INTRODUCTION

Land occupancy should be distinguished from land use. Occupancy refers to the biophysical cover of the land (wood, lawn, etc.) whereas land use corresponds to the function or use of a type of occupancy. A lawn can therefore be used by an individual as a garden, a farmer as a pasture or a community as a football field, and these uses can have different impacts on the environment. The approach used in this report to address territorial aspects is one of analysing land use, with a classification oriented towards the socio-economic function of the plots.

Specific lifestyles determine how land is used. In most cases, this use exerts pressure on the quality of the environment. Different land uses can be classified according to their environmental impacts. As such, woodland is generally more favourable to the development of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystems than artificialised land, and the increase in the area of artificialised land is *a priori* less favourable to the environment. The impacts therefore vary according to the quantitative size of each type of use, but also according to their geographical distribution. The environmental consequences of artificialising the territory are all the more important as housing, industries, shops and public services are highly dispersed, and this dispersion has an impact on mobility and on the use of the different modes of transport and transport networks.

This section presents the main land uses in Wallonia and the evolution of their surface area over the last 30 years. Emphasis is then placed on the environmental pressures generated by the artificialisation and fragmentation of the territory.

The environmental impacts of the various land uses (agriculture, forestry, industrial activities, transport, housing, etc.) are covered elsewhere in the report, primarily in the sections analysing the use of natural resources (part 3), production methods and consumption patterns (part 4) and the components of the environment (part 5). The analysis of the behaviour of households as regards land consumption for housing and the production of new housing is discussed in part 4.

One of the most important tools in managing the territory is the sector plan. The analysis of the actual use of the land use areas fixed in the sector plans, from undeveloped land use areas to habitat areas, as well as the modifications of the sector plans, is made in part 7, relating to the environmental management elements.