consultation about values, concerns, expectations

→ Inhabitants (including owners): evening/market

→ Local interest groups: focus groups

→ Stability experts: focus groups

▶ Research:

→ Input from consultation phase

→ Heritage, nature and stabilisation

▶ Visioning phase

→ Workshops with evaluation of different scenario's



3. Conclusion

Participation and commitment

- ▶ Great expectations ...

- ▶ Collaboration on different levels
 - Importance of declaration of commitment to get the political level involved (press attention)
 - Every actor can use own instruments
 - Problem of 'ownership' of HMP

- ▶ Participation of the public
 - Societal appreciation and needs

- ▶ Commitment
 - Action Programme is not binding
 - No monitoring included in process

Thank you



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