



PRESS-COMMUNICATION

OVAM co-ordinates long-term research project CityChlor

The European authorities have approved the CityChlor project, a long-term European research project aiming at elaborating an integrated approach for the tackling of soil and groundwater pollution with chlorinated solvents in urban environments. The approval is coupled with a research budget of 5,2 million euro of which 50% is financed by the European INTERREG IV B-programme for Northwest Europe. The project starts in september after signing the subsidy contract and will run for 3,5 years. The project will be realized by a partnership between Flemish, Dutch, French and German authorities, research insitutes and cities. The Public Flemish Waste Agency (OVAM) is responsible for the coordination of the project.

New solutions for complex pollutions

Due to the properties of chlorinated solvents, remediation of this type of pollution are often complex and slow processes. Pollution with chlorinated solvents is often caused by small-scale activities as dry-cleaners and printers. In the densely-populated West-Europe, these sites are often situated in the middle of builded areas. This means that the pollution is in many cases under dwellings and therefore difficultly accessible.

Apart from the environmental consequences, these pollutions also have a socio-economic impact for the parties involved and their environment. Indirectly, pollution hampers the redevelopment of neighbourhoods or cities and it affects the quality of life due to uncertainty and the often slow process of investigation and remediation.

Extensive research is already done to possible technical solutions for these remediations, but the urban environment requires a more specific approach. There is a need for an integrated approach of this type of pollution. The new research project will not only bring together technical knowledge, but will elaborate directives on how should be coped with organizational and socio-economic aspects and community involvement. This has to lead to a more efficient and faster tackling of this often-occurring type of pollution.

To put this vision into practice a number of pilot projects will be executed in the project.

Important investment in environmental expertise and knowledge

The total research budget amounts to 5,2 M€ of which 50% is financed by the INTERREG IV B programme for Northwest Europe. This programme supports projects that strengthen the competitiveness of the region and simultaneously contributes to a evenly-spread and sustainable development.

The approval of this research project is an important, new investment for the building of knowledge and expertise on soil investigation and remediation in Flanders. Also for the private market, the project forms a new impulse. Private enterprises will be involved as advisors in the project or will be appointed for study work.

International partnership

The realization of the project is in the hands of a partnership between authorities, research institutes and cities. In total, 9 partners spread over Flanders, the Netherlands, France and Germany are involved. In Flanders participate, beside project co-ordinator OVAM, the cities of Mortsel and Ghent. In the Netherlands, Bodem+ and the municipality of Utrecht are involved. France is represented by INERES and ADEME. ITVA and the Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart take part for Germany. Next to these partners, professional federations, experts and remediation funds are involved in the project.