

Remediation of Urban Waterways in Flanders – The Bluegreen Network and Eeklo Example

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Introduction: In Flanders, the remediation of urban waterways is getting more attention these days for a variety of reasons. There are social trends that are bringing people back to the urban areas and driving a resurgence of waterfront redevelopment. One of these is a desire to limit, if not stop altogether, the development of green field sites in Flanders. There are also economic trends that place a value on ecosystem services like biodiversity and water retention, the cultural and historical importance of waterways, and the enjoyment of the people. In conjunction there are regulatory forces such as the European Union Water Framework Directive that require improvement of water quality and through a close relationship, sediment quality.

Methods: The resurgence of interest in urban waterfront areas is driving a need for redevelopment and the related sediment remediation. The approach and process must take into account numerous, and sometimes competing needs, to achieve good and resilient outcomes. This case study provides insight into how this might be achieved efficiently and effectively. Thus it may serve as an example to others confronted with similar challenges and certainly, it shows a clear path for those confronted with the task of contaminated sediment management integration in Flanders.

Results: This dynamic social, economic, and regulatory situation provides a unique moment to capitalize on these various trends and trigger appropriate cleanup of contaminated sediments. One example of this is the waterfront redevelopment and sediment cleanup in Eeklo, Belgium. In this cleanup, the Dullaert Canal, which had become polluted due to many years of wastewater discharges from nearby textile industries, was remediated as part of an overall land redevelopment project that accounted for social, economic, and ecological needs.

Discussion: This abstract can help other regulators in Europe realize that sediment remediation not only costs money, but has a lot of positive aspects, beyond the ecological benefits. If you can emphasise these

benefits, you can more easily get funding for a remediation project.

Graphic symbols will be used and made available to the audience, which represent the various benefits of remediation projects. These symbols can help the Sednet-community to stress the positive effects of sediment remediation, to more easily get public awareness and funding for a project.



Fig. 1: Services of waterways in nature

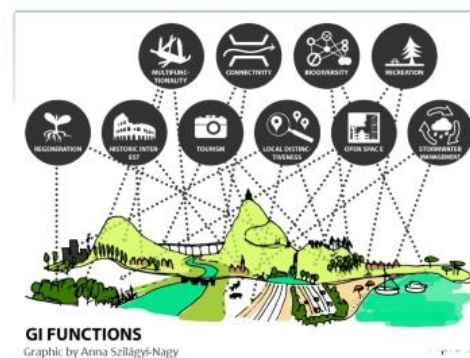


Fig. 2: Bluegreen Infrastructure Functions