



Context: The Woesten land consolidation plan was approved in 1999. The consolidation operations were completed in 2005. The land consolidation covers a surface area of 1,589 ha.

Land consolidation is a method by which the Flemish Government ensures more cost-effective and sustainable agriculture in the agrarian community. Described concisely, land consolidation comprises the regrouping of agricultural land, the construction of new roads and the improvement or removal of existing roads. The land is consolidated and rearranged within the management plan boundary area.

Most of the land remains private property. About 2% of the land is withdrawn from private property to allow the municipalities to carry out measures associated with landscape, nature conservation and recreation.

A **management plan** is drawn up by VLM – the Flemish Land Association – covering all measures to be undertaken with respect to nature, recreation and the landscape. The management itself is carried out by public, as well as private partners, mainly farmers.

In consultation with the partners concerned, VLM has drawn up a management plan for the measures to be carried out with respect to nature, landscape and recreation. The report includes a comprehensive description of the work carried out and the management tasks to be conducted for linear vegetation, the smaller more dispersed woods, the new recreational routes and road verges along new roads.



A land consolidation project requires a strong administration and the commitment of the very many **stakeholders** and public **partners**. There are approx. 1,090 parties concerned, owners and users of land in the research area of the Woesten land consolidation.



The local authorities and the parties concerned are involved with the drawing up of the land consolidation plan. By way of example, the youth council was closely involved in choosing the location and making the plan for the play area in the Wippehoek public woodland.

To maintain the engagement of the various target groups, planting work for the Wippehoek play area was started on “Nature Day”, Saturday 21 November 2009. Some 1,200 trees and bushes were planted. Nature Day is aimed at encouraging as many volunteers as possible to participate within the context of nature and landscape management.

Because various partners are responsible for the management of the linear landscape elements (including vegetation and recreational structures) it is considered favourable for this to be done in a coordinated way according to the management plan and with initial co-financing by the Province of West Flanders. Annual management consultation and **evaluation** is in place and forms an important part for all partners: VLM, regional landscape bodies, landscape watch, Westhoek development area of the Province of West Flanders, municipal parks and open spaces managers. During this annual consultation process, last year’s management is discussed and evaluated, as is the management planning and financing for the coming year. If necessary, the proposed planning and implementation method for the management plan is adapted.

Transferable Lessons

- Participation of target groups when drawing up a design which occurred in the planning process for the play area in the Wippehoek public woodland.
- Drawing up of a general management plan and the setting up of a management structure and financing for linear landscape elements within a rural context.
- Coordination of design and organisation with future management firmly in mind, with a commitment to funding beyond the place-making process.

