

## PILOT SITE DESIGN

# DE BLANKAART

WEST-FLANDERS, BELGIUM



<http://www.fotografiekrist.be/vroegmorgen-boottocht-op-de-blankaart/>

The pilot site is part of the Natura 2000 network and situated in the Special Protected Area Birds Directive 'IJzer- en Handzamevallei' and is partly managed as a nature reserve. The most prominent landscape features are the 50 ha large pond of named 'Blankaartvijver', and a vast area of grasslands that gets flooded during high water levels in the river.

Historically the Blankaartvijver was surrounded by extended reed beds. In order to intensify agricultural use of the grasslands a substantial lowering of water levels was achieved during last decades which transformed a large part the reedbeds into woods of willow. The deterioration of the area is exacerbated by the dramatic decline of water quality due to the input of excessive amounts of nutrients coming from the upstream lying agricultural area.

The measures taken will lead to a rewetting of the entire project area in three phases :

- One in eastern part of the project area was established in 2012
- Phase two (western part) of the rewetting will be established in spring 2019.
- An additional rise of the water level (phase III) will be implemented within a few years time.

**Size of pilot site:** 1000 ha

**Peatland type:**

**Land use:**

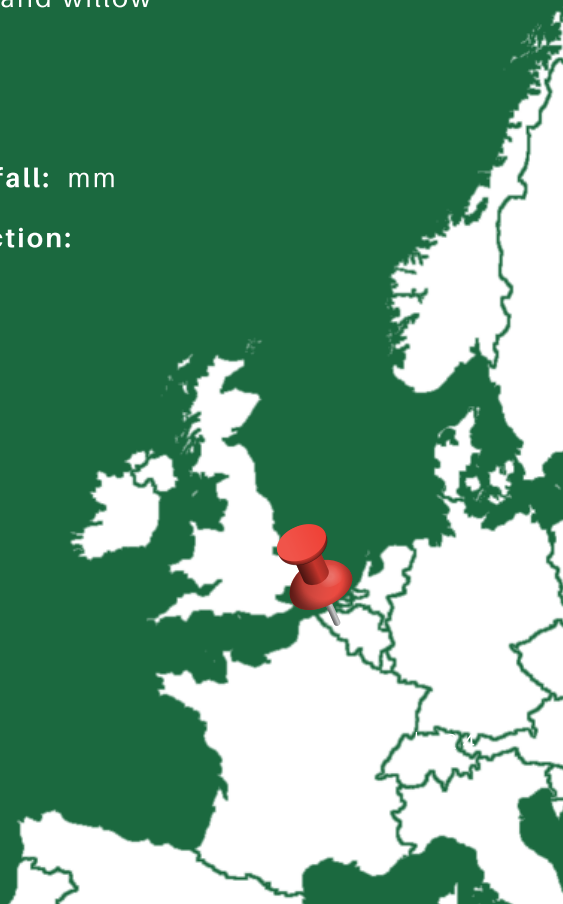
**Crop type:** Reeds and willow

**Water level:**

**Climate type:**

**Total annual rainfall:** mm

**Target CO2 reduction:**



## CHALLENGES

- Coordination with multiple stakeholders and owners to make decisions
- Legal restriction with the standards of nutrients legislation
- Use the marshland as a demonstration site to show that even land seemingly unsuitable for agricultural use can still have benefits to farmers.

## GOALS

- **Restoration** of the wetland over the entire project area, in particular thanks to the restoration of the former reed beds.
- **Rewetting** the wetland so as to:
  - increase the C-stock in the soil, and ensure monitoring to evaluate.
  - change vegetation types over a large area with concomitantly changing conditions for managing the land.
  - Attract farmers of the area (47) that use privately owned land towards the project thanks to the demonstration site.

## POTENTIAL BUSINESS MODELS

As it involve many farmers, the business modelling needs to be specific to each farm, but globally it will draw different types of biomass prodction on the rewetted sites and more specifcly composting the biomass and use it to increase c-stock levels in agricultural land.

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## PILOT SITE TIMELINE

**DATE xxxxx:** Preparation of a water level management protocol in collaboration with several stakeholders (waterboard Zuidijzerpolder, Flemish Environmental Agency)

**DATE XXXX:** Carry out a hydrological modelling to quantify the desired water levels in the area

Next step ?

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