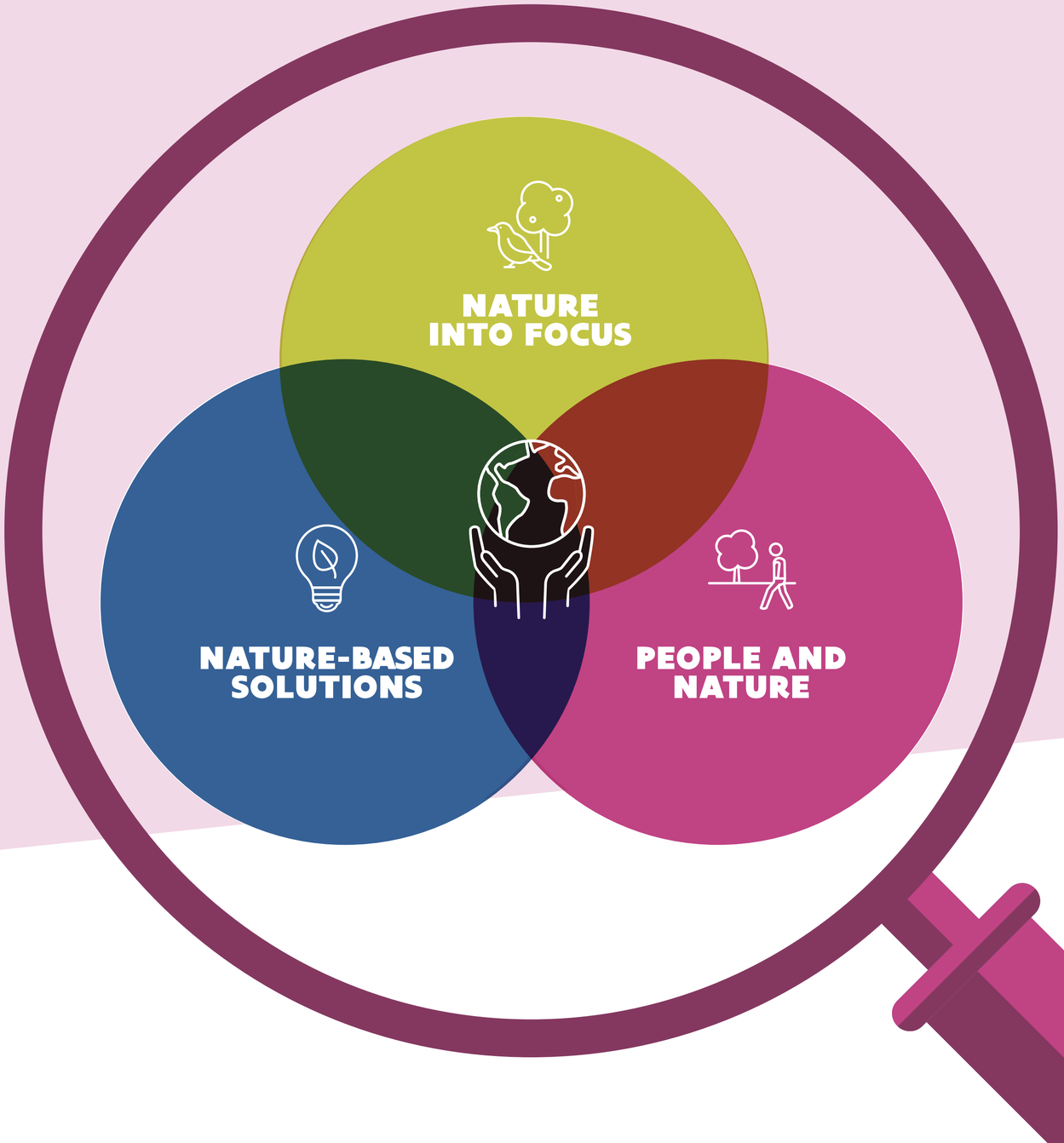
INBO ON THE ROAD TO 2030

Flanders
State of the Art



RESEARCH INSTITUTE
NATURE AND FOREST

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Aaike De Wever, Bruno De Vos, Charlotte Noël, Daniel De Charleroy, David Buysse, Dieter Mortelmans, Dirk Maes, Erika Van den Bergh, Floris Van den Broeck, Francis Turkelboom, Gerald Louette, Hilde Eggermont, Irina De Landtsheer, Jeroen Van Wichelen, Jim Casaer, Johan Peymen, Jomme Desair, Kris Vandekerkhove, Lymke Janssens, Maarten Stevens, Marc Pollet, Maud Raman, Maurice Hoffmann, Michael Leone, Myriam Dumortier, Nathalie Cools, Peter Van Gossum, Raïsa Carmen, Ralf Gyselings, Rein Brys, Sam Provoost, Sander Jacobs, Sandra Van Waeyenberge, Suzanna Lettens, Tim Adriaens, Toon Spanhove, Veronique Adriaenssens

We are also grateful to all the other INBO staff and stakeholders who participated in consultations or provided feedback on drafts.

A NEW RESEARCH AGENDA FOR INBO

The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) is the independent research institute of the Flemish government that underpins and evaluates biodiversity policy through monitoring and scientific research. INBO has a unique niche in the scientific landscape in Flanders due to its ability to ensure continuity. We achieve this through long-term research and monitoring, and a permanent research infrastructure supporting the full breadth of our activities.

In this new research agenda, we define INBO's priority research challenges for 2025-2029, in response to current needs and questions from policy and practice. We highlight a number of research avenues and pave the way for new collaborations. This strategic vision is a compass that will guide our research programmes over the coming years. Together with the **mission and vision**, the assignments from INBO's **founding act** (document in Dutch) and our **'statutory tasks'** (in Dutch), these research programmes form the basis for INBO research activities in support of biodiversity policy and practice.

This research agenda was compiled through a participatory process involving workshops, policy context analyses, inspirational speakers and dialogues with our stakeholders. This document presents the research challenges in a logical narrative.

Throughout this research agenda, you will find web links directing you to more background information.

SCIENCE FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

There is a growing consensus[1] that **climate change and biodiversity loss** are **inextricably linked** and that we must address both crises together to ensure a good quality of life for humans. A resilient nature is our greatest ally in the fight against climate change and other societal challenges. It provides a wide range of ecosystem services that are crucial for human well-being and our economy. We therefore have to bring nature back into our lives.

To achieve a sustainable, resilient and circular society, we need a **systems approach** that incorporates ecological, political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. **Transformative change** is profound, cross-sectoral and is not limited to nature policy.

INBO has analysed the **current needs and questions from policy and practice to identify priority research challenges**. These challenges will guide our efforts to help realise this sustainable transition.

European policy is exerting growing influence on Member States. Important European regulations that significantly impact Flemish nature policy encompass the Habitats and Birds Directives, the European regulation on invasive species and the Water Framework Directive. More recently, important frameworks have been added, such as the Green Deal and the European Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

The **European Green Deal** includes a package of incentives and regulatory initiatives aimed at making Europe a **climate-neutral continent** and world leader in **sustainable economy** by 2050. The measures span across a wide spectrum of sectors, such as energy, raw materials, housing, agriculture, transportation, environment,... To realise its ambitions, the Green Deal strongly emphasizes the importance of **nature-based solutions**, recognizing the pivotal role of robust nature in combating climate change and fostering economic sustainability. Therefore, biodiversity policy extends beyond merely protecting nature reserves: it serves as a paramount, cross-cutting theme driving transformative change.

1 See the IPCC and IPBES reports and the joint IPCC-IPBES report

The **European Biodiversity Strategy 2030** is part of the Green Deal, and was published by the European Commission in 2020 as a regional contribution to the international Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The strategy aims to restore Europe's biodiversity by 2030 for the benefit of people, planet, climate and the economy. It is also in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. The strategy contains four objectives:

- Establishing a larger EU-wide **network of protected areas** on land and at sea.
- Launching an EU **nature restoration plan**.
- Introducing measures to enable the necessary **transformative change**.
- Introducing measures to tackle the **global biodiversity challenge.**

Other initiatives that are part of the Green Deal are also important for **nature and forest policy in Flanders**, such as the Pollinators Initiative, the Soil Monitoring Law, the Forest Law, the Adaptation Strategy, the Farm To Fork Strategy, and a new Forest Strategy.

Besides European frameworks and regulations, the **Flemish government** also makes its own **action plans**, such as the Blue Deal, the Flemish Climate Adaptation Plan, the Forest Expansion Plan, the Flemish Action Plan Wild Pollinators, and the Flemish Action Programme Ecological Defragmentation (VAPEO). The Flemish government also recently approved the Nitrogen Decree, which aims to reduce nitrogen deposition and protect biodiversity.

RESEARCH CHALLENGES TOWARDS 2030

In collaboration with numerous actors and employing a transdisciplinary approach, INBO aims to provide a solid scientific knowledge base for current needs and questions from policy and practice.

We look at all aspects of biodiversity and their interdependence: genes, species and ecosystems. We study these in a wide variety of environments: terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, natural and forest areas, agricultural and urban environments.

OUR RESEARCH AGENDA TOWARDS 2030 COMPRISES FOUR COMPONENTS.

1. INBO BRINGS NATURE INTO FOCUS

Thanks to research and long-term monitoring, INBO describes the status and trends of nature, offering valuable insights into the effects of policy and management decisions on nature. We aim to address critical questions:

How is our biodiversity doing and how healthy are our ecosystems? How do climate change and other disturbances affect the provision of ecosystem services? What is the impact on nature of pollution by nitrogen, PFAS or other substances? How are insects and soil organisms thriving in Flanders? What invasive species pose potential threats to our region?

2. INBO CONTRIBUTES TO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

INBO provides scientific support for an effective Flemish nature policy. We investigate what nature needs in order to recover, and how we can strengthen ecosystems by creating a coherent nature network. How can we foster the development of multifunctional landscapes and make agriculture work more closely with nature? We investigate how we can provide space to water, how nature can help to counter climate change (climate mitigation), and how robust nature can make society less vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (climate adaptation).

3. INBO EXAMINES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NATURE

Ensuring a good life for all people requires transformative change. This concerns all aspects of our society, our economy and our relationship with nature: how we nourish, travel, work and live. INBO provides the scientific support needed to enable the transition towards a sustainable society and address the challenges around biodiversity loss, nature restoration and climate adaptation. We do this by integrating ecological, social and economic dimensions in our research.

4. HOW DOES INBO WORK?

As an Open Science institute, INBO upholds transparency throughout every stage of the research cycle. We employ innovative monitoring techniques and ensure that our data are publicly accessible. In dialogue with society, we produce research outcomes that are useful and relevant. We communicate these findings clearly and effectively, tailored to the needs of our target audiences. Moreover, we are committed to being active participants in transformative change by making our institute sustainable, agile and inclusive.

INBO BRINGS NATURE INTO FOCUS

The basis for a sound science-based nature policy is objective and reliable scientific data. These data give us insights into how our biodiversity and ecosystem services are doing, help to quantify how much nature contributes to our economy and well-being, and illustrate the impact of policy and management decisions on nature.

HOW HEALTHY ARE OUR ECOSYSTEMS?

INBO monitors **the long-term functioning and health of ecosystems** in Flanders to better understand their status and changes over time. We gain a better understanding of an ecosystem's water and nutrient balance. What enters, exits and remains within the system? By studying the complex and dynamic interactions within ecosystems, we are able to predict the impact of external disturbances. This allows us to recommend actions to maintain and restore nature in Flanders.

To assess the condition of our ecosystems, INBO is actively engaged in the development of ecosystem accounts, an initiative gaining traction on both the international and European policy agenda for years. These accounts serve as statistical tools facilitating the assessment of biodiversity policy. Ecosystem accounts reflect the basic natural quality and degree of degradation for different ecosystems. We do this not only for the more natural ecosystems such as forests, heaths, marshes, but also for agroecosystems and urban ecosystems. INBO will develop **ecosystem accounts** **on the extent and condition of the ecosystems in Flanders**. To do so, we will assess the existing monitoring networks, evaluate which data are missing and ascertain where additional monitoring networks are needed.

Forests are valuable ecosystems that provide us with numerous ecosystem services such as climate regulation, timber production or recreation. The upcoming European law on forest monitoring aims to make forest information accessible, thus supporting policies for the **conservation, restoration and sustainable use of forest ecosystems** and their services. This monitoring should make Europe's forests more resilient to cross-border threats from pests, air pollution, droughts, forest fires and biodiversity loss. INBO contributes to this endeavour by **forest research and monitoring**. Through the development and follow-up of forest indicators, we provide information on condition and trends.

Soil biodiversity is crucial for the proper functioning of ecosystems and the provision of ecosystem services. It holds over 50% of known species, and is the driving force in many ecosystem processes such as decomposition of organic matter, nutrient supply, or water purification and infiltration. Soil organisms contribute to soil fertility, which forms the basis for both food and feed. Due to the scarcity of long-term data on soil organisms, INBO aims to establish a knowledge centre on the **state and evolution of soil biodiversity in Flanders**. We want to investigate the effects of land use, climate change and pollution on soil biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides.

The **decline of pollinators and other insects** is an indicator that shows the health of our ecosystems has been compromised. The decline poses major implications for our food production. In Flanders, our knowledge of insect decline is limited. Various factors such as land use changes, pesticide use, nitrogen deposition and climate change could contribute to this decline. Therefore, we aim to investigate how to set up an **insect monitoring network** in Flanders. Such a network would allow us to better understand the mechanisms behind the observed decline and help to propose actions to maintain insect populations and restore the ecosystems in which they thrive.

BIODIVERSITY UNDER PRESSURE

In a region increasingly affected by globalisation, urbanisation and climate change, several factors are putting pressure on our biodiversity and affecting the health of the natural environment in Flanders.

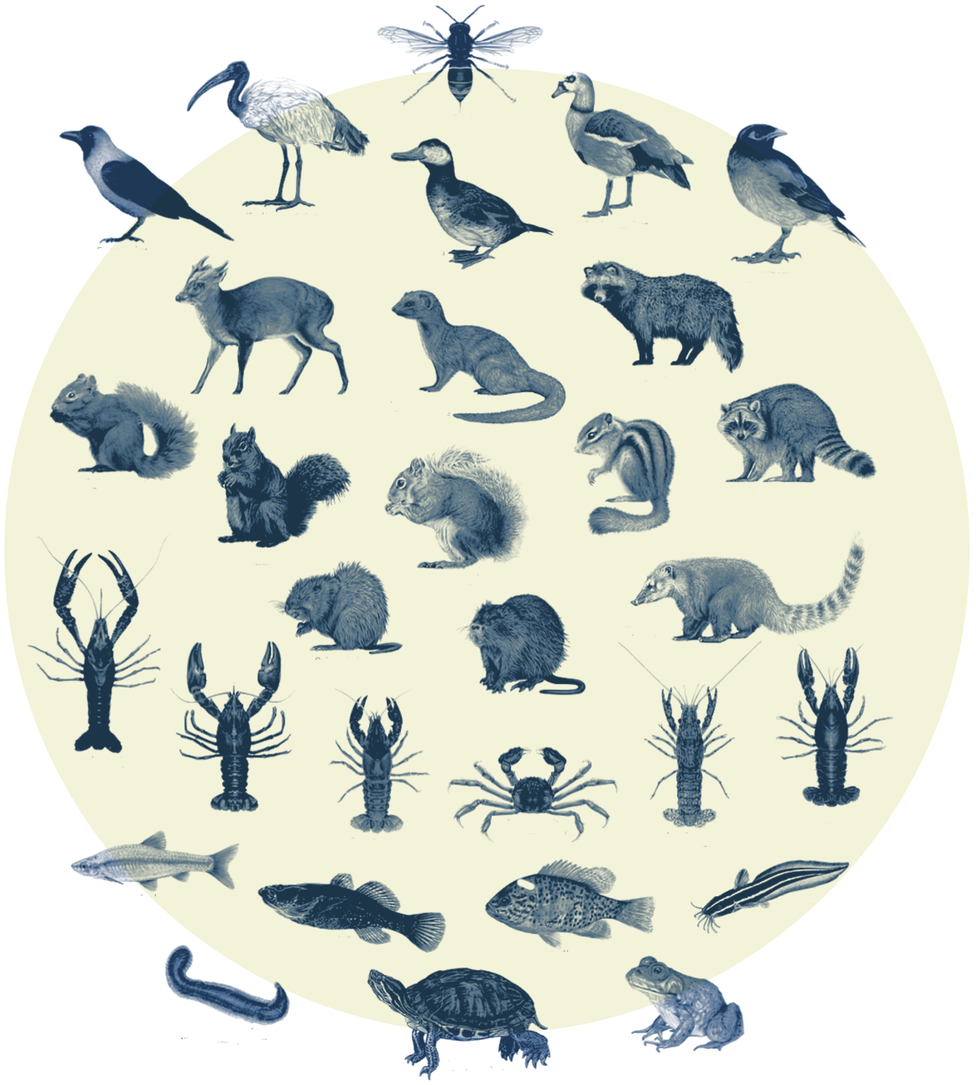
Pollution is increasingly prominent on the Flemish and European policy agenda. This includes substances such as nitrogen, phosphorus, heavy metals, pesticides, plastics, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other Particularly Hazardous Substances (PHS). INBO provides the scientific support to address pollution, focusing on the impact on biodiversity and the capacity to provide ecosystem services.

There is a high societal demand for scientific support for the **Programmatic Approach to Nitrogen (PAS)**. With PAS impact monitoring, INBO investigates the **ecological impact of nitrogen on protected nature**. We monitor nature quality of nitrogen-sensitive habitat types, both at the scale of Flanders and in five PAS focal areas. We also **evaluate the effectiveness of our nitrogen policy**. At the Flanders level, INBO wants to develop a PAS monitoring network to compare the result of nitrogen remediation and recovery measures in remediated and non-remediated sites.

We are continuing our research on **restoration measures**, extending our focus beyond nitrogen. We investigate the interaction with other related pressures, such as phosphorus and other nutrients, as well as the existing water regime and climate change effects. By making our data **accessible through web portals**, we facilitate informed decision-making in Flanders regarding licensing, technology and remedial measures.

In recent years, other pollutants such as **PFAS** have appeared on the policy radar. These substances can accumulate in the food chain due to their lipophilic properties. To date, little research has been done in Flanders on the effects of PFAS on fauna and flora. However, it is well established that these substances are immune and endocrine disruptors, posing risks such as infections, developmental disorders, and fertility issues. INBO aims to scale up research and monitoring of these persistent substances and other **Particularly Hazardous Substances (PHS)** to map their exposure pathways and effects, and determine safe thresholds. Our focus lies specifically on fish in Flemish inland waters.

Our natural environment is also greatly disturbed by the **rise of invasive alien species**. This has an increasing impact on our society and our economy. To respond effectively to this challenge, it is necessary to proactively identify these species. Monitoring invasive alien species is mandatory in the European Union. INBO aims to roll out **new monitoring networks** to quickly anticipate the presence of invasive alien species, and to support management practices. Through the newly established **exotic species unit**, we ensure coordinated efforts with the Agency for Nature and Forests and enhance public awareness through communication activities.



INBO CONTRIBUTES TO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

In Flanders, our natural landscapes are facing increasing pressure due to the scarcity of open space. In addition, as a society we are facing an increasingly unpredictable climate, characterised by weather extremes, droughts and flooding. INBO aims at supporting policymakers to tackle these challenges by providing nature-based solutions. These are measures that use natural processes and ecosystems to address several societal problems simultaneously and effectively, such as drought, food shortage or natural disasters. These nature-based solutions are sustainable, resilient and also lead to more biodiversity.

NATURE RESTORATION AND SPACE FOR WATER

INBO aims to scientifically support **nature restoration in Flanders**. To this end, we evaluate which areas are priority for nature restoration, and to what degree nature restoration projects have been effective in the past. We assess which restoration measures are needed in terms of space, soil, hydrology, species, and connectivity. We also evaluate which of these measures are the most cost-effective. For nature areas in Flanders, we determine the conservation status and what needs to be done to improve it.

We also aim to understand the underlying causes of **status and trends of species**. We go beyond species monitoring and site mapping by working on landscape level and focusing on system restoration.

Our research on **sustainable water system restoration** also adopts this holistic systems approach. Using nature-based solutions to give back space to water and restore natural processes is the most sustainable and cost-efficient strategy to help realise water policy objectives such as those from the Blue Deal. In this way, Flanders can arm itself against the consequences of climate change.

INBO aims to explore how water management, removal of obstructions and valley restoration can contribute to achieving the target of 25,000 km of **free-flowing rivers** set by the European Biodiversity Strategy 2030.

We examine how implementing **more natural drainage regimes** (e-flows), along with enhancing groundwater and surface water systems, can harmonise existing nature objectives with initiatives like creating floodable valleys (water storage) and retaining precipitation for longer (retention and infiltration). We look at the **effects of drought and pollution**, as well as the tolerance thresholds for species and ecosystems. As the **European Water Framework Directive** approaches its 25th year in 2025, we aim to assess its impact on aquatic nature in Flanders.

Achieving sustainable ecological water system restoration requires coordination amongst various action plans, covering areas like the Dender, Upper Scheldt, Leie, IJzer, Dijle, Nete, Demer, Maas, Sea Scheldt,... Establishing a scientific **advisory hub for water system restoration** can bring together multidisciplinary knowledge now scattered across Flanders. By doing so, we can provide proactive and area-specific recommendations and identify research needs. This can provide structural support for the climate-adaptive and nature-based design in source and valley areas, increasing water storage capacity and increasing the sponge effect.

CREATING A COHERENT NATURE NETWORK

An essential step towards halting biodiversity decline and fostering nature restoration is the **creation of a coherent nature network**. A robust, resilient and coherent nature network is one of the pillars of the European Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and the proposed legally binding nature restoration targets. Moreover, it underpins the broader goals of the Green Deal. Those targets, notably ambitious for Flanders, call for an acceleration of current efforts. INBO stands ready to support managers and policymakers with expert knowledge and research to realise these ambitions.

A coherent nature network consists of cores of robust and resilient nature that are interconnected. These nature cores are surrounded by multifunctional areas that serve as hydrological and environmental buffers, allowing species to move across landscapes. To create such a coherent nature network, we analyse the effects of **fragmentation**, including those caused by road networks and construction activities.

Additionally, we examine the impacts of **disturbances** such as light pollution, contamination or infrastructure (e.g. wind turbines, high-voltage lines, pumping stations).

INBO also aims to identify areas showcasing the highest **genetic diversity** across species. Together with research on habitat use, we can identify priority zones and measures to **improve ecological connectivity**. This will increase the chances of conserving and strengthening populations.

To optimise the use of limited open space in Flanders, we must explore ways to create **multifunctional landscapes**. INBO aims to provide scientific support to participatory area-based processes in **nature-inclusive landscape planning**. Our goal is to achieve win-win outcomes amongst different stakeholders while considering the landscape's carrying capacity, as well as Flemish policy objectives related to nature and climate. We focus our scientific support primarily on Landscape Parks, National Parks and wetlands, and also want to contribute to other area-oriented projects.

The creation of a coherent nature network and the realisation of nature restoration objectives also require measures outside nature reserves. We must strive for a **sustainable coexistence of agriculture and nature**.

Together with numerous partners, INBO aims to explore how **agroecology and nature restoration** **can reinforce each other**. Through agroecology, we seek to cultivate an agriculture that works more effectively with nature while minimising negative impacts. Biodiversity within agricultural landscapes can bolster agricultural productivity, with benefits such as enhanced pollination, soil health, natural pest control or resilience against climate extremes. Simultaneously, nature restoration within agricultural areas strengthens the surrounding nature areas, helping to achieve nature policy goals.

NATURE AS AN ALLY AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

INBO investigates how nature in Flanders can contribute to **mitigating climate effects**. How can we strengthen our ecosystems and adjust the landscape to help mitigate the effects of climate change?
We examine the **effect of climate change on the state of our natural environment:** what consequences do fluctuations in temperature, precipitation or drought have? How do species, populations and ecosystems react, survive and adapt?

It comes down to **fostering climate resilience within nature itself**. What management practices are needed to achieve this? How do we also deploy the landscape outside nature reserves and create a robust nature network that protects us from the effects of climate change?

INBO is committed to providing scientific support for **climate-smart forest management** to achieve the policy goals aimed at **forest expansion and climate robustness**. Which tree species and management techniques should we use to create a forest microclimate? How can we make forests more resilient to drought, heat, storms, wildfire? How can we use forests as allies against floods? How can we efficiently realise the ambition for 10,000 ha of additional forest: what are the most appropriate locations, which forest creation techniques are most effective, and which species are most suited?

Human greenhouse gas emissions primarily drive climate change. INBO investigates how we can use nature to **remove and store carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere**. We monitor **carbon stocks in soil and biomass**, and investigate how land-use changes and adapted management practices affect those carbon stocks. This allows us to provide targeted recommendations on what management is needed to maximise carbon storage, and which areas are most suitable for greenhouse gas storage.

INBO EXAMINES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NATURE

INBO does not only want to bring our nature into focus and provide nature-based solutions to the social, ecological and economic challenges we are currently facing in Flanders. To achieve the transformation of our society in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is also important to explore the relationship between people and nature.

THE IMPACT OF NATURE ON OUR WELL-BEING

INBO aims to explore the relationship between **nature and health**. How does environmental quality, biodiversity loss and climate change affect our physical and mental health? How can nature in the city and proximity to nature improve quality of life? How can **urban nature** mitigate climate effects and contribute to creating a coherent nature network?

International research suggests that a high connectedness to nature is an indicator of greater mental well-being and of a commitment to nature conservation and environmental protection. The concept of **'nature connectedness'** emphasises the emotional bond between people and nature, with nature being part of our identity. INBO wants to investigate the level of nature connectedness in Flanders and how we can strengthen it.

Clarifying the relationship between nature and well-being can help create **wider public support for nature** and integrate nature considerations in other policy areas.

The recent COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity called for extra attention to **human-wildlife interactions** to minimise potential conflicts. In Flanders, conflicts and tensions frequently arise among various stakeholders, concerning the management of returning species such as wolf, beaver and wild boar, or declining populations of species such as partridge and hare. At the same time, we see that the solutions are often solely technical in nature, focusing on population management or preventive measures, without adequately addressing the complex underlying processes that fuel conflicts between different interest groups. INBO aims to provide a sound scientific base and participatory processes to help address these conflicts.

NATURE AND ECONOMY AS PARTNERS

The way the economy is currently organised, contributes to biodiversity loss. Yet, our economy is also directly dependent on nature, for providing materials and ecosystem services, and for providing a stable and fertile environment for our society. Nature and economy are thus closely linked and mutually dependent. INBO wants to explore opportunities for developing a **nature-positive economy** that provides benefits for both people and the planet.

The value assigned to nature in various (policy) decisions is often based on only a few and one-sided valuations, such as market value, recreational value or ecological value. The corresponding indicators use a single perspective, like number of (rare) species, tonnes of carbon or nitrogen, or euros. This narrow focus often overlooks the diverse range of benefits provided by nature, resulting in nature being undervalued. Through combining and (re)balancing these different values in a **plural valuation approach**, INBO aims to improve the uptake of diverse values of nature in decision making and policy.

We leverage the extensive pool of monitoring data to assess how and to what extent our **economy depends on our nature and vice versa**. For example, we look at the cost-effectiveness of investing in nature-based solutions. We examine the cost of damage to ecosystems, for example from invasive species, pollution or land use practices. We also assess the impact of Flemish consumption patterns on biodiversity and land use abroad.

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

To help ensure that humanity operates safely within planetary boundaries, INBO aims to support **transformative change** through its research. Transformative change is a fundamental reorganisation of how society functions, to balance human development with social, economic, technological and environmental sustainability.

Transformative change in Flanders poses significant challenges because one has to take into account great pressure on open space and thus a large number of spatial and sectoral policies. Policies and instruments in one sector can unintentionally undermine the objectives of another.

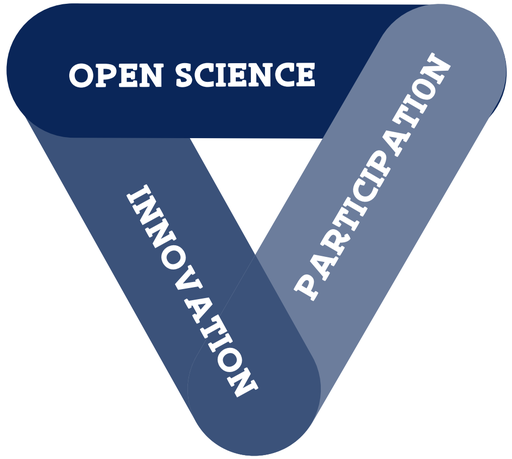
INBO therefore aims to support transformative change by underpinning adaptive policies across sectors. We explore the **complexity of the policy landscape** and the underlying interests, power relations and value patterns. Understanding different perspectives and involving stakeholders in the decision-making process is essential for a **broadly supported and sustainable design of the environment**. We look at the root causes of the biodiversity and climate crisis, and advise on innovative decision-making processes and equitable solutions.

HOW DOES INBO WORK?

To effectively support policy and practice in tackling the challenges around biodiversity loss, nature restoration and climate adaptation, INBO must operate as an open organisation committed to innovation, and engaging in continuous dialogue with society. This commitment is essential to increase the impact of our research.

At INBO, we adhere to the principles of open and reproducible research, commonly known as Open Science, in order to achieve solid and demonstrable scientific quality. As an **Open Science institute**, transparency guides our approach across all stages of the research cycle. From the design of the research question, through data collection, data analysis, sharing of research results, to encouraging the reuse of our research data, we prioritise openness to foster trust and collaboration within the scientific community.

To bolster the accessibility of our research findings and ensure that our data reach the end user, INBO is intensifying efforts to make our data more readily available to the public. Through our website, we provide a clear and publicly accessible overview of all INBO monitoring data. At the same time, we are working on a **Flemish Biodiversity Portal**. Through this portal, we aim to centralise and open up all available species data for Flanders. We aim for optimal use of this portal, tailored to the needs of different actors, in particular for policymaking and licensing.



We aim for **clear and proactive communication** with a diversity of products to increase the reach and effective uptake of our research results. We pay specific attention to communicating to citizens about the societal relevance of our research.

INNOVATIVE DATA COLLECTION

To address the research challenges we identified, high-quality and efficient data collection is essential. INBO therefore intends to scale up its efforts on **innovative monitoring techniques**.

INBO uses **automation and remote sensing techniques** such as sensors, radars, drone images and satellite imagery to monitor the state of nature, map land use or update the **Biological Valuation Map**. To help interpret these images, we use **artificial intelligence (AI) and deep learning**. We also use these techniques to automatically recognise animal species on images from camera traps or sound recordings.

We deploy **citizen science** to contribute to our research and increase public engagement. Citizen science involves citizens conducting scientific research. This approach not only enriches our research endeavours but also offers significant advantages at scale.

INBO continues to invest in permanent **research infrastructure**, encompassing laboratories, greenhouses, field measurement equipment such as camera traps, monitoring wells, sensors and drones. At the Flanders' level, we are actively collaborating to use our research infrastructure more efficiently. Furthermore, it is our ambition to strengthen our involvement in international research infrastructures, facilitating long-term research and promoting harmonized knowledge exchange within a European network..

With its recently renovated genetic laboratory, INBO remains at the forefront of genetic analyses. We are also strengthening our monitoring capabilities through **environmental DNA (eDNA)**. This cutting-edge technique enables rapid and efficient identification of species present in soil or water samples.

WITH AN OPEN MIND TOWARDS THE FUTURE

We continuously **assess our own organisation** to identify opportunities for contributing to transformative change.

We want to discuss the **value systems, frames of thinking and roles played by various societal actors**. In what ways does this affect the language we speak, the questions we ask, the values we promote and the policies we help shape? What can we learn from other frameworks and roles to strengthen our research and impact?

We reinforce our **transdisciplinary and participatory work**. We enrich natural science research with other disciplines, such as socio-ecological research, and work together with societal actors. We embrace a participatory and inclusive approach, promoting innovative forms of cooperation.

Biodiversity knows no national borders. Moreover, our impact on nature extends far beyond our own borders. INBO therefore wants to further upscale **internationalisation** and knowledge exchange. We are convinced that this can promote scientific progress and cooperation, and broaden our outlook. We also wish to further translate our knowledge into international policy. We do this by scientifically supporting multilateral agreements such as the Convention on Biodiversity, the Migratory Species Convention or Ramsar. We cooperate in international organisations such as IUCN and contribute to evaluations of science-policy platforms such as IPBES.

We evaluate how to make **our institute more sustainable, inclusive and agile**. How do we make sustainable and ecological choices in our operations? How do we create equal opportunities for all and create an inclusive organisation? How do we ensure that we are a dynamic organisation that can deal with change and support innovation on a regular basis?

Together, we are future-proofing our institute to meet the research challenges toward a sustainable society.

LIST OF IMAGES

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This research agenda was produced in collaboration with:
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