

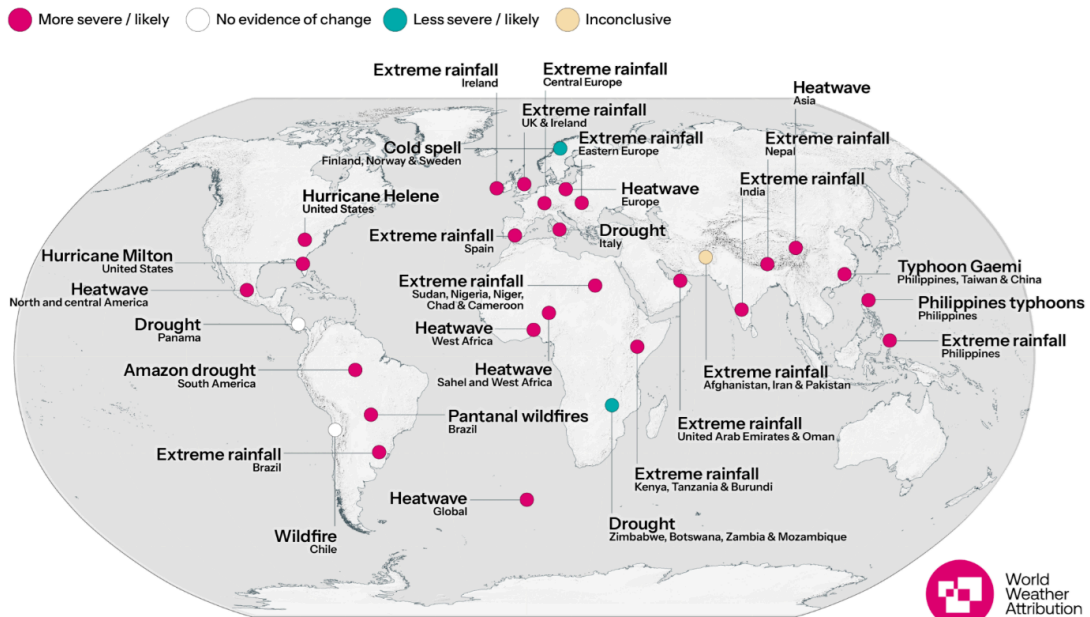
# MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON CLIMATE ACTION IN BELGIUM



## A year marked by urgency and reflection

As we reflect on the close of 2024, it is evident that this year, like the ones before it, was profoundly shaped by climate extremes. According to the [World Weather Attribution \(WWA\) report](#), extreme weather reached dangerous new heights in 2024 (see the map below). Record-breaking temperatures fuelled heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods that killed thousands of people and forced millions from their homes. With global temperatures averaging 1.6°C above pre-industrial levels (1850-1900), 2024 marked the first year that the symbolic threshold of 1.5°C of warming was exceeded. This exceptional year of climate extremes shows us how dangerous life has already become and underscores the urgent need to transition away from planet-heating fossil fuels as quickly as possible.

## World Weather Attribution studies 2024



World Weather Attribution studies in 2024 (Source: [Otto F. et al, 2024, When Risks Become Reality: Extreme Weather in 2024](#), see: [World Weather Attribution Annual Report LR.pdf](#))

As a climate scientist, I experienced 2024 as a year of reflection, one where it became increasingly difficult to leave my personal anxieties behind. When a journalist recently asked me how it felt to hear about the 1.6°C exceedance, I found myself responding with honesty: I am scared. Scared for the future of my children, for the generations that will follow, and for the planet they will inherit. In my professional role, I've long held the belief that my emotions should take a backseat to the data and science. But over the course of 2024, I've come to realise that fear, together with hope and anger, is not only natural—it is also essential for climate action. These emotions drive the urgency we need to move forward. Just as I teach my children that all emotions are valid, I am now learning to embrace them in my work. By doing so, I believe I can contribute more effectively to the mission of the Climate Centre and continue to advocate for urgent action.

While the scientific facts are indeed alarming, I also find that they fuel a sense of “active hope.” This hope is not blind optimism, but a recognition of the immense challenges we face—and the responsibility we bear to act in the face of them. It is this hope that sustains my commitment to our work at the Belgian Climate Centre.

Looking ahead to 2025, the efforts of the Belgian Climate Centre will continue to focus on making science more accessible and actionable. We will launch new projects within our research community, including the synthesis science working groups on Climate Overshoot Effects on Land Ecosystem Functioning and Societal Tipping Points and Social-Ecological Inequalities. These projects will advance our understanding of how climate change is reshaping our natural systems and society. Additionally, we will continue to improve access to and the use of climate-related data through the development of the Belgian Climate Data Portal. Finally, we remain dedicated to connecting scientific experts to decision-makers through initiatives such as workshops and events. More information on this will come soon.

As we enter 2025, I urge all of us to face the facts with both clarity and courage. The climate crisis is real, it is urgent, and its impacts are being felt every day. But I also encourage you to allow the full spectrum of emotions—fear, active hope, and even anger—to guide your commitment to action. Only together, driven by science and societal will, can we confront this crisis and build a more sustainable future for all.



**Rozemien De Troch**

Climate Services Lead

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## The first Annual Report of the Belgian Climate Centre is out!

We are proud to announce the release of our very first Annual Report for 2024! This report offers a comprehensive overview of our work at the Belgian Climate Centre over the past year. It's a great opportunity to discover our key activities, initiatives and the impact we have made in maximising the impact of climate science in Belgium. We invite you to explore the full report on [our website](#).



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## Launch of synthesis science working groups

To foster interdisciplinary research collaboration and improve scientific knowledge transfer to a wide range of stakeholders, we launched in early 2024 our **first call for synthesis science working groups**. The call involves the creation of working groups of up to 20 scientists and stakeholders, each led by a team of up to 4 Principal Investigators, including at least one Federal Scientific Institute, to collaborate on a two-year synthesis science project. These synthesis science projects **aim to advance evidence-based decision-making in the Belgian public and private sectors**, by employing innovative approaches and state-of-the-art techniques for compiling and analysing existing data sets and information.

Within this first call, two projects were positively evaluated by the Climate Centre and its Scientific Board and will kick off in 2025:

1. Climate overshoot effects on land ecosystem functioning in collaboration with [Africa Museum](#), [University of Ghent](#), [Université catholique de Louvain](#) and [World Wide Fund for Nature \(WWF-Belgium\)](#).
2. Societal tipping points and social-ecological inequalities in collaboration with [Sciensano](#), [Université Libre de Bruxelles](#), [KULeuven](#), [Université catholique de Louvain](#)

We will communicate on the next steps and results of these projects soon!

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## Under development: Belgian Climate Data Portal

We are excited to announce that we are developing an open data portal focused on climate-related data sets in Belgium. This platform will provide **easy access to a wide range of climate data and serve as a repository for users to share their own data sets, linking them to related publications for greater visibility**. Designed to promote accessibility to climate data and foster collaboration, this initiative aims **to advance climate research, decision-making, and cross-sector innovation**. If you are interested in sharing data, you can already contact us!

[Send us an email](#)

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## Call for scientists and knowledge holders in the field of biodiversity and/or climate: Share your barriers and incentives to engage in IPBES and IPCC processes!

Belspo leads the [RESPIN project](#), a Horizon Europe project that aims to improve the uptake of existing knowledge on biodiversity and climate in decision-making and to strengthen collaboration between the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

To **identify the gaps in the knowledge provision and to identify ideas on how to improve the engagement of experts**, (potential) contributors and end users of IPBES or IPCC are invited to **fill in [this short survey](#)**.



The survey is available in multiple languages and it will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You have time to fill it in until around mid-March 2025.

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## Belgian scientists in the media

- 09/12/2024 - [Symbolische mijlpaal komt dichterbij: "Eerste ijsvrije dag in Noordelijke IJszee kan al in zomer 2027"](#)
- 23/12/2024 - [Klimaat en natuur in 2024: vier lichtpuntjes in een somber totaalplaatje](#)
- 03/01/2025 - [Jean-Pascal van Ypersele : "Il faut mettre en avant les opportunités économiques qu'il y a d'agir en faveur du climat"](#)
- 07/01/2025 - [Aarde bereikte 1,6 graden opwarming in 2024: "Het gaat zeer hard, maar oplossingen liggen op tafel"](#)
- 9/01/2025 - [Onderzoekers vinden ijs van 1,2 miljoen jaar oud op Antarctica: "Stalen zullen ongekende inzichten bieden"](#)
- 10/01/2025 - ["Les modèles climatiques actuels sont encore trop optimistes"](#)
- 12/01/2025 - ["La Belgique n'est pas prête à affronter une multiplication des feux de forêt", prévient le Centre des risques climatiques](#)
- 13/01/2025 - [Comment sait-on que le climat actuel est le plus chaud depuis au moins 120.000 ans ?](#)

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## Upcoming events

**6 February 2025**

[A quoi ressemblera le monde de l'énergie de demain ?](#)

**6 February 2025**

[Onder de loep: Pools EU-voorzitterschap & Sociaal Klimaatfonds](#) - Minaraad and VLEVA

**11, 25 February, 3 April & 15 May 2025**

[Lesson design workshops rond Klimaateducatie](#) - KLIMACT

**11-12 February 2025**

[Wavemaker session "The data suggest... Nobody will listen"](#)

**28 March 2025**

[Women in Science Day 2025](#)

**16-18 June 2025**

[7th European Climate Change Adaptation Conference](#) (ECCA) - call for sessions is open until 24/02/2025: <https://www.ecca2025.eu/submissions>



## Who is Belgian Climate Centre?

The Climate Centre has been created to lead scientific research at the highest level on climate and related economic and ecological issues.

It also serves as a contact point for organisations, policymakers and citizens for a wide range of climate-related services. The mission of the Belgian Climate Centre is to maximise the impact of science on climate mitigation and adaptation in Belgium to support an efficient and socially just transition.

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