

PARTIAL REVISIONS OF SECTOR PLANS

TERRIT 6

The main tool to control land take within the territory is the sector plan (SP). Since their adoption, the 23 SPs have undergone numerous revisions. The offsetting principle ensures a balance between areas not intended for urbanisation (ANIUs) and areas intended for urbanisation (AIUs) (planological offsetting) and/or to counterbalance the impacts of the implementation of new AIUs (alternative offsetting) in the case of partial revisions to the SPs.

The offsetting principle

The offsetting principle was enshrined in legislation in 2005¹. Through this mechanism, the inclusion of any new AIU must be offset either by "planological offsetting", i.e. the equivalent modification of an existing AIU or a concerted municipal development area into a ANIU, or by "alternative offsetting" as defined by the Government. In 2007, qualifications were added², since offsetting was intended for the inclusion of any new AIU "likely to have significant environmental impacts".

An additional 732 ha of AIU

The total land use of 3,868 ha was modified between March 2005 and October 2016, resulting in a net increase of 732 ha of AIU³. Part of this surface area was subject to alternative offsetting and the other part benefited from transitional measures. The areas of the SP that have been most affected by these revisions, in terms of net changes, are the agricultural area (AA), the EAA (economic activity areas) and the natural area (NA). As such, in terms of the AA (49.4% of Walloon territory in 2016), 352 ha were registered in the AA, while 1,589 ha of AA were assigned in other areas, i.e. a net loss of 1,237 ha. The EAA (1.7% of the territory in 2016) showed the opposite trend: 1,405 ha were registered as EAA, versus 457 ha of EAA assigned in other areas, or a net gain of 948 ha. Areas of AA lost were lost mainly to the EAA (845 ha). In terms of NA (1.4% of the territory in 2016), 418 ha were registered as NA, while 1 ha of NA was assigned in other areas. The areas registered as NA mainly come from areas initially assigned as extraction area (EA) (208 ha).

Offsetting in the Territorial Development Code (Code du développement territorial - CoDT)

Adopted on 20/07/2016 by the Walloon Parliament, the CoDT replaced the CWATUP on 01/06/2017. As regards the SPs, this reform changes certain land use areas and the principles applicable to their revision. Among the most important changes, all existing EAs become extraction dependent areas that constitute a particular form of EAA and therefore continue to be part of the IUAs, and new "extraction areas", which form part of the ANIUs, can be registered as of 01/06/2017. During the revisions to the SPs intended to include these new "extraction areas", the offsetting principle was therefore no longer applicable⁴. An area of regional significance and an area of municipal significance are also created within the AIUs and the CoDT facilitates their inclusion in the SPs, in some cases making the planological compensation mechanism more flexible. The regulatory part of the CoDT also introduces a definition of alternative offsetting.

^[1] Programme Decree of 03/02/2005 amending in particular Art. 46 of the Walloon Code on Land Use Planning, Urbanism and Patrimony (Code wallon de l'aménagement du territoire, de l'urbanisme et du patrimoine - CWATUP). The decree of 18/07/2002 already introduced an offsetting mechanism, but only for the inclusion of new areas of mixed or industrial economic activity (EAA) | ^[2] Decree of 20/09/2007 | ^[3] Not being, strictly speaking, revisions of the SPs, the overriding municipal plans for planning and the implementation of concerted municipal development area are not taken into account in the analysis. However, they are likely to have an environmental impact. | ^[4] It will nonetheless be applied when including new extraction dependent areas.

Fig. TERRIT 6-1 Partial revisions of sector plans in Wallonia (2005-2016)

