

## Using the Climate and Health Observatory to refine Belgium's National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP)

- **Climate-ADAPT features used:** Climate and Health Observatory platform, case studies, data benchmarking, climate and health indicators, adaptation strategies repository.
- **Sector:** Public Health
- **Governance level:** National and Regional
- **Biogeographical region:** Continental
- **Macro-region:** Western Europe
- **Policy stage:** Strategy and Action Plan Development

### The challenge

The Climate Department of the Belgian Federal Public Service (FPS) Health, Food Chain Safety, and Environment is primarily concerned with diseases or health issues related to or exacerbated by climate disruptions. According to the study on the effects of climate change on human health in Belgium<sup>1</sup>, climate change affects health in direct ways (heat, vector-borne diseases, pollution, and pollen-related) and indirect ways with impacts on mental health and well-being.

As part of the development of its National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) 2023-2029,<sup>2</sup> the FPS faced the pressing necessity to embed climate adaptation as one of the plan's two priorities. In line with international commitments and collaborative efforts in the respective EU working groups, the plan aims to tackle the multifaceted effects of climate change on public health, including preparedness for extreme events, ecosystem-mediated diseases, exacerbated respiratory conditions due to pollution, and impaired mental well-being.



© Ivan Beshev, ImaginAIR /EEA

### The approach

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.adapt2climate.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/FHS\\_climate-healthcare-final-report-final-220408.pdf](https://www.adapt2climate.be/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/FHS_climate-healthcare-final-report-final-220408.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.environnement-sante.be/sites/default/files/public/NEHAP3\\_FR.pdf](https://www.environnement-sante.be/sites/default/files/public/NEHAP3_FR.pdf)

The European Climate and Health Observatory platform<sup>3</sup> was a crucial source of information during the brainstorming phase and further development of Belgium's NEHAP. THE FPS used the following resources:

- Other countries' initiatives and policies provided through the Country Profiles and the Resources Catalogue
- Existing measures on the climate and health nexus for benchmarking purposes through the case studies
- Active health professional associations such as the Health Care Without Harm to set-up collaborations

## **Future plans**

FPS had to seek more frequent and downscaled data on the exposure and vulnerability of populations and healthcare systems, tailored to the surrounding countries and/or only produced in few European countries. There is an opportunity for the Observatory to highlight the specific features of national platforms more systematically. For instance, Belgium produces data relating to the climate-health nexus that is not systematically provided in the other Member States (e.g. CERAC: *Social dimension of risk*<sup>4</sup>). Building on these specificities, additional indicators could be considered, assuming that they would only cover a few countries. More resources could also be allocated to the *Adaptation options* section, to further inspire adaptation and health practitioners in their respective countries.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cerac.be/en/themes/social-dimension-risk>