Water Resilience Strategy

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VITO Kennispunt Water thinks along with entrepreneurs about integrated and innovative water solutions. Our goal? To effectively manage freshwater resources in Flanders for a resilient economy. For our industry and agriculture. For our drinking water. For our nature.

VITO Kennispunt Water is an accessible team of water experts who are ready to help - packed with practical experience.

Get in touch

Water Resilience Strategy

Water is not just a resources, it is a strategic asset that underpins our economy, environment and public health

The water resilience strategy sets out guidance on the orientation of investments and subsidies

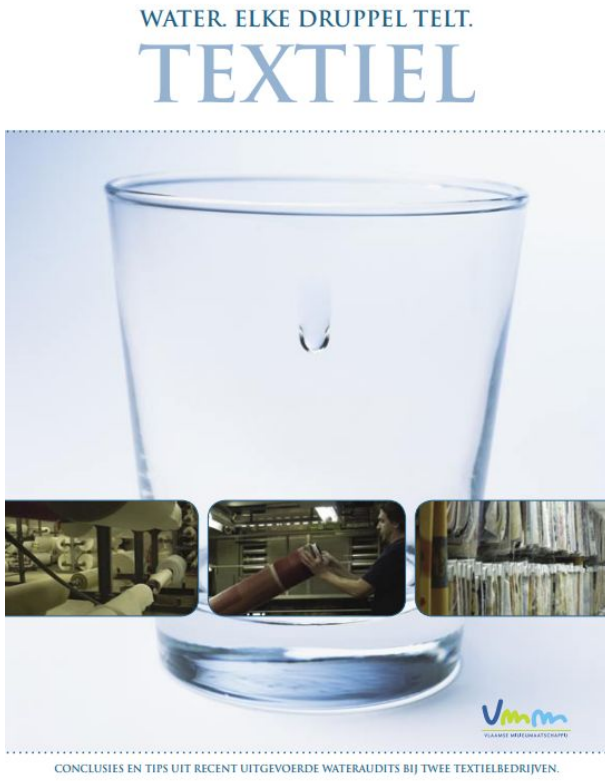
Water Efficiency First Principle + Water reuse

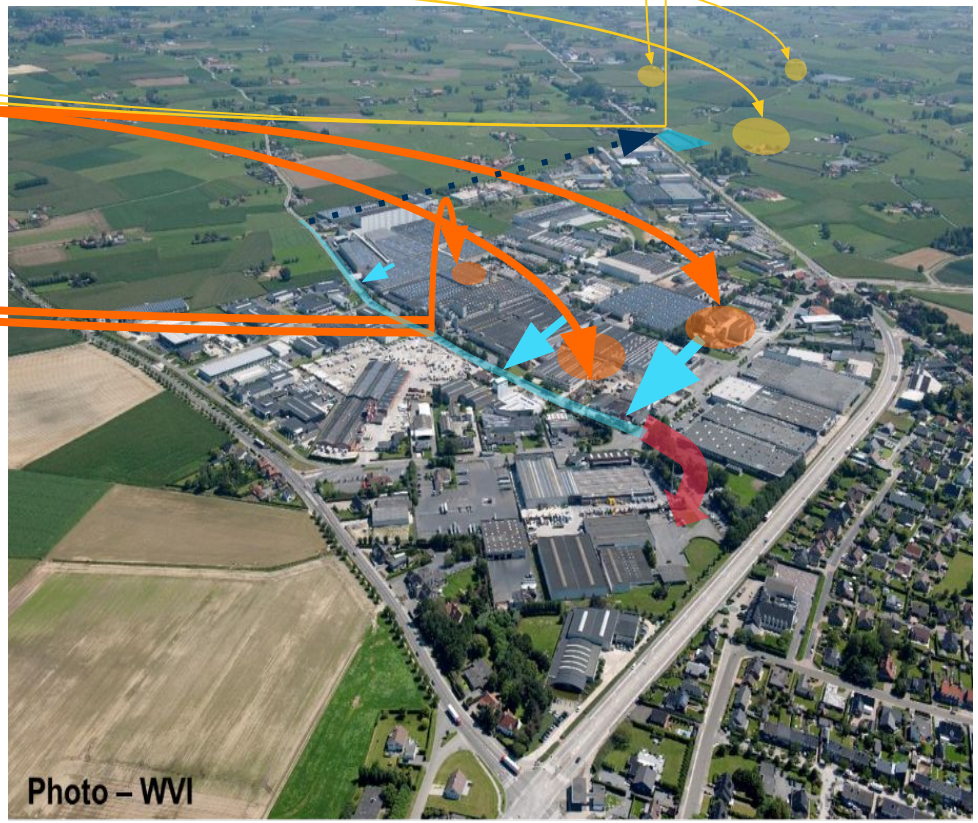
Flagship actions - Building a water-smart economy that leaves no one behind, supports EU competitiveness and attracts investors	Timeline
Recommendation on the Water Efficiency First principle, guidelines and EEA report on the untapped water efficiency potential.	2025-2026
Support the uptake of water reuse practices also beyond agriculture and review the Water Reuse Regulation.	2026-2028
Public water supply: • Support leakage reduction and infrastructure modernisation and deep data assessment.	2025-2028

[47] European Environment Agency (2024) Europe's state of water 2024. https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/europes-state-of-water-2024

[48] For example the current Transition Pathways Stakeholder Support Platform.

WATER PROOF





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Target & shared ambition

- What is the “end point” of water resilience?
  - Without **clear regional targets** or thresholds, companies lack visibility on when resilience is "achieved" or how far their investment needs to go.

- Urgent need for a **shared ambition** framework
  - Businesses are reluctant to invest when there's no guarantee that these efforts will measurably reduce their actual exposure to water-related risks
  - Clearly defined expectations for all stakeholders (public, private, local) are required to align efforts, reduce fragmentation, and de-risk private investments.

“The effectiveness of our major investments in water resilience is highly interdependent with actions taken by other stakeholders in the region. Without coordinated effort, our individual risk profile may remain largely unchanged”

Align Taxonomy with EU water Resilience Strategy

Financial Sector

- No dedicated category for new industrial wastewater treatment plants
  - Current scope focuses primarily on municipal or utility-scale infrastructure, overlooking industrial-specific solutions.
- Freshwater reduction efforts are not adequately recognized
  - Projects that significantly lower water intake (e.g. via process optimisation or closed-loop systems) receive no explicit credit—unless they also reduce energy use or emissions per m^3.
- Performance metrics may unintentionally penalize sustainable projects
  - Water-efficient operations can increase energy use per m^3 treated, despite lower absolute impact.
- Stringent data requirements are a barrier to innovation
  - Criteria often demand multi-year historical performance data (e.g. baseline energy use), which are typically unavailable for older installations. Even when it's clear the new system performs better, it's not always possible to provide the "hard evidence" required.

Public –Private Partnership PFAS

Flagship actions - Restoring and protecting the water cycle	Timeline
Establish, including through Structured Dialogues with Member States, implementation priorities of the Water Framework and the Floods Directives, focusing on water quality and quantity.	2025-2026
Revise the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.	2027
Develop water scarcity indicators and a Technical Guidance on Drought Management Plans.	2026-2027
Support addressing main sources of pollution: • Public-private initiative to achieve a technological breakthrough in feasible and affordable methods for the detection and remediation of PFAS and other persistent chemicals, if the right partners are found. • Launch an Assistance Toolbox for Member States to support actions to reduce nutrients pollution, including through enhanced modelling, interactive maps and exchanges of best practices.	2027 2026-2027

Working smarter in complexity

The more brains the more power

Works speak louder than words

KIS Kenniscentrum Innovatieve Saneringstechnieken

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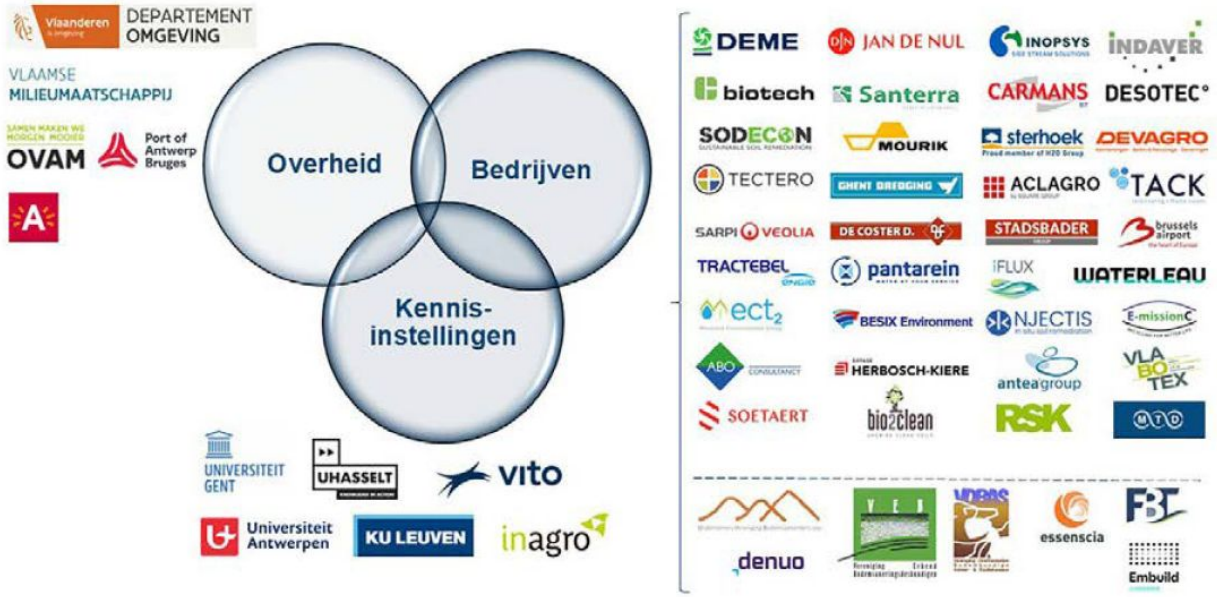
Kenniscentrum voor Innovatieve Saneringstechnieken (KIS)

- KIS: Knowledge Center for Innovation in Remediation Techniques (2023)
  - **Collaboration** between companies, public authorities, and research institutes.
    - **Incentive program** focused on the development of demonstration projects (up to 75% funding).
    - **Centralization of knowledge**:
      - Project database showing who is working on which solution.
    - Sharing lessons learned and encouraging cross-pollination between projects.

- Lessons learned
  - Keep focus on soil, water, and air simultaneously (avoid shifting the problem from one compartment to another).
  - Importance of local pilot projects that account for regional and legal specificities
  - The strategic value of European/international alignment



Water Resilience Investment accelerator

Flagship actions - Finance, investments and infrastructure to achieve a stable supply	Timeline
Launch of EIB Water Programme and Sustainable Water Advisory Facility in cooperation with the Commission to step up the assistance to potential loan-takers, increasing the pipeline of projects.	2025
Support Member States and regions in reorienting Cohesion policy funds for water resilience within the mid-term review.	2025
Establish a Water Resilience Investment Accelerator	2026-2027
Launch a Green and Blue Corridors initiative to support the restoration of ecological settings and infrastructure including rivers, wetlands, and coastal restoration to restore the water cycle with a source-to-sea approach.	2027
Adopt a Roadmap for Nature Credits to tap the potential of these instruments and incentivise the scale-up of these markets.	2025

Insight about pilot projects and alliances

- “Launch a pilot project to promote water efficiency, including waterless and closed water cycle technologies, in selected industrial clusters (2025- 2027)”
- “The Commission will establish a Water Resilience Investment Accelerator to implement 20 pilot innovative cases for natural water retention and water efficiency, bringing together local water investors, solution providers and problem holders to inspire similar actions across the EU. **This could also build on the networks of Living Labs** established e.g. in European Partnerships and Missions (2026 -2027)”
- “Water Smart Industrial Alliance to stimulate competitiveness.”
- More insight regarding selection criteria and opportunities for involvement of regions with existing initiatives, such as the recognized Flemish WOLLs (Mechelen, Herk & Mombeek, Port of Antwerp-Bruges, WaterClimateHub)
- The possibility to operate in **the spirit of the legislation**, though not necessarily according to the letter of the law, supported by EU subsidies

Water4All
Water security for the planet

Filter by: Location WOLL type


City of Mechelen


Herk and Mombeek Living Lab


Port of Antwerp – Bruges


Water Climate Hub

"A WOLL (Water-Oriented Living Lab) is a practice-based environment where innovative water solutions are tested and scaled up in a real-life setting, with the active involvement of businesses, governments, researchers, and citizens. The added value of a WOLL lies in its ability to foster collaboration and accelerate innovation, with the goal of realizing sustainable solutions that can be rolled out on a larger scale”

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