

1. Information on National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) or equivalent

Strategy Title: The Belgian federal sustainable development strategy

Strategy website: www.cidd.be and www.plan2004.be

Coordinating Body: Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development

Coordinating Body website: www.cidd.be

Strategy Status: i) being implemented

Date of Adoption: 5 May 1997

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Additional Information: *(Please publish on website.)*

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, Belgium undertook to adopt a national sustainable development strategy. Belgium being a federal state, such a commitment entails cooperation between the federal government, the three community governments and the three regional governments.

Negotiations between these governments commenced in 2004. An inter-ministerial conference on sustainable development was created, and reached an agreement on a two-phase work programme. The second phase is ongoing since 2006. The adoption of a national visionary text is foreseen in the autumn of 2007.

Nevertheless, the federal government and the governments of the communities and the regions have put in place (or are putting in place) “important mechanisms for enhancing and linking national capacity so as to bring together priorities in social, economic and environmental policies”.

1. Federal sustainable development strategy

1.1. Process and organisation

The act of 5 May 1997 on the coordination of the federal sustainable development policy lays the foundations of the federal sustainable development strategy. It provides for a cycle of four-year federal plans and biennial federal reports on sustainable developments (Cf. 1.2. and 1.3. respectively)

According to this act, the federal reports on sustainable development are the basis of the plans. A Task Force on Sustainable Development (TFSD) has thus been established to set them up in the Federal Planning Bureau (FPB). This act has also set up the Inter-Departmental Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD). This commission is responsible for drawing up the federal plans on sustainable development.

The ICSD is composed of representatives of all members of the federal government and of experts from all federal government departments, plus six representatives of the governments of the communities and of the regions.

The State Secretary for Sustainable Development chairs the ICSD. A civil servant of the Federal Public Planning Service Sustainable Development is the secretary.

In addition to the ICSD, the aforementioned law of 5 May 1997 also created the Federal Council for Sustainable Development (FCSD). This is an advisory body composed of representatives of civil society. It gives recommendations to the members of the federal government on the policy to be implemented.

The FCSD gives advice on each draft federal sustainable development plan, and the government must give reasons as to why it has departed from it.

1.2. Strategic priorities and instruments

The federal government defines the sustainable development policy principles, objectives and actions in the federal sustainable development plan every four years.

The federal government defined the first federal plan on sustainable development in 2000 for the 2000-2004 period.

The federal plan on sustainable development 2004-2008 followed in 2004. This plan forms the basis for the current sustainable development policy. The strategic framework consists of the six topics of the first EU sustainable development strategy. It also contains 31 policy actions for sustainable development.

The current plan will expire on 31 December 2008. The ICSD is currently preparing the preliminary draft of the federal plan on sustainable development plan 2009-2012, taking due account of the renewed EU sustainable development strategy.

1.3. Evaluation and monitoring

The afore-mentioned law of 5 May 1997 provides two evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.

First, the TFSD of the FPB evaluates the situation from a sustainable development perspective, including the federal sustainable development policy, draws forecasting on sustainable development in the federal report on sustainable development published every other year. This report contains recommendations for the next plan.

The FPB has published three reports since 1999. The last report contained an addendum with sustainable development indicators. The fourth federal sustainable development report will be published in the autumn of 2007.

Second, the members of the ICSD draw up an annual report on the implementation of the current federal plan on sustainable development in their government department, which enables the ICSD to monitor the implementation thereof.

2. Flemish sustainable development strategy

2.1. Process and organisation

The “Flemish sustainable development strategy: pushing back the borders together” (VSDO) came into being in 2005. The Flemish government adopted it on 20 July 2005. Twelve civil society organisations signed it in September 2006, as did the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities and the Flemish Association of Provinces.

The sustainable development coordination unit coordinates the implementation of this strategy. This unit is part of the staff service of the Flemish government, which in turn falls under the services for general government policy. It works together with all policy areas of the Flemish government. An official sustainable development working group contributes to this effort.

The VSDO came into being after extensive consultations with the local and provincial authorities and five civil society organisations.

2.2. Strategic priorities and instruments

The seven priorities of the VSDO are:

- poverty and social exclusion;
- the greying of the population;
- climate change and clean energy;
- mobility;
- town and country planning;
- management of natural resources;
- public health.

In addition, it also brings administrative aspects to the fore. Concrete projects will be proposed for twelve cross cutting issues.

Specific attention will also be paid to cooperation with all actors involved.

The Flemish government considers sustainable development to be an inclusive policy. This means that each policy area must implement the VSDO. Furthermore, consultation is provided for cross cutting issues.

2.3. Evaluation and monitoring

The Flemish government has already developed an environment monitor based on EUROSTAT indicators and the *Network of regional Governments for Sustainable Development*. A process monitor for periodic measurement must still be developed.

3. Sustainable development strategy of the Walloon region

In April 2006 the Walloon government signed an agreement with a sustainable development consulting firm to draft a regional sustainable development strategy. This strategy, which is being worked out, will have to meet at least the following requirements:

- offer a response to the main challenges and questions raised by putting sustainable development into daily practice in the Walloon region by 2015;
- include the achievements and commitments of the Walloon region (contract for the future of Wallonia's inhabitants, the so-called "Marshall Plan," and the Walloon Government's decisions, etc.);
- dovetail with the European Sustainable Development Strategy, the Lisbon strategy and other sustainable development planning tools;
- teach the population, be understood by the overwhelming majority of the population, be practical; and trigger action, involvement, and commitment.

The seven topics of the regional sustainable development strategy are the same of those of the renewed EU SDS.

Principles of governance and horizontal tools will be added.

4. Sustainable development strategy of the German-speaking community

The dialogue with the citizens, economical efficiency and sustainable development are the three transversal aspects that the government of the German-speaking community takes into account in its policies. It has confirmed this principle in its government declaration of 13 September 2004 through which it took office.

Furthermore, it has asked its administration in 2006 to examine the relevance of 38 of the 155 policy measures of the parliamentary term 2004-2009 in a sustainable development perspective. In this context, the administration put forward several recommendations to take sustainable development aspects into account in the implementation of these measures.

5. Sustainable development strategy of the Brussels Capital region

The Brussels “Regional Development plan (2002 – 2007)” has been approved the 12th of September 2002 and covers many SD issues such as Housing policy economics and employment policies (revitalization of the regional economy, in a network of major cities, support to external trade and to the creation of SME, dialog between trade unions and regional authorities, support to the creation of urban jobs and to the professional reintegration) Land policy (urban renovation, quality of the public space and of the local environment) Public participation Health and Education policy Mobility & transport policy Environmental policy (air, noise, waste, nature, soil, ...), International role and image of the Region (trade, culture and tourism) Security policy R&D, innovation.