

## ON-SITE WASTE WATER TREATMENT

## WATER 20

In sparsely populated areas, the construction of a collection network for household waste water is sometimes considered too expensive or technically difficult to achieve. In this case, waste water treatment requires the installation of an individual treatment system (*système d'épuration individuelle - SEI*) which may be the subject of certain financial advantages granted by Wallonia.

### 12% of Walloons potentially affected

According to the Sub-basin Treatment Plans (*Plans d'assainissement par sous-bassin hydrographique - PASH*), approximately 160,000 homes are located in an on-site treatment area (*zone d'assainissement autonome - ZAA*), of which approximately two-thirds are in urban areas that can be developed according to sector plans.

### Priority areas

In ZAA, new dwellings must be equipped with an SEI. For dwellings built prior to the date of approval or modification of the General Municipal Collecting System Plan (*Plan communal général d'égouttage*) or of the PASH, this provision does not apply. However, in priority areas (Natura 2000, upstream bathing areas, catchment protection areas, water bodies of unsatisfactory quality or unlikely to achieve certain environmental objectives<sup>1</sup>), zoning studies are carried out in order to determine: (i) the most appropriate treatment method for waste water, (ii) the dwellings which will be obliged to install an SEI, and (iii) the deadlines for compliance. The zoning studies are carried out by the approved treatment bodies (*organismes d'assainissement agréés - OAA*). In 2015, 27 zoning studies<sup>2</sup> were approved by ministerial decree.

### Stability of applications for premiums and requests for a "true-cost of treatment" exemption between 2010 and 2015

The installation of an SEI may be the subject, under certain conditions<sup>3</sup>, of a premium granted by Wallonia (the amount of which is increased for dwellings situated in priority areas) and an exemption from the "true-cost of treatment" (*coût-vérité à*

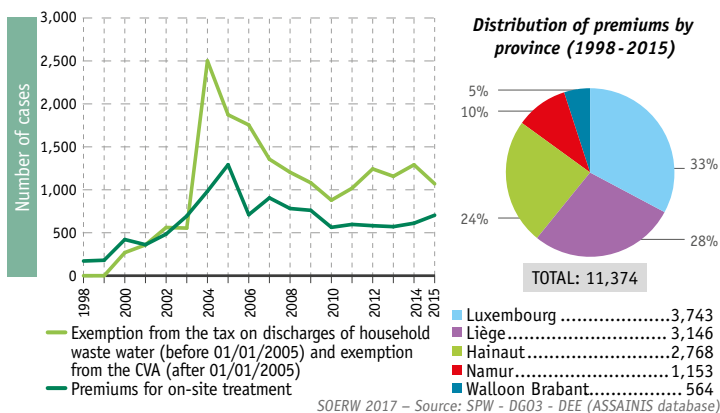
*l'assainissement - CVA*)<sup>4</sup>. The total number of premiums granted between 1998 and 2015 was 11,374, for a total amount of €31 million. Following steady growth until 2005, followed by a decrease, around 600 requests per year were processed on average over the period 2010-2015. The total number of CVA exemptions granted between 2005 and 2015 was approximately 14,000. The maximum treatment capacity of the individual water treatment systems concerned, aggregated over the period 2007-2015<sup>5</sup>, amounted to almost 66,000 p.e. Between 2007 and 2015, there were around 1,140 applications per year to obtain an exemption from the CVA. It should be noted that the total number of homes equipped with an SEI is difficult to estimate, as not all installations are covered by an application for a premium or exemption from the CVA.

### Transfer of the management of on-site treatment

A comprehensive reform<sup>6</sup> of on-site treatment was introduced at the end of 2016. Its objective is to guarantee an equivalent level of environmental protection regardless of the treatment system (on-site or collective) to which a house is subjected. As of 01/01/2018, in addition to the granting of premiums for the installation of an SEI (for which the amounts will be adjusted), the SPGE, which is now entrusted with the public management of on-site treatment, will also be responsible for periodic maintenance of these SEIs and the drainage of surplus sludge, subject to the abolition of the exemption to the CVA.

<sup>[1]</sup> → WATER 1 & WATER 21 | <sup>[2]</sup> SPGE, 2016b | <sup>[3]</sup> [http://environnement.wallonie.be/publi/de/eaux\\_uses](http://environnement.wallonie.be/publi/de/eaux_uses) | <sup>[4]</sup> The CVA replaced the household waste water discharge tax on 01/01/2005. As of 01/07/2017, this was €2,365/m<sup>3</sup> (excl. VAT). | <sup>[5]</sup> Non-valid data for 2005 and 2006 | <sup>[6]</sup> Decree of 23/06/2016

**Fig. WATER 20-1** Premiums allocated for the on-site treatment of household waste water and exemption from the true-cost of treatment (CVA) in Wallonia



**Fig. WATER 20-2** Maximum cumulative purification capacity of individual water treatment systems (SEIs) which have been exempted from the true-cost of treatment (CVA) in Wallonia.

