



S02.04 -2

CONVERTING THE LEGEND OF THE SOIL MAP OF BELGIUM INTO THE WORLD

REFERENCE BASE FOR SOIL RESOURCES: (II) STRENGTH AND CONSTRAINTS OF USING WRB AS A MAP LEGEND

Dondeyne Stefaan*^[1], Antoine Bouhon^[2], Xavier Legrain^[3], Geert Baert^[10], Karen Vancampenhout^[5], Carole Ampe^[6], Nathalie Cools^[7], Patrick Engels^[8], Roger Langohr^[9], Eric Van Ranst^[11], Jean Chapelle^[2], Jozef Deckers^[1]

^[1]Catholic University of Leuven ~ Department Earth and Environmental Sciences ~ Leuven ~ Belgium ^[2]Haute École Charlemagne ~ Soil Science Unit ~ Liège ~ Belgium ^[3]Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, University of Liège ~ Soil Science Unit ~ Gembloux ~ Belgium ^[4]Catholic University College ~ Department of Applied Bio-engineering Sciences ~ Gent ~ Belgium ^[5]University College Kempen ~ Biosciences department ~ Geel ~ Belgium ^[6]Flemish Land Agency ~ VLM ~ Brugge ~ Belgium ^[7]Research Institute for Forest and Nature ~ INBO ~ Geraardsbergen ~ Belgium ^[8]Ministry of the Walloon Region ~ ~ Namur ~ Belgium ^[9]Association for the Diffusion of Sciences ~ ~ Brussels ~ Belgium ^[10]University College Ghent ~ Department of Applied Bio-engineering Sciences ~ Gent ~ Belgium ^[11]Ghent University ~ Laboratory of Soil Science ~ Gent ~ Belgium

Within the European Union, there is a general interest to prepare joint soil maps at a 1:250000 scale in order to harmonise agricultural and environmental policies. The World Reference Base for Soil Resources (WRB) has been adopted as the common soil classification system within the EU. As soil surveys in most member states were conducted independently, the challenge is now to convert the national legends into a common WRB legend. Based on our experiences from converting the legend of the Soil Map of Belgium to WRB, we discuss the strengths and constraints of using WRB for both large scale (1:50000) and small scale (1:250000) maps. By using WRB Reference Soil Groups with one or two main qualifiers, the principal soil information of the original 1:20000 scale Soil Map of Belgium can be represented. Inevitably the conversion to WRB leads to some loss of information as details on soil texture, drainage and substratum get generalised into broader categories in WRB. This generalisation however can be neatly presented on 1:50000 scale maps. Being less complex than the original maps, these maps have the advantage to provide better insights into the regional soil geography. Moreover, as they are built on international classification concepts, the historical soil maps are made accessible to a wider audience. The conversion into WRB units also allowed for a straightforward generalisation and production of small scale maps (1:250000) which should be suitable for producing a soil map at European level.