



THE NATO AIRFIELD IN MALLE

The NATO airfield in Malle has been recognized as a good example of a private area with successful nature conservation management. In this area, nature conservation goes hand in hand with a durable economic model to guarantee a long-term nature protection.

Private landowners and Flanders' largest nature NGO Natuurpunt join forces to protect the area's biodiversity.

For more than a half century the airfield has been in use by NATO for military activities. Today its use is multifunctional including a private flying club, sport manifestations, scouting, air shows, vehicle testing, photo shoots, walking and nature conservation. The area was part of the DANAH Life project restoring part of the area's original nature.

The Land Is For Ever LIFE+ project was able to bring together the surrounding **private owners** who were expropriated for the realization of the airport together with **Natuurpunt**, Flanders' largest nature organization and **PIDPA**, a drinking water company that pumps water in the area for the drinking water supply of Flanders. Under the mediation of the LIFE+ project, a first cooperation agreement has been signed and the partners are jointly working towards a common vision on and management of the area's nature.



The EU's LIFE+ 'Land is Forever' Project:

60% of Europe's acreage is privately owned. It has become clear that the EU nature conservation goals cannot be accomplished without the engagement of private landowners. The project 'Land Is For Ever' aims to expand the implementation of successful management models for private landowners to make nature conservation on their land durable on the long term.

By sharing examples of innovative structures and programs of private conservation initiatives, landowners all over Europe get inspired and motivated to invest in nature conservation on their land. Through dialogue with landowners and field tests in different EU member states, this project builds the basis for effective policy recommendations to support private land conservation initiatives at a larger scale. The bottom-up approach of this project to policy development makes the project unique and gives the recommendations that emerge a great chance of success in the future.

The management of The NATO airfield in Malle was selected as a good practice example to be followed elsewhere in Europe.