

BELGIUM, Flanders

This review has been checked and approved by Vera Ameels (agentschap Onroerend Erfgoed), June 2023.

Country: Belgium, Flanders
Type: Regional (Belgium being a federal State, the Flemish government is the central actor in the implementation of the regional immovable heritage policy).
Name: Flanders research framework, assessment manual and theoretical framework

Ervynck, A., S. Debruyne & R. Ribbens, 2015 : *Assessment. Een handleiding voor de archeoloog*, Brussel – Assessment manual

Ervynck, A., M. Martens & R. Ribbens, 2016: *Een theoretisch kader voor onderzoeksvragen bij archeologische ingrepen in de bodem*, Brussel – Theoretical framework

Onderzoeksbalans Archeologie – Research framework

Who has created /funded the framework?

- The assessment manual and theoretical framework were developed by Flanders Heritage Agency.
- The research framework is an initiative of the Flanders Heritage Agency and was created in a collaborative approach. Recent updates are the result of studies commissioned by Flanders Heritage. In 2020, Flanders Heritage agency launched a call which aimed to update the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic chapters of the research framework.

Who owns the framework?

They are published online by Flanders Heritage agency via the agency's Open Archive Repository <https://oar.onroerenderfgoed.be>

What was the process of creating the framework?

- The assessment manual and theoretical framework were created by archeologists of the Flanders Heritage Agency.
- The research framework was co-created through the collaboration of more than 180 specialists from universities, colleges, government research institutes, government agencies, non-profit organisations/ societies, museums and independent heritage researchers. Recent updates of the chapters Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic were outsourced to archaeological companies and universities.

Aims and objectives of the framework

Who is it for?

The assessment manual and theoretical framework:

- all archaeologists with a focus on accredited archaeologists who work according to the Code of Good Practice.

The research framework:

- all archaeologists
- local authority staff (accredited inter-municipal immovable heritage agencies and accredited immovable heritage municipalities)

What is it for?

The assessment manual and theoretical framework:

- to help formulate research questions within projects that are part of the so-called Malta archaeology.
- for any type of archaeological research (period/theme).

The research framework:

- serves as a source of inspiration for archaeological research
- recent updated chapters give an overview of research and knowledge, but also explicitly list the gaps and current research questions. These research questions are an important source of inspiration for new research.

Structure and content of the framework

What does it contain?

The assessment manual:

- describes what is meant by an assessment and how the research framework and research strategy are determined with a specific focus on the knowledge potential of the various types of objects, material, environmental remains, features and structures found.

The theoretical framework:

- provides a framework on how to formulate research questions that are required by the Code of Good Practice

The research framework:

- gives an overview of the knowledge, the gaps and the current research questions about the immovable heritage in Flanders. An important difference between the original version and the updated chapters of the research framework is that in addition to an overview of research and knowledge, the updated chapters explicitly list the gaps and current research questions. These research questions are an important source of inspiration for new research.

How is it structured?

The three documents complement each other setting out different aspects of developing your research. The research framework gives an overview of what we currently know and identifies gaps in the knowledge. The assessment manual and theoretical framework define more in detail how to assess the research potential and how to formulate research questions within projects that are part of so-called Malta archaeology based on the existing knowledge.

The assessment manual:

- The basis consists of chapters on the knowledge potential of the various types of objects, material, environmental remains, features and structures found.

The theoretical framework:

N/A

The research framework:

- Consists of chapters on archaeological periods and themes. The updated periodic chapters are structured in a similar way as the initial chapters. They contain an overview of the research conducted (in time and space), an overview of the known sources, the relevant methodology and theory and current research themes and questions.

What period/themes does it cover?

The research framework:

Periods:

- Paleolithic
- Mesolithic
- Neolithic - Early Farmers
- Bronze Age / Iron Age
- Roman period
- Early and Full Middle Ages
- Late Middle Ages and Modern Times

Themes:

- Maritime archaeology
- Natural science research and dating
- Methods and Techniques for site surveys and site evaluations
- First World War Heritage
- Battlefield archaeology from before WWI

Besides the archaeological research framework there is also a landscape research framework and one on architectural heritage.

Outputs

Format

The assessment manual, theoretical framework and research framework: Digital reports (PDF), accessed via the agency's Open Archive Repository
<https://oar.onroerenderfgoed.be>

Date of publication

The assessment manual: 2015

The theoretical framework: 01-04-2016

The research framework: 2008

Update Paleolithicum (2021) - Mesolithicum 2021 – Neolithicum 2022

Where can you find it?

The assessment manual: <https://oar.onroerenderfgoed.be/publicaties/HAOE/9/HAOE009-001.pdf>

The theoretical framework:

<https://www.vlaanderen.be/publicaties/een-theoretisch-kader-voor-onderzoeksvragen-bij-archeologische-ingrepen-in-de-bodem>

<https://oar.onroerenderfgoed.be/publicaties/HAOE/11/HAOE011-001.pdf>

The research framework: <https://www.onroerenderfgoed.be/publicaties/de-nieuwe-onderzoeksbalans>