



First two national parks in Wallonia

Seminar Dialogue
14/11/2024 @Brussels

- Project call
- Project proposal
- NP ESEM
- First steps and challenges

The Project cAll - context

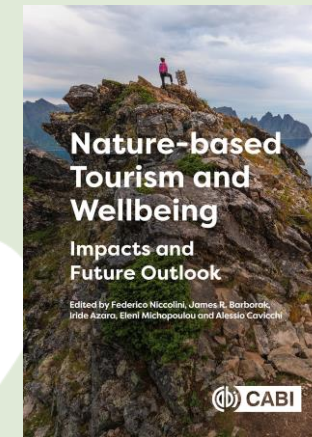
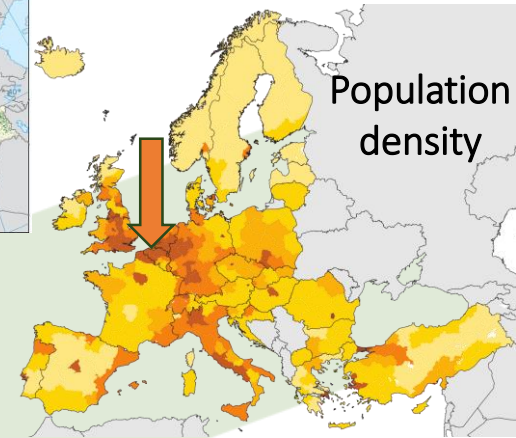
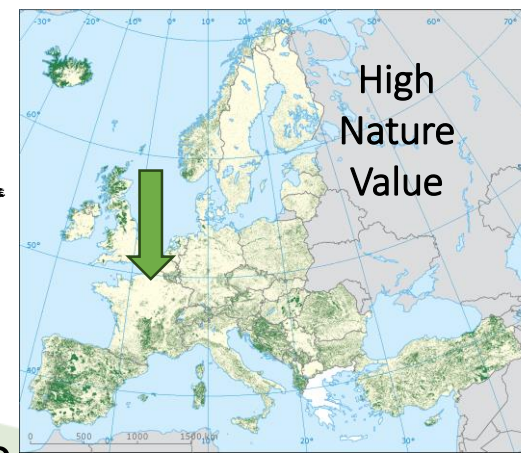
- Geo-demography

- High natural value territory at the centre of Europe
- High human pressure : population, roads...
- A low rate of protected areas (1.6 %)

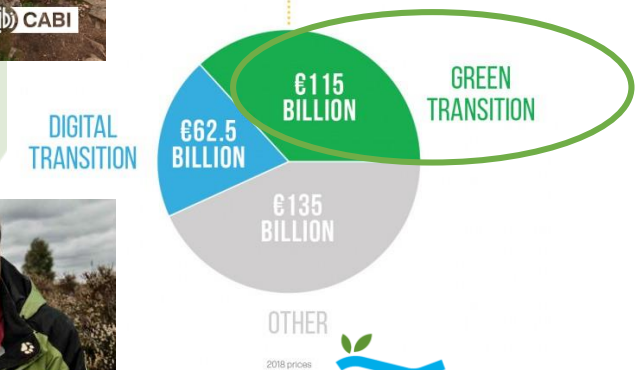
- Momentum

- Green Nature ministry in Wallonia
- Covid & natural areas as support for the tourism economy
- The Recovery and Resilience Facility

- 20 years Hoge Kempen National Park (FI)
 - Inspiring show-case setting the example



DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS
KEY SECTORS



The Project cAll - content



- 2 main goals
 - Contributing efficiently to nature protection
 - Building a global socio-economic project around nature protection and valuation
- Eligibility criteria (+ selection criteria)
 - Min. 5000 ha and **ecological** coherence, **international** dimension
 - High ecological and biological value :
 - > 90% natural ; > 75 % biological interest ; > 40% protection status ; + rewilding
 - Strong **partner coalition** and property agreements (>80%)
 - Municipalities + Administration + Nature NGOs + Tourism agencies + ...
- An Independent and expert Jury (14)
 - IUCN, Europarc, French NP, national thematic experts ...

Appel à projets

**Parc national
de Wallonie**



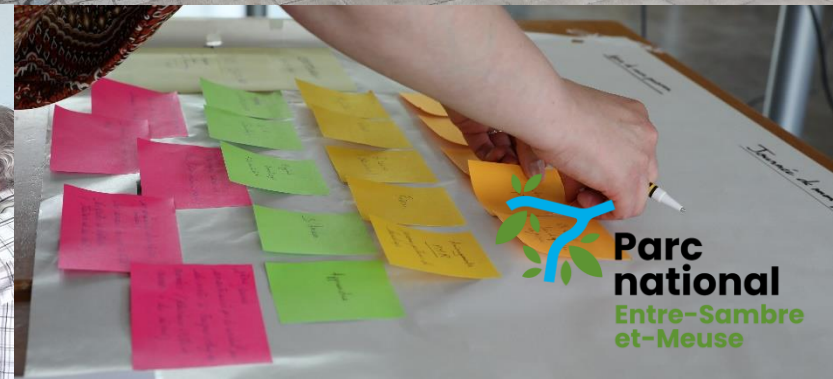
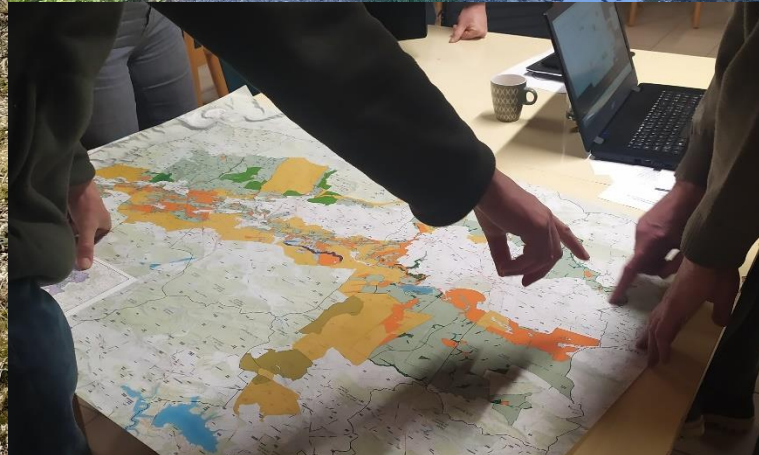
The Project proposal

Phase 1 : Intentional note

Phase 2 : Masterplan (PO-PD)

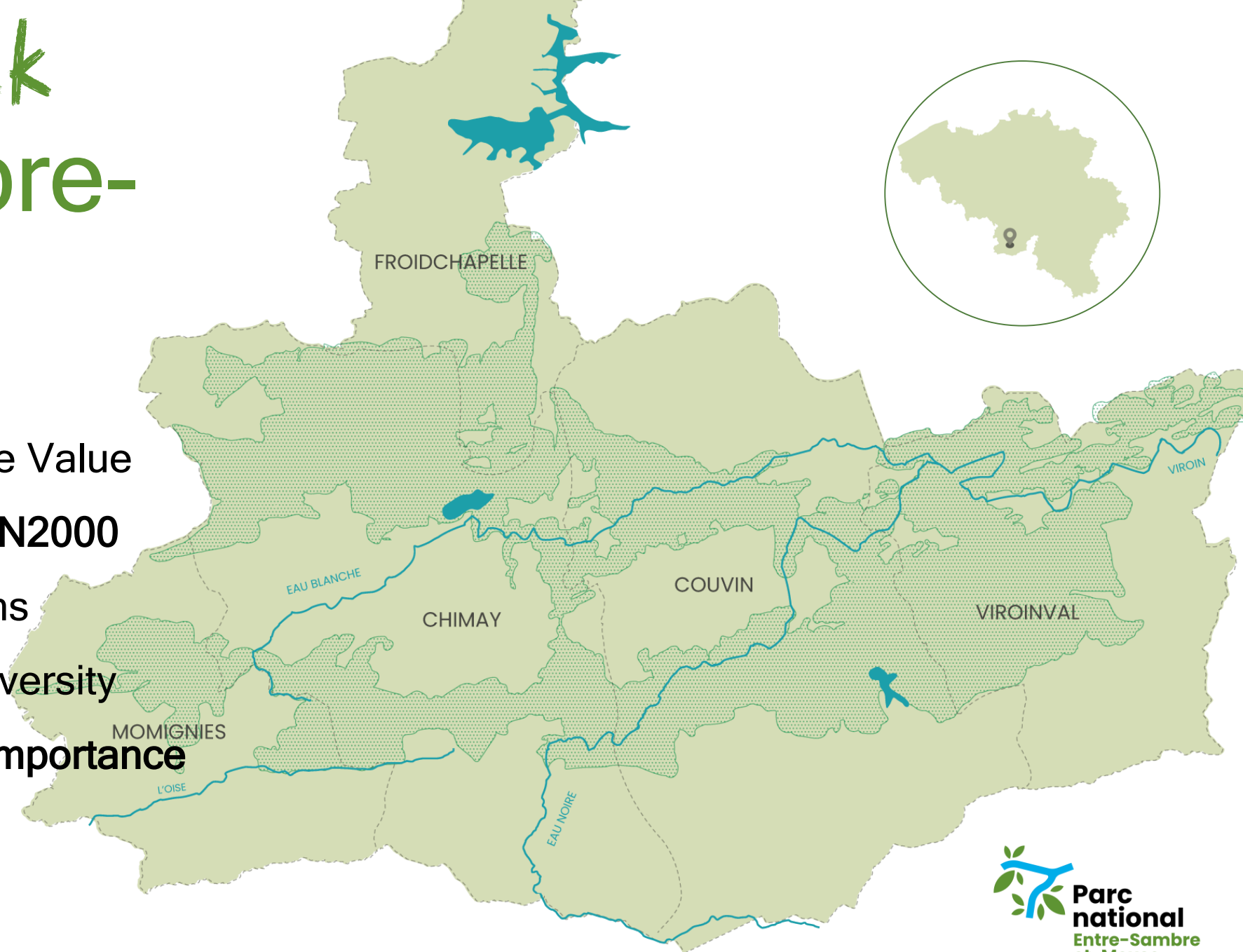
- How to build a NP in **334** Days ...
- Let's meet about 300 Times !
 - All ideas welcome <> not all ideas withheld
 - Who co-finances what ?
 - Who will pilot if we win ?
 - Who heard about the other projects ?
- Think Big <> Fear of change
 - Inhabitants : Restrictions for local uses of natural resources & Too many tourists
 - Rural Municipalities : Financial impacts



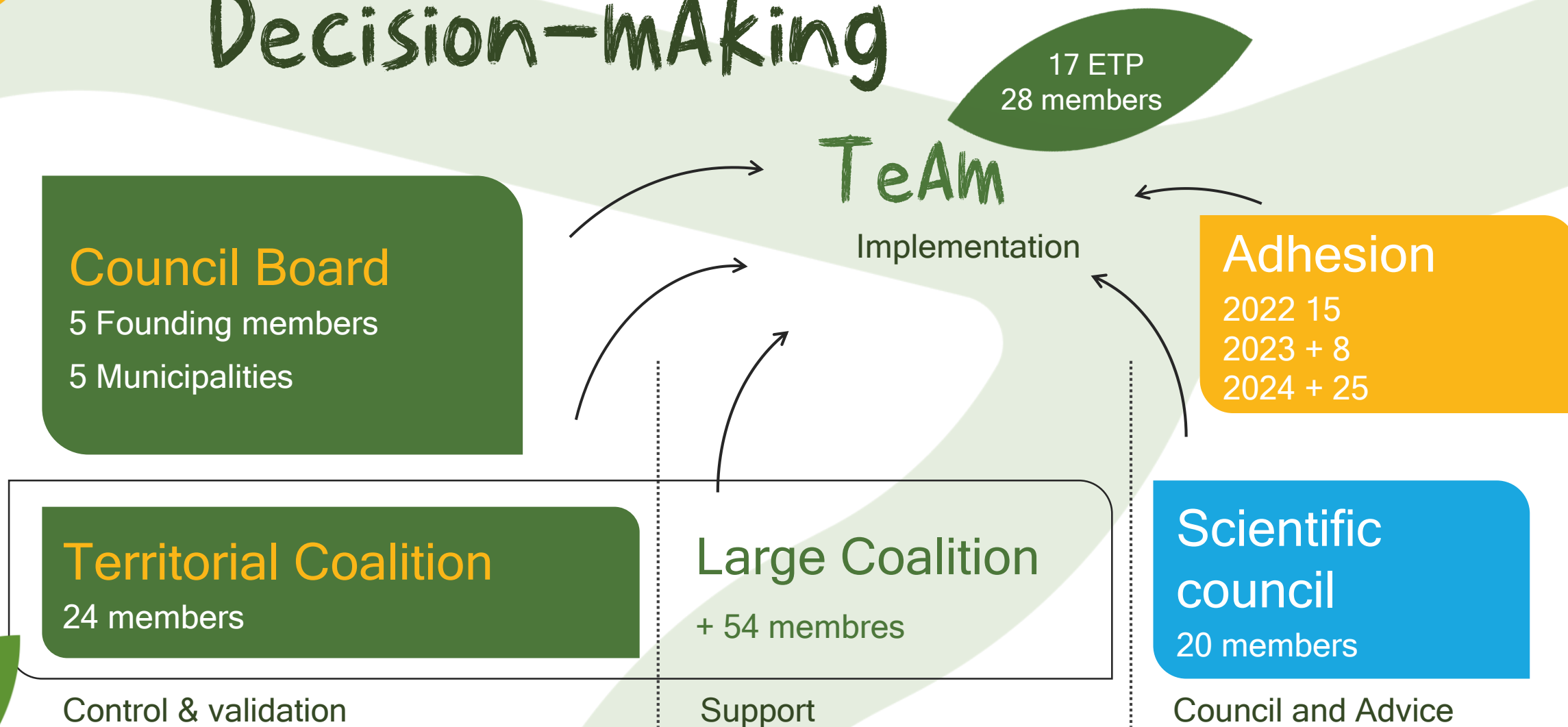


NATIONAL PARK Entre-Sambre- et-Meuse :

- 22 000 ha of High Nature Value
- 43,7 % of the surface is N2000
- 3 biogeographical regions
- 80 % of Wallonia's Biodiversity
- 26 Sites of Community importance



Gouvernance & Decision-making



First steps And challenges

- Creation of 1500 extra integral forest reserves
 - Prioritising old growth indigenous public forests
 - Misconceptions and concerns over the financial impact
- The revival of agro-pastoralism (120 + 80 ha) whilst connecting calcareous grasslands
 - Recoupling nature management to socio-economical development
 - Launching a participatory herd, setting a welcome wolf example, trying to buy a pick-up
- The rewilding of rivers, lakes and wetlands
- Regaining a Dark Sky
 - Phase II – Interreg candidature

Increasing strict protection areas

23 sites of community importance

20 Animal species of community interest



@Jean-Pierre Frippiat

First steps And challenges

- Tourism : Entry Gates and POI
 - Min. 1 major or minor entry point / municipality (<> operators)
 - Organising 1 common ecotourism vision
- Socio-economical development
 - Made in ESEM
 - Convincing local small-scale enterprises of EU proof public-procurement procedures



First steps And challenges

- Sensitisation and participation
 - NP Guides – a huge success !
 - >60 Activities / year 23: 500p, 24 100p
 - Counter mainstream attitudes and perceptions
- Research & Monitoring
 - Start of the T0 mapping
 - Co-construction of research questions
 - Launch of 4 research projects incl. ecological and socio-economical aspects



First steps And challenges

- 2023-2026
 - Deal with eminent expectations
 - Cope with political changes due to elections 24
 - Finalize all financial investments before June 2026 whilst strengthening support and local dynamics
 - <> Constraining, slow and inadequate administrative procedures (Wallonia + UE)
- >2026
 - Safeguard future financing
 - Obtain a legal framework for national parks in Wallonia
 - Confirm and strengthen the local communities' public acceptance and participation



Conclusions

- The self-fixed level of ambition is higher than expected, and even higher than what public authorities could have imposed...
- A challenge will be to maintain the level of ambition and engagement and to capitalize on the human and financial investments



Voluntary dynamic :
a call for projects >
ambition level set by
the partners on a
voluntary basis



**Collaborative and
Inclusive dynamic**
: all actors need to
be part of it



**Important financial
support :**
an opportunity of
the RRF



**A very large
freedom of
choice and
initiative range**
for local projects



A master plan
approved by the
Government to set
and keep the long-
time vision

#Reconnect

Thank you

#Rethink

#RenAture



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