

# Sixth National Report of Belgium to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2019)

## BACKGROUND

Article 26 of the Convention on Biological Diversity states that the objective of national reporting is to provide information on measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and the effectiveness of these measures. In accordance with Article 6, measures to be addressed, in light of specific national circumstances, are reflected in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

The fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties agreed that national reports would be called for on a four-yearly basis and considered at alternate meetings of the Conference of the Parties.

The process for the preparation of the 6th Belgian National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity includes the involvement of a national Steering Committee, while the report is compiled by the National Focal Point.

The final draft is submitted for approval to the national Steering Committee, as well as to the national Coordination Committee on International Environmental Policy.

## PREAMBLE

Belgium is a federal state, composed of communities and regions. The power to make decisions is not the exclusive prerogative of the federal government and the federal parliament. The leadership of the country is in the hands of various partners, who independently exercise their authority within their domains.

The implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is carried out by the federal government, the regions, the communities and the local authorities (provinces and municipalities).

The **regions** are in charge of territorial matters. They have therefore the greatest amount of responsibilities on biodiversity-related issues: nature conservation, forest management, agriculture, exploitation of natural resources, land use and spatial planning, hunting, fisheries, etc. They are also in charge of tourism, which is a competence that has been delegated to them by the communities.

The **federal government** is the competent body for the biodiversity management of the Belgian part of the North Sea, for the international dimension of the marine environment policy and coordinates the Belgian external relations with respect to biodiversity (see CCIEP below). It is the federal government that undertakes the follow-up of trade in threatened species and that takes measures relating to the trade of exotic species.

The **communities** take care of issues linked to culture, research, education and public awareness. The regions and the federal government can also conduct research and raise public awareness in their own fields of competence.

The **provinces and the municipalities** play an important role at the local level, in accordance with regional policy.

The coherence of international environmental policy at national level is ensured by a coordination mechanism composed of representatives from the federal government, the regions and the communities. It is called the **Coordinating Committee for International Environment Policy (CCIEP)**. This body functions under the high-level authority of the Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment (ICE). Under the CCIEP different committees, convention related or thematic, have been established, such as for Biodiversity, Climate Change, Adaptation to Climate Change, Forests, Nature, etc.

## SECTION I. INFORMATION ON THE TARGETS BEING PURSUED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

If your country has set and/or adopted national targets or equivalent commitments related to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 please use the following template to describe them. Please complete this template for each of your country's national targets. National targets entered in this section will be linked to section III so that progress in their implementation can be assessed. If your country has not set or adopted any national targets related to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 please indicate so in the first box and move to section II.

### I. Information on the targets being pursued at the national level

My country has adopted national biodiversity targets or equivalent commitments in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets.

"Biodiversity 2020, Update of Belgium's National Strategy (NBS)" has been developed as a direct response to Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was adopted on 13 November 2013 by the Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment, which is composed of the competent ministers of the Federal Government and the three Regions of Belgium (Flanders, Brussels, Wallonia).

The Strategy spells out a range of priority objectives to anticipate, prevent and reduce the causes of biodiversity loss in Belgium. It is the unique national document on biodiversity that is applicable both at the federal and regional levels in order to comply with the European and international commitments made by Belgium. It offers a framework for the policy to follow and for the subsequent implementing actions to be developed.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 1 - Identify and monitor priority components of biodiversity in Belgium

#### Rationale for the national target

In principle, the entire wealth of biodiversity should be subject to protection. It is however not feasible to concentrate efforts on all the elements of biodiversity. The Strategy will therefore focus the efforts where they are most needed, *i.e.* on components of biodiversity that are most at risk or could be subject to high risks in the near future. Priority components of biodiversity requiring the most urgent protective measures must be identified and their status monitored.

Priority components of biodiversity include (1) ecosystems and habitats that are unique, rare, in danger of disappearance, or that play a crucial role for priority species; (2) species that are rare, endangered, vulnerable, or that are endemic or live in specific habitats; (3) genomes and genes of particular social, scientific or economic importance; and (4) functional components of biodiversity that are essential for the provision of ecosystem services.

Adaptive management is concerned with the complex and dynamic nature of ecosystems and their uses and the absence of complete knowledge of their functioning. Because circumstances change and uncertainties are inherent in all managed uses of components of biodiversity, adaptive management is able to respond to uncertainties and it contains elements of "learning-by-doing" or research feedback. Monitoring is a key component of adaptive management.

Adequate monitoring, followed by regular reporting on status and trends of priority biodiversity components, is important. It allows adaptive management and decision-makers to develop adequate policy responses. It is also a prerequisite to communicate progress towards the 2020 targets to the public and stakeholders.

Furthermore, it contributes to enhancing public awareness and participation. In order to avoid an additional reporting burden, the format of such reports should be streamlined in accordance with existing reporting obligations on biodiversity at European and CBD level.

A set of biodiversity indicators has already been adopted by the CBD to follow the implementation of the 2020 target (see box below). Several of these indicators have been tested and standardized at EU level by the European Environment Agency (set of EU headline biodiversity indicators, SEBI 2020 project) to monitor the state of biodiversity in Europe. The Member States are therefore asked to report annually to the EEA on these indicators.

Monitoring and reporting on the status of biodiversity in Belgium will need the development of suitable monitoring tools and indicators in line with the outcomes of the SEBI 2020 project (see also objective 7.3).

Furthermore, Belgian authorities need to argue for an effective use of other existing European biodiversity indicators in policy on, for example, agriculture or structural funds.

**Level of application** (Please specify the level to which the target applies):

Seen the national scope of the strategy and its objectives, all the objectives apply to the entire territory, unless the distribution of competences (see preamble above) states otherwise.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, the relevant sectors (agriculture, fishery, forestry), nature conservation agencies, universities, nature conservation NGOs, the Belgian Biodiversity Research Platform and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS. Weblink to a list of actors for biodiversity in Belgium: [www.biodiv.be/implementation/docs/stratactplan/biodiversity-strategy-2020/appendix-1-actors-for-biodiversity-in-belgium](http://www.biodiv.be/implementation/docs/stratactplan/biodiversity-strategy-2020/appendix-1-actors-for-biodiversity-in-belgium).

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 1.1 - Define a common Belgian methodology for the identification and monitoring of priority components of biodiversity according to EU guidelines

### **Rationale for the national target**

So far, no methodology to identify priority elements of Belgian biodiversity is available at national level. The Regions manage biodiversity according to their own criteria and priorities. Nevertheless common standards can be developed and therefore it is useful to compare the monitoring methods of the different Regions. The methodology could consider conducting the identification of priority components of biodiversity on the basis of a bioregional approach deciding to choose components of biodiversity which are most at threat of disappearing, or species that are of particular importance for the functioning of vulnerable ecosystems, together with a number of flagship species for Belgium.

Common standards for biodiversity inventories and monitoring should also be defined and applied for the evaluation of biodiversity status taking into account existing guidelines for monitoring and obligations for reporting at EU and CBD level. A short set of common indicators and evaluation criteria (cf. EU headline indicators and related indicators developed by the Regions [32]) would enable the evaluation of progress towards the 2020 target at national level and greatly help reporting to international bodies (i.e. the European Commission and EEA, PEBLDS, OECD, CBD, OSPAR and other conventions). The categories and criteria used by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species could also be considered. Synthetic and cost-efficient direct and indirect indicators could be developed (for example territory fragmentation, rate of fertilisation). The monitoring system could apply the method "Pressure - State - Response" prescribed by the CBD or the "Driving forces, Pressures, States, Impacts, Responses (DPSIR) method" adopted by the EEA.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 1.2 - Identify and monitor priority species, habitats, genetic and functional components of biodiversity

### **Rationale for the national target**

Once a common methodology to identify components of biodiversity that need urgent protective measures has been agreed, lists of priority habitats, species and genetic components will be drawn up. Threatened species and ecosystems should benefit from adequate long-term policy, and the restoration of degraded habitats should favour the protection of threatened and rare species as well as the re-establishment of species that had disappeared from our country. Particular attention will be paid to wetlands that are under serious threat.

From the species conservation point of view, the loss of local populations implies a loss of genetic diversity, which in turn may result in a loss of resilience to environmental change, i.e. the ability to offer resistance to, or recover from, natural and human-induced pressures.

Lists of most sensitive (threatened, vulnerable and rare) species and ecosystems which need particular attention (included in Natura 2000 at EU level) will be used and adapted to the Belgian context. It is also important to take the specificity of Belgian ecosystems/species into account and to identify the elements of biodiversity that are rare, particularly threatened with extinction, vulnerable or of particular importance (for

ecosystem functioning; symbolic importance; cultural importance) at the Belgian level. Belgian regional and national red lists of threatened species already exist and could be used for this compilation of priority species. For the marine environment, a list of priority species and habitats has been developed in an international framework (OSPAR). National red lists and related synthetic indicators are very useful for example for reporting to the EU, OECD and IUCN and other organisations.

Monitoring of priority components of biodiversity (see also operational objective 7.2) is very important, as it is the key to adaptive management and for improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programmes.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Regional or maritime red lists are ad hoc constructed by specialists and Citizen Scientist groups on an irregular basis (about every 10 years for every group of species) as a side product of regional species atlases.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this national target can be found.)

National red list (indicators): <https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/environnement/biodiversite#panel-11>

34387 national and regional species and status (statistic and/or official):

[http://www.especies.be/fr/index\\_adv.php](http://www.especies.be/fr/index_adv.php)

Flanders region red lists (official): <https://www.inbo.be/en/search-flanders-red-lists>

Wallonia region species and red lists (official): <http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/especies.html?IDC=3025>

Brussels region new strategy for red list:

[http://document.environnement.brussels/opac\\_css/elecfile/FD\\_14\\_Biodiversite](http://document.environnement.brussels/opac_css/elecfile/FD_14_Biodiversite)

Brussels birds red list (official, as an example, other red lists exist):

[http://www.aves.be/fileadmin/Aves/COA/Publis\\_COA/Liste\\_Rouge\\_oiseaux\\_BXL.pdf](http://www.aves.be/fileadmin/Aves/COA/Publis_COA/Liste_Rouge_oiseaux_BXL.pdf)

Citizen Science maps and observations: <https://observations.be/>

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 2 - Investigate and monitor the effects of threatening processes and activities and their causes

**Rationale for the national target**

The major processes that constitute a threat to, or are likely to have significant adverse impacts on, biodiversity are identified in part I.4. These processes and the activities impacting directly on biodiversity must be further investigated and their effects monitored through sampling and other techniques. Their causes must be identified and monitored on a regular basis (see also operational objective 7.3).

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, nature conservation agencies, the Belgian Biodiversity Research Platform, universities, market actors (including business and import sectors, consumers and other members of civil society), and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 2.1 - Investigate and monitor the effects and causes of activities and processes, including new and emerging risks, that threaten components of biodiversity in Belgium

**Rationale for the national target**

Identifying new and emerging risks as early as possible is a precondition for early action.

Much can be done to avert loss of biodiversity if adequate information on potential threats is available. It is necessary to further investigate the impact on biodiversity of human activities and of threats arising from natural causes, as well as relations between those processes and activities in order to take the most appropriate measures to minimise their impacts. Particular attention must be paid to the potential risks to biodiversity posed by the development and use of new technologies, their processes and products. For instance, attention should be paid to the potentially negative impacts of nanotechnologies on biodiversity, to the use of GMOs in agriculture, forestry and fishery - detailed in Objective 4 - as well as other GMOs developed as bioindicators or bioremediators, GM cattle, domestic animals, decorative plants, or GM microorganisms and viruses used as pest regulators in agriculture, etc.). Among their potential negative impacts: the spread of invasive alien species, the threat to non-target organisms by GMOs producing specific pesticides, unforeseen interactions with biodiversity, or the ecosystem disequilibrium caused by the large-scale diffusion of such organisms. The development of new, not yet marketed genetic transformation techniques, like synthetic biology, should be carefully accompanied by, a. o., thorough EIA procedures and the elaboration and implementation of adequate regulations by the community involved in biodiversity preservation. The biodiversity research community has a role to play in identifying emerging issues and delivering relevant biodiversity policy information.

When considering the various potential impacts of these emerging risks, attention should be paid not only to impacts on specific components of biodiversity but also to community structures and global ecosystem functions and services and to the links between biodiversity and health, in particular to risks to health.

Appropriate monitoring will involve taking physical measurements/observations of the chosen biodiversity and activities indicators year on year for comparison with the current status of biodiversity and pressures from threatening activities. This comparison together with a study of the causes of threatening processes will be most useful for an adaptive management of threatening activities. Key questions to be addressed in the monitoring process can be based on the proposed indicator framework for the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (CDB Decision XI/3) and the EU headline indicators to 2020 developed by the European Environment Agency (SEBI 2020).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

**Other relevant Aichi Targets:**

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 2.2 - Investigate and monitor the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services

**Rationale for the national target**

As highlighted in Part I, some effects of climate change on biodiversity are already obvious. They are likely to increase further because of the projected rise in temperature. Climate change constitutes a direct threat to biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services as it disrupts ecological relations, unbalancing ecosystem functioning; it increases the impact of invasive alien species, causes disturbance to the lifecycle of some species and migration or disappearance of others, and can affect specific ecosystem services such as water regulation, nutrient cycling, food provision. Populations of Northern species tend to move northwards or disappear altogether (e.g. plant species), not having been able to adapt to climate change. Terrestrial ecosystems are mainly affected in terms of plant phenology and distribution of plant and animal species, with specialist species being most at risk.

Even if society substantially reduces its emissions of greenhouse gases over the coming decades, the climate system is projected to continue to change in centuries to come. We therefore have to prepare for and adapt to the consequences of some inevitable climate change, in addition to mitigation measures.

To prevent or limit severe damage to the environment, society and economies, adaptation strategies for affected systems must be developed at national, regional and local level. In 2010, Belgium adopted its national climate adaptation strategy. It has 3 objectives:

- to improve the coherence between existing adaptation activities in Belgium (assessing the impacts of climate change, vulnerability to climate change and adaptation measures already implemented);
- to improve communication at national, European and international levels;
- to initiate a process to develop a national action plan.

The Strategy summarizes the expected impacts of climate change in Belgium in several areas including biodiversity and gives an overview of the adaptation measures that have already been made in these areas as well as two cross-cutting areas: research and international cooperation. This strategy has initiated the process of developing a National Adaptation Plan. In this context, the different levels of government (Federal Government, Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels-Capital) have carried out studies in order to prepare future Federal/Regional adaptation plans that will provide the baseline for the national adaptation plan.

Regional studies have led to the development of regional climate projections and to provide information on sectoral vulnerability to future climate conditions.

The Flemish Region has published in 2013 the regional plan for adaptation to climate change (Het Vlaams Klimaatbeleidsplan 2013-2020). The Walloon Region adopted in 2007 the Walloon Plan 'Air-Climate'. Brussels-Capital Region approved in September 2013 the proposal of pre-project for the regional plan air-climate-energy.

The European Commission adopted an EU strategy on adaptation to climate change in April 2013.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 2.3 - Investigate the potential impact on biodiversity of the internal trade (legal and illegal) of live animals and plants at a Belgian level and potentially adapt relevant regulations, including market regulation when appropriate

**Rationale for the national target**

Sending out the right market signals, particularly to final consumers, for biodiversity conservation is crucial. While the potential impact on global biodiversity of international trade with Belgium is covered under objectives 5.6 and 5.7, it appeared necessary to also consider, in a holistic way, the potential impact of the internal trade (legal and illegal) of live animals and plants on biodiversity. Animal welfare and public/animal health issues should be taken into account in this context. Relevant regulations, including market regulation, as well as consumer behaviour should be adapted where necessary. This can be done for example by implementing CITES Regulation or other relevant EU legislation.

In considering the internal trade of species, particular attention will be devoted to the numerous exotic species deliberately introduced into Belgium (import of ornamental plants, pets, species for breeding, fishing, hunting, used as biological controls or for biomass production, etc.).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.



**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3 - Maintain or restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in Belgium to a favourable conservation status

**Rationale for the national target**

Healthy ecosystems are needed if we want to halt the loss of biodiversity and benefit from the many valuable services they provide. Despite the initiatives already put in place, habitats in Belgium are becoming increasingly fragmented and degraded. This affects biodiversity directly and indirectly as it makes the ecosystems vulnerable to other threats, such as biological invasions. It also undermines the many services that healthy ecosystems provide to society, such as clean water and protection against flooding and erosion.

In 2010, the Parties to the CBD agreed to make concerted efforts to achieve Aichi Target 9 (the introduction and establishment of invasive alien species is prevented), Target 11 (17 % of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 % of coastal and marine areas have been conserved), Target 14 (ecosystems and essential services have been safeguarded) and Target 15 (ecosystems are restored and their resilience has been enhanced). These global targets are reflected in EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 under target 1 (implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives), target 2 (maintenance and restoration of ecosystems and their services) and target 5 (combating invasive alien species). It is therefore important to adapt the NBS accordingly.

Nature conservation activities across Belgium, in, among others, marine areas as well as rural and urbanised areas, need to be strengthened through optimal protection, management and restoration measures. The measures to be taken will depend greatly on the priority components of biodiversity selected in Objective 1 and on threatening processes and activities identified in Objective 2. Measures could be, for instance, the extension of a forest or grassland in a specific area, restoration of a degraded habitat of particular importance (e.g. wetlands) or establishment of a protected area.

The measures will have to be taken in cooperation with the different stakeholders in order to define ways that both conserve biodiversity and meet other stakeholders' interests. In this context, the application of the ecosystem approach and the implementation of the programme of work on Protected Areas (CBD Decision VII/28), as appropriate, will be of particular relevance.

The concept of favourable conservation status\* (see box below) provides an objective concept that will be scientifically defined for the purpose of Objective 1, together with the identification of appropriate indicators to allow for the monitoring of the status of the priority components of biodiversity.

Concept of favourable conservation status (EU Habitats and Birds Directive)

The conservation status of a natural habitat is “favourable” when (i) its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and (ii) the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined below.

The conservation status of a species is “favourable” when (i) population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, (ii) the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and (iii) there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its population on a long-term basis.

Protected areas, ecological networks and green infrastructure in Belgium

**Protected areas** in Belgium represent many different types of ecosystems: forests, wetlands, pastures, calcareous grasslands, heath lands, caves, marine areas, etc. Their sizes range from a few ares to thousands of hectares. Protected areas include: nature reserves (public and private), Natura 2000 sites, forest reserves,

forest protection areas, caves, natural parks, Ramsar and other wetlands of biological interest, protected dunes and zones of high biological value. Different protection statuses have sometimes been attributed to the same site. For example, a nature reserve can also be a Natura 2000 site.

The **ecological network** is a coherent ecological structure of areas in which nature conservation policy is the main objective to be developed. The objective is to create a coherent and functional network of ecosystems that are (inter)nationally important and should be preserved in a sustainable way. It aims to merge the fragmented nature and forest reserves into larger and interconnected units of nature. It is composed of core areas of natural interest (protected or not) connected by buffer and corridor zones as small biotopes and natural linear features in the landscape (hedgerows, ditches, field margins, footpaths, small streams, narrow valleys, etc.). Zones under other effective area-based conservation measures are part of this network, such as some Agri-Environment Measures, late mowing of road banks, sustainable forestry management measures.

The **green infrastructure** encompasses the ecological networks but it also takes into account areas providing specific ecosystem goods and services. Its added value comes from broader investments in natural capital with a view to 'greening' existing infrastructure and strengthening the functionality of ecosystems that provide goods and services as well as mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, and enhancing the quality of life (health, tourism, conserving historic and cultural heritage). It addresses the spatial structure of natural and semi-natural areas but also other artificial and environmental features (such as "green roofs" or trails) which enable citizens to benefit from its multiple services. The underlying principle of Green Infrastructure is that the same area of land can frequently offer multiple benefits if its ecosystems are in a healthy state. Green Infrastructure investments are generally characterized by a high level of return over time, provide job opportunities, and can be a cost-effective alternative or be complementary to 'grey' infrastructure and intensive land use change.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

**Other relevant Aichi Targets:**

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

Target 11 - By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Target 12 - By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

Target 14 - By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: land use planning departments, nature conservation agencies, managers, the federal and regional authorities (including the provinces and municipalities), various sectors (including the horticultural sector, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, fisheries, the pet industry, hunting, mobility, tourism, public health, research), professional federations involved in the sectors concerned, teachers in the academic system including in the field of horticultural qualifications, consumers, environmental NGOs, land owners, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS 1.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.1 - At least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and are integrated into the wider landscapes

**Rationale for the national target**

The aim of this operational objective is to enhance existing terrestrial [39] networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures over the three Regions and to promote interconnectivity between them and with neighbouring countries. The target of 17 % was chosen to align with international commitments (Aichi target 11 and EU Target 1- see Appendix 4: concordance table of SNB objectives with Aichi and EU targets). The objective is based on the concept of ecological network and will include the ecological requirements of the priority components of biodiversity in order to ensure their maintenance or rehabilitation in a favourable conservation status. As small landscape elements play a key role in ensuring connectivity between networks, their conservation and/or rehabilitation will be promoted.

In accordance with Objectives 1 and 2, the integrated management of protected areas should apply the ecosystem approach. The network of protected areas should also be integrated into its socio-economic context and wider environment to enable adequate buffering of external influences on the network elements. Measures taken in the framework of Objectives 4 and 5 should particularly take into account the network of protected areas.

The Natura 2000 network currently covers up to 12.77 % of the Belgian terrestrial territory with an ecologically representative system of protected areas. Additionally to this network, other surfaces are effectively conserved through other conservation measures such as some Agri-Environment Measures, late mowing of road banks, sustainable forest management measures.

This is why the target of 17 % of effectively managed protected areas at land and other areas of particular importance to biodiversity is deemed to be an ambitious yet realistic target for Belgium. Besides the importance of extending the network of protected areas on paper, its effective management is crucial and has to be ensured. Attention will be paid to implementing coherent transboundary and transregional conservation measures within Natura 2000. For the time being, only a limited number of sites at land are effectively managed and it is vital that appropriate management plans are adopted and implemented as a matter of urgency.

For a large number of wild species, crop species and varieties and domestic animal breeds, the establishment of a system of protected areas alone is not sufficient. Existing measures taken to protect wildlife outside protected areas will be enhanced in several ecosystems (for example, urban, freshwater, humid, rocky/caved, marine, coastal, forest and agricultural ecosystems) and integrated into land use planning. Such measures can include buffer zones playing the role of a transition, the ecological management of railway sides and road- and riversides, ecological management of parks and green areas in urban areas, municipal nature development plans, hosting wild fauna in attics and belfries, etc. Several documents produced by the Regions can be used as guidance for implementing this strategic objective (for example, Codes for Good Nature Practices, Codes for Good Agriculture Practices, Vademecum for nature-oriented management of road verges and river borders, Management standards to favour biodiversity in woods under a forest regime, etc.) [40].

It is also crucial to promote the protection of biodiversity in private domains and in green areas surrounding companies (see “Nature and Companies: Operating instructions, “Qualité et développement durable des zones d’activité économique: Le cahier des charges urbanistique et environnemental”). Furthermore, partnerships with the private sector should be developed.

The quality of nature in urban and peri-urban areas (cities and municipalities) is of particular importance not only for biodiversity but also for the quality of life and human health. The quality of nature can be enhanced by integrated planning and harmonious management of urban and peri-urban green areas (for example Vademecum for harmonised park management of the Flemish Region).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 11 - By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Most relevant National Indicators:

- \* FLE100 - Flemish Region: Surface of Flemish ecological Network and areas to be designated for nature
- \* FLE111 - Flemish Region 11. Conservation status of habitats of European interest
- \* WAL005 - Walloon Region: Conservation status of habitats

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.2 - At least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and are integrated into the wider seascapes

### **Rationale for the national target**

The Belgian part of the North Sea is a sensitive ecosystem and is one of the most densely used marine areas in the world with important pressures from sea-based activities (e.g. fishing, coastal defence, sand and gravel extraction, shipping, off-shore energy, tourism) and land-based activities (agriculture, urbanization, harbours, industry).

Addressing the pressures resulting from these activities within a complex state structure is an important overarching management issue. The implementation of the management plans for the Marine Protected areas in the Belgian Part of the North Sea adopted in January 2018 as well as the Good Environmental Status objectives (to be reached by 2020) reviewed in 2018 and related measures as part of the EU-Marine Strategy Framework Directive [2008/56/EC] (MSFD) will contribute to this challenge.

Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are an important means of safeguarding the ocean's rich diversity of life. They may support local economies by providing a refuge from fishing pressure for commercial fish stocks. If properly located and managed, MPAs may act as refuge habitats and lead to reduction in fishing mortality and bycatch.

The establishment of ecologically significant MPAs in the Belgian marine zone, complemented by the Natura 2000 network (35.85% of the area of the Belgian Part of the North Sea), has been an important step. The existing MPA's are taken up in the Marine Spatial Plan adopted in 2014. This Royal Decree forbids a number of human activities in the Natura 2000 areas (e.g. industrial activities).

Additionally, a programme of measures for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive was adopted in March 2016. This programme of measures addresses all relevant pressures and (socio-) economic sectors to allow the recovery of degraded habitats and populations to achieve the Good Environmental Status (GES) and/or Favourable State of Conservation (FSC) by 2020. This programme of measures stimulates the transition from human activities (including fishery) with adverse effects on species and habitats to human activities that allow the achievement of the GES or FSC.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 11 - By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.3 - Ecosystems, their resilience and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing, inter alia, a green infrastructure and restoring at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems.

**Rationale for the national target**

Protected areas are necessary but not sufficient to rehabilitate biodiversity to a favourable conservation status across the country and to maintain the provision of ecosystem services. Reaching the 2020 target implies, inter

alia, the development of a green infrastructure with a focus on representativeness and management effectiveness at land and at sea, the restoration of degraded areas and ultimately the compensation of new degradations if not avoidable (see operational [objective 3.8](#)).

The *Green infrastructure (GI)* is defined as a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to provide a wide range of ecosystem services. It incorporates green spaces (or blue if it concerns aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features in terrestrial (including coastal) and marine areas. On land, GI is present in rural and urban settings (EU Commission, May 2013). More information on GI is provided in the box in [objective 3](#).

As small landscape elements play a key role in ensuring connectivity of a green infrastructure network, their conservation and/or rehabilitation will be promoted. The management of the green infrastructure should apply the *ecosystem approach* and be integrated into its socio-economic context. Indeed, it is necessary to step up efforts to integrate biodiversity into the development and implementation of other policies, taking into account the objectives of all policies concerned, in particular those national and EU policies on natural resources management, such as agriculture, food security, forestry, fisheries, and energy, as well as spatial planning, transport, tourism, trade, and development. Measures taken within the framework of Objectives [4](#) (sustainable use) and [5](#) (sectoral integration of biodiversity) of the NBS should particularly take these green infrastructure elements into account.

Building a green infrastructure can help overcome many of these challenges. It can reconnect fragmented natural areas and improve their functional connectivity and resilience within the wider countryside. Connectivity, restoration and conservation measures need to be mainstreamed throughout the entire territory and not limited to specific areas, to contribute to an ecologically coherent green infrastructure for the benefit of all, people as well as nature. Furthermore, the restoration of degraded ecosystems can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Belgium currently works with the European Commission on the common understanding and operationalisation of the terms "restoration" and "degradation" and the nature of the 15 % target. The baseline (reference point) against which the 15 % restoration target is to be assessed is the EU 2010 Biodiversity Baseline Study produced by the EEA and supplemented by additional information to be generated through the MAES work programme. At the core of the concept is the idea that restoration should be regarded as a process rather than as a binary (restored vs. degraded) description of the state of play. If restoration is regarded as a process then this allows for the possibility of identifying different stages in the process. It also means that all significant efforts to improve the abiotic and biotic condition of a site can, in principle, be counted as a contribution to restoration even if the site is not fully restored to its "original/natural state". The approach also has the advantage that significant efforts to improve the ecological condition of a site that has been completely transformed (e.g. intensively farmed land) can also be taken into account.

In order to ensure resilience, evolving factors such as climate change will be taken into account when restoring ecosystems. Attention must be paid to the slow changing processes. Climate change or deposition of nitrogen, for instance, can have an irreversible effect on the "natural" population, the "natural" range of the species and on the "sufficiently large" area, which are factors that determine whether a species or habitat has a *favourable conservation status* (see box, [Objective 3](#)). Applying an adaptive management process is a good way of getting management to take such processes into account.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 14 - By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Target 15 - By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Most relevant National Indicators:

\* WAL006 - Walloon Region: Protected natural sites

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.4 - Develop and implement action plans so as to ensure the maintenance or rehabilitation of our most threatened species to a favourable conservation status.

**Rationale for the national target**

The maintenance of biodiversity in a favourable conservation status implies maintaining a sufficient quantity, quality, and connectivity of habitats for terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species, with a focus on priority species as to be defined by Objective 1. The rehabilitation of species and restoration of ecosystems is done mostly by recreating habitats that resemble the target communities in terms of composition of plant, animal and microbial communities, ecosystem function and stability.

The Strategy will capitalise on both new and existing conservation and restoration efforts, by the development and implementation of specific action plans for species, habitats or local areas (for instance protected areas) as appropriate.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 12 - By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Most relevant National Indicators:

- \* FLE110 - Flemish Region 10. Conservation status of species of European interest
- \* WAL003 - Walloon Region: Conservation status of Species

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.5 - Adopt an integrated strategy for *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity together with measures for its implementation.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium houses extensive *ex situ* collections of endangered varieties, breeds and species originating both from within the country and worldwide. They are preserved in seed banks, gene banks, zoos, aquariums, botanic gardens and collections of museums and various research institutes. Belgium also takes part in several international initiatives aiming to cooperate in the area of *ex situ* conservation (*i.e.* Belgian Coordinated Collections of Micro-organisms, the International Association of Zoos, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation).

The development of an integrated strategy will provide a framework to facilitate harmony between existing initiatives aimed at *ex situ* conservation, to identify gaps where new initiatives are required, and to promote mobilisation of the necessary resources. Among other things, research and management capability of *ex situ* conservation facilities should be enhanced. In developing such a strategy, the guidance of various international commitments initiatives should be taken into consideration (CBD Art. 9, the targets for 2020 of the consolidated update of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation in CBD Decision X/17, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, etc.).

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.6 - Take measures to minimise the impact of the identified processes and activities threatening biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Rationale for the national target**

Measures should be taken to reduce the impact of processes and activities threatening biodiversity and ecosystem services as identified by and monitored according to Objective 2, including at least habitat destruction and degradation, pollution, overexploitation, the spread of invasive alien species, the spread of some GMOs, and climate change. For example, air, soil and water pollution and water eutrophication and acidification can be reduced by the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant environmental policies (for example, product policy, water management policies). Land use planning should seek to limit land conversion (whether for urban, industrial, agricultural, transport or tourism purposes), which induces the drainage of wet ecosystems and the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats.



As far as GMOs are concerned, the scrupulous respect of EU regulations relating to GMO evaluations, authorisations and the development of good risk management procedures, monitoring and urgency plans, the development of adequate coexistence rules, should help minimise or prevent the potential threatening impacts in Belgium and in Europe. At the international level, Belgium's strong involvement in the Cartagena Protocol and other related forums should help minimise potential negative impacts of GMOs on world biodiversity.

Particular attention should be paid to an integrated control (including trade control) of chemicals, pesticides, GMOs and alien species released into the environment. As an example, control and reduction of pollution-inducing eutrophication should be promoted. Another step could be made by implementing an integrated water management, including the North Sea coasts (cf. Directive 2000/60/EC in the field of water policy; Gland convention on rivers), and an integrated coastal zone management (EU Recommendation 2002/413/EC on ICZM), etc.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

Target 15 - By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.7 - Invasive alien species (IAS) and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**Rationale for the national target**

Biological invasions are the second most important cause of the extinction of species worldwide (and in Belgium) after the loss of natural habitats. Organisms can be introduced beyond their natural range, either intentionally or unintentionally. Those include disease-causing viruses, bacteria, fungi, algae, mosses, ferns, flowering plants, invertebrates and vertebrates. When invasive, they can cause environmental damage and can have a detrimental impact on health, the economy and safety.

IAS have an adverse impact on indigenous species and can have a profound negative effect on the functioning of ecosystems. At economic level, they can among others negatively affect crop yields, obstruct waterways, and generate public health problems (they can be vectors for parasites and diseases or produce

allergenic substances and toxins). Often, they result in significant management costs in order to restrict their development, to limit their damage or to restore the ecosystems.

The threat caused by IAS to biodiversity in Belgium is addressed in the NBS via operational objective 3.7 but also via other operational objectives (2.3, 5.7, 7, 8.3) dealing with internal and external trade and whose implementation is guided by ten principles, including the precautionary approach and the polluter pays principle (see part III of the NBS).

This target is in line with article 8h of the CBD (1992) supplemented by Aichi Target 9 (2010) as well as with the EU Biodiversity Strategy Target 5 (2011). At international level, the CBD has developed guiding principles in order to help Parties to prevent the introduction of IAS, to detect early new introduced IAS and to undertake mitigation measures for established IAS (CBD Decision VI/23).

In order to establish rules to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse effects of invasive alien species (IAS), the EU Regulation 1143/2014 entered into force on 1 January 2015. The Regulation stipulates a series of measures that apply to any organism listed on the list of invasive alien species of Union Concern.

At the European level, the actual implementation of the Regulation is performed through two main bodies:

- The EU Scientific Forum on IAS, made up of representatives of the scientific community appointed by the Member States, which provides advice on any scientific question related to the application of the Regulation, and in particular, on whether additional species for inclusion on the list of EU concern and their associated risk assessments are robust and fit for purpose.
- The EU Committee on IAS, composed of representatives of all Member States, discusses the compliance of the proposed species with the criteria for listing. Any update of the Union list is subject to the positive opinion of the IAS Committee.

The implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS is based on a close cooperation between all the Member States. Concretely, the species included on the list of EU concern are subject to restrictions and measures set out in the Regulation. These include restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding and growing. Member States are required to take action on pathways of unintentional introduction, take measures for early detection and rapid eradication of these species, and to manage species.

In Belgium, the implementation of the Regulation involves the competences of the Federal State and the Regions. Therefore, in order to implement this Regulation in Belgium, a Cooperation Agreement has been drafted and is under the process of being endorsed between the federated entities. The Cooperation Agreement creates three official national structures:

- The Scientific Council on IAS, composed of scientific experts providing advice to the National Committee on IAS.
- The National Committee on IAS, composed of decision-makers who develop and adopt Belgium's position on the Union List and its updating (Belgium's position is then shared with other Member States within the EU Committee on IAS).
- The National Scientific Secretariat on IAS, supporting the Scientific Council in answering questions of the National Committee on IAS.

According to article 13 of the EU IAS Regulation, all member states are required to identify and prioritize pathways of unintentional introduction of alien invasive species of Union concern. Priority pathways of unintentional introduction for the 49 invasive alien species of Union Concern listed to date, were identified at the scale of Belgium. Based on this exercise, a set of action plans are under development in order to address the priority pathway identified. Belgium will establish and implement these action plans for its territory and as far as possible coordinated at the appropriated regional/federal level.

Additionally, member states are required to take a decision on the management options. For this purpose, Belgium performed a manageability assessment in 2018. The project relies on experts to score the feasibility of management strategies for Union List species using an adaptation of the Non-Native Risk Management scheme (NNRM) of Booy *et al.* (2017) <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10530-017-1451-z/fulltext.html>. Species that are believed to be unable to establish in Belgium are excluded from the exercise. The NNRM uses semi-quantitative response and confidence scores to assess seven key criteria linked with management feasibility of an invasive species: Effectiveness, Practicality, Cost, Impact, Acceptability, Window of opportunity and Likelihood of re-invasion. The approach was slightly adapted to fit the needs and practice in Belgium. The undertaking of this assessment was agreed upon and formalized by the Belgian IAS scientific council & IAS committee and aims to: 1) Support the EU Regulation implementation in Belgium; 2) Provide a sound evidence base for decisions on IAS management through a transparent, repeatable process; 3) Provide an evidence base for derogations on the rapid response obligation ( Art 18 ); 4) Provide a means of structured decision making for IAS management through a participatory approach of the Belgian expert community on IAS. The outcome of the present manageability assessment therefore provides support to the decision-making process but is not in any way a management recommendation.

The Commission will also be considering how to better integrate additional biodiversity concerns into the new Plant and Animal Health Regimes.

As a Party to the Bern Convention (Council of Europe), Belgium should implement the specific Bern recommendations on IAS issues including article 11, 2 b) which states that each Party should take measures to strictly control the introduction of non-native species. In order to implement this provision, the Standing Committee adopted a Pan-European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species which inter alia recommends drawing up and implementing national strategies on IAS taking into account the above-mentioned pan-European strategy (Recommendation No. 99/2003).

Tackling the IAS issue in an integrated way is a particular challenge in Belgium due to its complex institutional framework resulting in a division and fragmentation of competences on issues dealing with different aspects of IAS (e.g. environment, health and agriculture). In order to address this problem and meet the various commitments regarding alien species under treaties to which Belgium is a Party, concrete steps must be urgently taken and coordinated action plans developed when necessary by and between all the competent authorities.

The TrIAS project is currently undertaken It is aimed at dynamically, from year to year, track the progression of alien species, identify emerging species, assess their current and future risk and timely inform policy in a seamless data- driven workflow. One that is built on open science and open data infrastructures. By using international biodiversity standards and facilities, TrIAS ensures interoperability, repeatability and sustainability. This makes the process adaptable to future requirements in an evolving IAS policy landscape both locally and internationally.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 9 - By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 3.8 - Define the framework and the conditions to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Rationale for the national target**

The compensation principle is included in the ten guiding principles for implementation of the NBS (see Part III). Whereas compensation for deteriorated habitats is a legal requirement of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives in the case of damage to Natura 2000, there is no explicit EU requirement for compensation of unavoidable residual impacts on species, habitats and ecosystem services that are not covered by Natura 2000, which leads to net losses. Environmental Liability Directive does not cover damage to protected species, habitats and related services when it has been authorized by a plan or a license in accordance to EU or national nature conservation law. Further action should therefore be taken to promote a wider no net loss approach to biodiversity and ecosystem services when damage is caused by an authorized plan or project (EU Biodiversity Strategy, Action 7).

Belgium will closely follow the work of the Commission (under the EU Common Implementation Framework) to clearly define the principle of “no net loss”, its range, ensuring that sufficient safeguards are put in place to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services whilst avoiding any drift/abuse, and make proposals for its implementation in the country. In order to ensure real equivalence between ecosystems and services, Belgium will review and take the literature recommendations into account when defining the guidelines for the implementation of the “no net loss” principle in the country.

According to Born et al. (2012), compensation or offset mechanisms should among others respect the following principles:

- principle of ecological equivalence: compensation measures and offset mechanisms should ensure the re-creation or the restoration of ecosystems similar in size, composition, structure and functioning to the deteriorated ecosystems;

- principle of ecological continuity: the compensation measures should be located as close as possible to the damaged site and should also be implemented and effective before the damage is caused;

- principle of additionality: should be excluded as compensation those measures that do not provide a significant improvement in the status of biodiversity after the occurrence of the damage, in order to ensure that this damage is effectively repaired. The restoration should be based on the best available scientific knowledge.

In any case, according to the principle of preventive action (see Part III), the damage and its compensation should be authorized only if no other reasonable alternative can be found to reach the objectives of the damaging plan or project, and after having applied the appropriate mitigation measures. The authorities should therefore select the measures to be taken according to the following hierarchy: in priority, avoidance measures, then mitigation measures (minimization), and finally, as a last resort, necessary compensation measures.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4 - Ensure and promote the sustainable use of components of biodiversity

**Rationale for the national target**

The sustainable use of biodiversity refers to “the use of components of biodiversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations” (CBD art. 2). This concept is based on the assumption that it is possible to use biodiversity in a manner in which ecological processes, species and genetic variability remain above the thresholds needed for long-term viability, and that therefore all resource managers and users have the responsibility to ensure that that use does not exceed these capacities.

Non-sustainable activities with a negative impact on biodiversity must be identified (see Operational objective 2.1) and options developed in order to minimise these impacts. Synergies between economic growth, social progress and ecological balance in the long run should be created, with quality of life as the central factor. A well-thought equitable and fair management of our natural resources will be a key element for the sustainable use of our biodiversity. It is crucial to ensure that ecosystems are capable of sustaining the ecological services on which both biodiversity and the human population depend.

The Ecological Footprint tries to face this challenge. It measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes under prevailing technology, and it enables people to track progress towards sustainability.

Calculated footprints are estimations based on assumptions which are used as a communication tool to help individuals, organisations, and governments formulate policies, set targets and track progress towards sustainability (WWF, 2005).

The Belgian Ecological Footprint is about 4.9 ha per inhabitant (WWF, 2004), when the earth’s carrying biocapacity is only 1.8 ha per person. This means that surface used by the average Belgian is over 170 % larger than that which the planet can regenerate. This finding indicates that Belgium’s ecological stocks are being depleted faster than nature can regenerate them.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.1.1 - Identify and promote good practices involving the sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Existing good practices involving sustainable use of biodiversity in various areas of activity (agriculture, fishery, forestry, hunting, tourism, etc.) must be identified, compiled and made widely accessible. Furthermore, bad practices (and lessons learnt) also need to be highlighted and publicised widely.

The establishment of such compilation documents will be compulsory for the stakeholders (farmers, fishermen, hunters, etc.) and will represent a significant step forward towards sustainable use of our biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.2 - Sustainable products, consumption and production policies

**Rationale for the national target**

Not only consumption patterns but also the production processes for many products may adversely impact on biodiversity (unsustainable use of natural resources, overexploitation, use of harmful substances, habitat destruction, impacts of surface water pollution on biodiversity, etc.). These impacts are rarely apparent at the point of purchase or use so that we continue to use products that destroy our biodiversity, even when alternatives exist. Not only consumption patterns but also the production processes for many products may adversely impact on biodiversity (unsustainable use of natural resources, overexploitation, use of harmful substances, habitat destruction, impacts of surface water pollution on biodiversity, etc.). These impacts are rarely apparent at the point of purchase or use so that we continue to use products that destroy our biodiversity, even when alternatives exist.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem-based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, producers, consumers, various sectors (including agro-food, energy, industry...), NGOs, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.2.1 - Avoid or minimise the risk to biodiversity posed by production and consumption, products and services.

**Rationale for the national target**

Products and good practices that have a positive impact on biodiversity have to be promoted to the entire chain from producers to consumers.

Unsustainable production and consumption patterns (food, energy, water, travel, waste, etc.) need to be changed, for example through eco-design, eco-performance and appropriate product standardisation.

Consumers can impact on biodiversity by adapting their consumption patterns (for example by opting for certified products, by consuming local and diversified products or by deciding not to consume specific products).

There is a need to identify and evaluate negative impacts of unsustainable patterns on biodiversity and to ensure that markets reflect environmental costs. The lifecycle approach should be used to reduce environmental impacts along the production chain.

A consistent message also needs to be given to consumers so as to guide them to take sustainable consumption decisions. For example, the world's growing demand for biomass energy or meat creates pressure to extend industrial crop cultivation area, threatening not only agricultural biodiversity but also wild ecosystems. Public awareness of consumption behaviours increasing such threats should be raised. Furthermore, there is a need to influence suppliers to provide biodiversity-friendly products.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.2.2 - Adopt biodiversity criteria in public procurement policies to prevent biodiversity loss.

**Rationale for the national target**

Public authorities are major consumers. In Europe, for example, they spend 16 % of the EU's gross domestic product. By using their purchasing power to purchase goods and services that also respect the environment and biodiversity, they can make an important contribution towards sustainable development. Public authorities can also show citizens, enterprises and organisations how they can really change their attitudes by making the right consumer choices.

Green public procurement can have a positive direct or indirect impact on biodiversity. It covers areas such as transport and construction, office equipment, recyclable paper, organic food in canteens and activities in developing countries with support from Belgian authorities.

Initiatives have already been taken in Belgium to use green procurement policies in order to promote goods that are less harmful to the environment (for instance, promotion of the use of wood products originating from sustainable forests or inclusion of environmental - including biodiversity - criteria in the procurement procedure for Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation).



In 2006, the Belgian Parliament passed a new law on public procurement that provides some opportunities to integrate sustainable (biodiversity) criteria in public procurement procedures.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3 - Agriculture

**Rationale for the national target**

The importance of agriculture for the natural environment and for biodiversity is emphasised by the fact that nearly half the land surface in Belgium is farmed. Farming is an activity which goes beyond simple food production, affecting and using natural resources such as soil and water. Over the centuries, farming has contributed to the creation and maintenance of a large variety of agricultural landscapes (fields, pastures, quickset hedges, mixed woodland and pasture, etc.) which provide important semi-natural habitats for wildlife. Furthermore, the agricultural sector plays a multi-functional role as a food producer, biodiversity manager, motor for the economy in rural areas and guarantor of in situ conservation of local species, varieties and domestic animal breeds. However, in recent decades, intensification and specialisation of agriculture, and at the same time marginalisation of land, have resulted in significant biodiversity loss in and around farmland. Farmland bird populations in particular have shown a decline over last decades.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), together with broader developmental dynamics of the agricultural sector has only gradually taken on concerns regarding biodiversity loss. The CAP has its roots in 1950s Western Europe, whose societies had been damaged by years of war, and where agriculture had been crippled and food supplies could not be guaranteed. The emphasis of the early CAP was on encouraging better productivity in the food chain so that consumers had a stable supply of affordable food. The CAP offered subsidies and guaranteed prices to farmers, thus providing them with incentives to produce, and a viable income. Financial assistance was provided for the restructuring of farming, for example by aiding farm investment, aiming to ensure that farms increased in size and that farmers developed management and technology skills so that they were adapted to the economic and social climate of the day. Although successful in reaching its original objectives, this policy also led to reducing high nature value farmlands, the removal of hedgerows and the draining of wetlands, and intensification exerted a variety of pressures on ecosystems (high fertilizer and chemicals inputs, drainage, increasing cutting frequencies, grazing pressures, early mowing, over sizing of agricultural parcels).

Since 1992, however, the CAP has been adapted to better integrate biodiversity needs. Increasing use of agri-environment measures, Good Farming Practice, organic farming and the support of Less Favoured Areas have favoured farmland biodiversity. The 2003 CAP reform promotes these and other pro-biodiversity measures. Measures under market and income policy, including mandatory cross-compliance, the single farm payment (decoupling) and modulation, should have provided indirect benefits to biodiversity. These

measures have been implemented at EU level since 2005. The on-going reform of the CAP (2013) goes a step further in this direction by introducing a Greening Payment as an essential part of the direct payments to farmers.

Reducing pressure on biodiversity from agriculture is a big challenge for farmers in Belgium because our agriculture is one of the most intensive, specialised and productive in Europe. Furthermore, farmers are currently facing serious challenges with regard to the continuation of their profession. The number of farmers is decreasing every year. They leave the profession for various reasons, including competitive pressures from the market, compensation for the drop in prices by a rise in the cultivated area and risks posed by the move towards energetic crops. Between 2000 and 2010, 19,072 farms ceased their activities (30.8 per cent of Belgian farmers) with the total agricultural area decreasing only slightly (decrease of 2.6 per cent), so that the average area per farm is growing (FPS Economy - Directorate-general Statistics Belgium, agriculture census 2000 and 2010).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the regional and federal authorities, farmers, agricultural research bodies, various sectors (including public health, food chain safety, agro-food, bioenergy...), universities and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.1 - Promote measures favourable to biodiversity under the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

**Rationale for the national target**

The ongoing CAP reform provides for the introduction of a payment for agricultural practices that are beneficial to the climate and the environment within the direct payment scheme, the Greening Payment. From 1/1/2015, 30 % of the budgetary envelope for direct payments will be assigned to this kind of mandatory measures. The payment will reward the delivery of environmental public goods that go beyond cross-compliance and promote sustainable production. Farmers who receive first-pillar payments will receive the Greening payment (except for organic farms and small scale farms) when they respect the 3 basic measures:

- maintaining permanent grassland
- crop diversification
- maintaining an “ecological focus area” of at least 5 % of the arable area of the holding for farms with an arable area larger than 15 hectares. The Commission can propose to increase this figure to 7 %, on the basis

of a Commission report in 2017, by presenting a new legislative proposal. This measure can contribute to the establishment of the green infrastructure.

During the mid-term interim review of the CAP in 2002, it was decided that the whole-farm payments made by the CAP would be backed up by a compulsory set of cross-compliance requirements, covering environmental, food safety, plant and animal health and animal welfare standards. Farmers should observe a minimum level of environmental standards and have to maintain agricultural land in good agricultural and environmental condition as a condition for the full granting of the CAP direct payments. With the on-going CAP-reform the list has been simplified to exclude rules where there are no clear and controllable obligations for farmers. The CAP imposes the framework of cross-compliance criteria. As a Member State, Belgium only has limited freedom in defining its minimum requirements for a good agricultural and environmental condition.

Environmental cross-compliance criteria address the conservation of habitats through ecologically managed Natura 2000 areas, and protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources. These cross-compliance criteria are based on articles emanating from specific European directives, such as the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC and the Directive on the conservation of wild birds 2009/147. The requirements for good agricultural and environmental condition include inter alia the retention of landscape features.

This operational objective aims to stimulate authorities and farmers to implement the Greening payment and cross-compliance in a way that delivers a real profit to biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.2 - Enhance and encourage the role of farmers as biodiversity actors.

**Rationale for the national target**

The role of farmers as actors for biodiversity protection through implementation of good farming practices and technologies should be encouraged. Farmers play a key role in agro-ecosystems, protecting and enhancing the environment, biodiversity, natural resources, soil and genetic diversity (for instance, crop rotation, organic farming and set-aside of small land parcels) and maintaining the landscape and the countryside (for instance, maintenance of open environments, management of linear and small landscape features, ecological compensation areas\*). In several areas, semi-natural habitats can be preserved only if appropriate farming activities are continued.

Apart from the principle that farmers should observe a minimum level of environmental standards (cross-compliance) as a condition for the full granting of the CAP direct payments, the CAP provides financial incentives called “agri-environmental measures” within the framework of the rural development policy (see also 4c.4). These measures support specific farming practices that go beyond the baseline level set by the cross-compliance obligations and help to protect the environment and maintain the countryside.

Farmers who commit themselves, for a five-year minimum period, to adopt environmentally-friendly farming techniques that go beyond cross-compliance obligations, receive in return payments that compensate for additional costs and loss of income that arise as a result of altered farming practices. Examples of commitments covered by regional agri-environmental schemes are: environmentally favourable extensification of farming; management of low-intensity pasture systems; integrated farm management; preservation of landscape and historical features such as hedgerows, ditches and woods; conservation of high-value habitats and their associated biodiversity.

This operational objective complements the previous one, by targeting the development of clear and detailed guidance at exactly what farmers should do to implement cross-compliance criteria and agri-environmental measures. This could be achieved for example through the establishment of guidelines that will provide an easy and understandable way of getting information across given that the wording of CAP reform is rather complex. Continuous appropriate education of and the provision of information to farmers, farm contractors, agriculture advisers and teachers in agricultural colleges are crucial. For instance, guidebooks, workshops, conferences, publications and information campaigns could address the following issues: soil management best practices, impacts of pesticides on wild fauna, the establishment of set-aside strips and their appropriate management for fauna and flora preservation, soil erosion control or landscape improvement, importance of the preservation of notable indigenous farmland trees and other small landscape elements, the protection of breeding wildlife and nests in pasture and fields, the protection of ponds and rivers from pollution from manure, etc.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.3 - Promote agricultural diversification.

**Rationale for the national target**

Agricultural diversification can be defined as all gainful activities by farmers outside agricultural core activities, i.e. outside production zones. This operational objective aims to encourage agricultural diversification that specifically benefits biodiversity and to support creative research into new diversification possibilities that can stimulate the conservation of local biodiversity, including traditional varieties. The system of advisory councils could provide guidance to farmers interested in diversification. Diversification is promoted in the Rural Development Policy and can be further promoted by the Regional Rural Development Plans.

Agricultural diversification can meet the demand for varied quality products as well as rural recreation activities and at the same time stimulate public interest in biodiversity conservation. It can lead to an increase in a product's added value and farms' profitability and to an improvement in the image of agriculture. Creative solutions could also seek to meet sanitary constraints of neighbourhood production, promote the interests of consumers and ensure access of the products concerned to the market.

Examples of such diversification activities in rural areas are (i) assisting in the management of nature reserves, (ii) the development of agricultural and nature tourism which arouse the interest of the public in biodiversity conservation, (iii) organic production of fruit and vegetables or organically reared chickens, (iv) neighbourhood production such as farm cheese, ancient varieties of fruit and vegetables, snails, and (v) other initiatives that reduce standardisation of agricultural production.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.4 - Promote the integration of biodiversity into rural development.

**Rationale for the national target**

Agricultural and environmental policies must give farmers complementary signals if environmentally sound agricultural practices are to be applied to a sufficient extent. A new policy for rural development was introduced in 1999 as the second pillar of the CAP. This second pillar of the CAP aims to accompany market and income policy (“first pillar”) by providing financial aid to farmers in order to influence rural structures. In its revised version for the period 2014-2020, the Rural Development Policy still includes important biodiversity-friendly measures, like agri-environmental measures, compensatory schemes in Natura 2000 sites, ecological forest-management aid, etc. They have to be scheduled by a national (regional) rural development programme and are co-financed by the EU. These measures can be a useful financial instrument for farmers who face a drop in income as they comply with the set regulations.

One of the six Union priorities for rural development in the period 2014-2020 is restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry with one focus area on “restoring, and preserving and enhancing biodiversity, including in Natura 2000 areas, areas facing natural or other specific constraints and high nature value farming, and the state of European landscapes “. Besides, at least 30 % of the rural development programmes' budget will have to be allocated to agri-environmental measures, support for organic farming, forestry measures or projects associated with environmentally friendly investment or innovation measures. Agri-environmental measures are obligatory for all programmes and will be stepped up to complement greening practices. These measures will have to set and meet higher environmental protection targets (guarantee against double funding).

Another important tool in rural development regulation for promoting the integration of biodiversity that the Member states may chose to use is the “non-productive investments ” support. Support could be granted to investments linked to the achievement of agri-environment-climate objectives including biodiversity conservation status of species and habitat as well as enhancing the public amenity value of a Natura 2000 area or other high nature value systems to be defined in the programme.

Therefore, one priority of this Strategy is to integrate biodiversity aspects better and more clearly in current and future rural development plans.

In particular, the elaboration of rural development plans for the period 2014-2020 will be an occasion to streamline integration of biodiversity in these plans at Belgian level.

Furthermore, policies for nature conservation and rural development must take into account the commitments of the Kiev Resolution on biodiversity (2003) which foresees (i) the identification, using agreed common criteria, of all high nature value (HNV) areas in agricultural ecosystems in the pan-European region and (ii) their biodiversity-friendly management through appropriate measures (e.g. instruments of rural development). Designation of HNV and integration of ad hoc protection tools should be fully implemented in the Rural Development Plan.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.5 - Promote the sustainable use of genetic resources for food, and agriculture.

**Rationale for the national target**

Humans' age-old agricultural activities have contributed, in the course of history, to the creation of a large pool of biodiversity. Since the 1950s, however, due to economic pressure and intensive urbanisation, drastic genetic erosion of old landraces and cultivars took place and actions for collecting, evaluating and conserving them became, and still are, urgently needed. Data show that about 50 per cent of the main native livestock breeds (cattle, pig, sheep, goat and poultry) in the EU-15 countries are either extinct or classed as endangered or critical ([EEA, 2006](#)).

Biological and genetic diversity in agriculture is essential for the sustainable development of agricultural production and of rural areas. Genetically poorly diversified agricultural areas are indeed more threatened by environmental stresses and disasters; besides, genetically diversified food offers a greater variety of nutrients useful for good general health and resistance to disease. The necessary measures should be taken to collect, conserve, characterise and utilise the potential of that biodiversity in a sustainable way to promote the global aims of the CAP. The conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture is one of the objectives of the CBD. It is also a major objective of the FAO's Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilisation of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and it is a key topic of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Coordinated actions at Belgian level (including regional level) must be set up for a better, safe conservation strategy for the genetic diversity that is essential for food and agriculture. The conservation of agricultural genetic diversity is to be achieved through *in situ* conservation of local species, varieties, domestic animal breeds and microbial life forms with actual or potential value. Actions should also be taken to improve the development of adequate gene banks useful for the *ex situ* conservation of genetic resources for food and agriculture. Such conservation requires an adequate system of economic and social incentives, combined with increased consumer awareness. The Regions take the conservation of breeds and varieties into consideration in their agri-environment measures. Ongoing initiatives cover, among other things, the establishment of private

orchards, the safeguarding of poultry varieties and a programme to promote the rearing of the “Blanc-Bleu mixte” breed of cattle and the “mouton ardennais roux” breed of sheep in Wallonia (*in situ* conservation) and the establishment of cryo-banks for ruminant rearing in Wallonia (*ex situ* conservation).

A specific national strategy focusing on the management of agricultural biodiversity should be developed in the first place for coordinating the diverse actions already going on and to promote new ones. All the actions will contribute to the implementation of both the FAO’s Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture that stipulate clearly the implementation of a National Strategy and a National Inventory of plant genetic resources for agriculture.

Furthermore, the importance of biodiversity for food and nutrition should be taken more into account by public health and food chain safety policies and their scientific bodies.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 13 - By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.6 - Reduce the impacts of pesticides on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Rationale for the national target**

Pesticides are used to combat organisms considered to be harmful to crops and have therefore a detrimental effect on biodiversity. It is nevertheless possible to reduce the impacts of pesticides on biodiversity and ecosystem services by lessening their impacts on non-target organisms. A range of measures, if correctly applied, can contribute to reducing these impacts; they are either related to the choice of the pesticide or to the way it is spread into the environment (for example, organic agriculture, integrated agriculture, biological control, prohibition of pesticides with long-term repercussions for the abundance and diversity of non-target species; and application of risk mitigation measures such as buffer zones in order to protect aquatic organisms).

From 2013, the NAPAN (Nationaal Actie Plan d’ Action National) has been established as the Belgian national action plan for pesticide reduction as requested by the EU directive 2009/128. It includes the Federal Reduction Plan for Pesticides 2013-2017 (FRPP), and the plans from the three Regions. Each of these plans comprises both specific actions and actions carried out jointly with the other members of the NAPAN Task Force. It aims to reach the objectives of reducing risks linked to pesticides as defined in EU Directive 2009/128/CE establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides.

The FRPP is coordinated by the federal agencies in charge of the standardization of products, which allows to take many structural changes related to pesticides issues through legislative changes [50].

Examples of the measures foreseen in the federal and regional plans to be implemented at the national level are (i) the harmonization of methods, standards and reports on water contamination by pesticides, (ii) ensuring balanced information for non-professional users of products at the point of sale regarding the right conditions of use, the risks to public health and the environment, including biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.7 - Prevent cultivated GMOs from leading to the loss, displacement or genetic introgression into local agricultural varieties and related wild flora and prevent them from affecting the surrounding natural biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

The use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture for food or feed crops and their release into the environment per se are issues of growing importance. This importance increases in line with the technological progress made in this area, as the use of GMOs can potentially have negative impacts on the biodiversity of the environment. One risk is the escape of newly introduced genes into the surrounding environment (especially through pollen) so that the genetic material of local agricultural varieties or wild related flora can become contaminated. This can be prejudicial for instance if the newly introduced gene (transgene), aimed at agricultural purposes, has adverse effects if spread into the wild nature. Since the purpose of genetic modification will often be acceleration of the growth of cultivated plants or growth in adverse environmental conditions, cross-pollination could lead to mutations in wild plants that make such plants more invasive. Depending on the new character conferred by the transgenes, the impact of genetically modified plants should be carefully evaluated with regard to various components of biodiversity, representative of the various functions of the ecosystem, not only in the agricultural ecosystem itself but also with regard to the related vicinal wild terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

There is also a risk that GM standardised cultivated varieties will supplant locally adapted agricultural varieties, mainly for economical and marketing reasons and generally as large monocultures, and would therefore counteract Objectives 4c.2 to 4c.5 and Objective 5.8.

Moreover, with GM varieties being covered by patents generally owned by multinationals, efforts must be made to prevent that their release in the environment would alter traditional agricultural practices, thus counteracting Objectives 5.10 and 6.

We must also prevent marketing, economic forces and consumption habits from threatening and contaminating wild ecosystems. Public awareness of consumption behaviours increasing such threats should be raised (cf. obj. 4b.1 and 4g.1).

On the other hand, GM plants are developed for industrial purposes (to make pharmaceuticals, bioplastics and other biomaterials), and industrial crops take over the area previously used for food crops. Once again, it is extremely important to carefully monitor the ecological consequences of the spreading of those transgenes as well as the ethical and social consequences, and decisions must be taken to avoid negative impacts.



Some GM cultures are resistant to herbicides or insecticides. Cultivation of these plants could lead to adjustments in agricultural practices (a change in the amount and type of herbicides/insecticides used) that have a direct impact on the environment and on biodiversity in particular.

In order to pursue the operational objective mentioned above, case-by-case studies on environmental risks for biodiversity and on socio-economic considerations of introduction of GMO cultures in Belgium are needed. Such studies would provide a scientific background to facilitate cooperative discussions between the Regional and Federal authorities and between the various stakeholders in Belgium when deciding to import and/or cultivate GMOs. These studies should be coordinated with the implementation of Objective 7.8 aimed at promoting research on and assessing the effects of GMOs on biodiversity and socio-economic aspects. Finally, such environmental and socio-economic impact studies would have to be based on a good knowledge of the existing agricultural biodiversity of our country. The establishment of complete “living” (adaptable) catalogues covering this should therefore be encouraged.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.3.8 - Ensure that the production of plants, inter alia non indigenous plants, for renewable energy does not negatively impact on biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Biomass\* energy and biofuels\* are set to cover an ever-increasing share of the EU’s future transport and heating needs. The EU is supporting biofuels with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, boosting the decarbonisation of transport fuels, diversifying fuel supply sources, offering new income opportunities in rural areas and developing long-term replacements for fossil fuel.

In 2003, the Biofuels Directive on the promotion of the use of biofuels and other renewable fuels for transport set out indicative targets for Member States.

In December 2005: the European Commission adopted an Action Plan designed to increase the use of energy from forestry, agriculture and waste materials.

With regard to CAP, the decoupling of income support from production introduced in 2003 by the reformed CAP helps to facilitate the supply of energy crops. In particular, crops that were eligible for direct payments only under the non-food regime on set-aside areas may now be cultivated on any area without loss of income support.

Under Rural development policy, investments on or near farms, for example in biomass processing, as well as the mobilisation of unused biomass by forest holders, can also be supported. The Commission has proposed Community strategic guidelines for rural development that emphasise renewable energy, including biofuels. It is also proposing a specific ad hoc group to consider biomass and biofuel opportunities within national rural development programmes.

EU Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the (sustainable) use of energy from renewable sources raises the share of renewable energy to 20 % by 2020 and the share of renewable energy in the transport sector specifically to 10 %. This directive is challenging, especially because a large number of plants grown to produce renewable energy are non-indigenous. As demonstrated by numerous studies on biofuels, imports to meet our need for renewable resources have dramatic consequences for the fight against climate change or the protection of biodiversity, as they indirectly lead to land use changes: they contribute to accelerate the destruction or degradation of natural habitats and increase the introduction of non-indigenous plants for that production. Intensive production of any form of biomass has serious negative impacts on biodiversity as a result of the use of fertilizers, pesticides, monoculture and forest clearing. In order to meet the growing demand for biomass and biofuels, the EU already imports large quantities of crops with substantial environmental impacts, such as palm oil or sugar cane. This must not lead to unacceptable pressures on biodiversity and food production in the exporting countries. This is not only an issue for biofuels, but biofuels will increase the pressure.

It is necessary to consider carefully how policies in Belgium can best increase the use of biomass and biofuels without damaging biodiversity. However, current attribution criteria in Belgium (established until 2013) only take into account the limitation in the use of fertilizers and pesticides, yet there are no specific criteria related to biodiversity. As a follow-up to the two studies on the impacts of biofuel production on biodiversity carried out in 2009 and 2010, Belgium will defend a position aiming at the compulsory inclusion of new environmental criteria within the framework of the revision of Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC. Incentives should be restricted to the promotion of biofuels produced from feedstock that do not create an additional demand for land and do not compete with other uses like food, materials, biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 9 - By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.4 - Fishery in marine and inland waters

**Rationale for the national target**

*Marine waters*

Belgium has a limited coastline and the country's professional marine fishing fleet is relatively small. Its ships only land 1 % of total landings of the countries bordering the North Sea. About 30,000 tons of fish (mostly flat fish and cod) are brought ashore by Belgian fishermen each year. Other marine products (oysters) and the aquaculture\* production in marine waters and freshwaters are currently not exploited. Taking into account that the state of the commercially exploited fishery resources is assessed at the European level and not at the level of the individual member states, marine biodiversity is particularly threatened in our coastal zone and shelf sea, where direct and indirect disturbances are concentrated. Two important threats are the overexploitation of marine resources and the adverse effects of certain fishing methods (in particular bottom-affecting gear) employed not only by Belgian fisheries but also by fishing vessels from

foreign countries active in Belgium waters. Despite the creation of several international instruments to regulate fishery and its impact on the environment, the pressure on the marine ecosystem and fish populations is still present. Besides professional fishermen, also recreational fishermen are active at sea.

Fishery and aquaculture in the North Sea are governed by the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), established in 1983 and reviewed in 1992, 2002, and 2013. The new CFP came into effect from 2014 with the objective of an ecological sustainable fishery and aquaculture (see art.1 of the CFP) and to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield by 2020. The CFP takes into account the biological, economic and social dimensions of fishing. The CFP addresses four main areas, dealing with (1) conservation of fish stocks (such as establishment of total allowable catches (TACs) of sea fish that can safely be caught every year to allow for renewal of fish stock), (2) structures (such as vessels, port facilities and fish-processing plants), (3) the common organisation of the market and (4) an external fisheries policy which includes fishing agreements with non-Community members and negotiations in international organisations.

EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) on the protection and conservation of the marine environment establishes a framework for Member states to take the necessary measures to achieve Good Environmental Status of the marine environment by 2020 at the latest. For that purpose, marine strategies shall be developed and implemented in order to (a) protect and preserve the marine environment, prevent its deterioration, or, where practicable, restore marine ecosystems in areas where they have been adversely affected and (b) to prevent and reduce inputs in the marine environment, with a view to phasing out pollution so as to ensure that there are no significant impacts on or risks to marine biodiversity, marine ecosystems, human health or legitimate uses of the sea.

An important national instrument is the Law of 20 January 1999 on the protection of the marine environment in the areas under Belgian jurisdiction. This foresees the identification and designation of marine protected areas (MPA) (among others in application of the EU Habitat and Birds Directives). Work on MPAs and threatened and declining species is also ongoing under OSPAR. An impact analysis of human activities (including fisheries) and measures in view of achieving the objective of Good Environmental Status (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) are included in the programme of measures. Already in 2014 the Marine Spatial Planning proposed measures to reduce the impact of bottom-affecting gear that would contribute to the Good Environmental Status. As there are also foreign fishermen active in the Belgian part of the North Sea, these measures had to be negotiated and adopted following the procedures of the Common Fisheries Policy in order to make them legally binding for all fishermen. After a long and hard negotiation process the European Parliament rejected the proposed measures. As measures are still needed to reduce the impact of bottom affecting gear, the new Marine Spatial Plan (which will enter in to force in 2020) contains 4 searching zones where new measures will be developed and proposed.

For CITES-listed marine species, the permitting procedure with regards to the commercialisation of species caught in the high sea was approved at CITES CoP16 (March 2013). This way there is a common understanding of the provisions of the Convention relating to the introduction of sea specimens taken in the marine environment not under the jurisdiction of any State in order to facilitate the standard implementation of trade controls for such specimens introduced from the sea and to improve the accuracy of CITES trade data.

### *Inland waters*

In Belgium, inland water fishery can be considered to be a leisure activity or a sport. It is practised mostly for entertainment and on a limited basis for food, both in artificial areas specially managed for fishing (private ponds, fishing grounds) and in the public hydrographic network of rivers and canals. Belgium's current legislation only covers the management of the public hydrographical network. Several improvements in the management of standing waters by fishermen should be promoted both to ensure an ecological management of the aquatic ecosystems and improve the quality of the local fish populations.

Belgium is a Party to the Ramsar Convention on the protection of wetlands (i.e. inland waters and marine waters) established in 1971 which provides the framework for conservation and sustainable utilisation of wetlands.

The ICES Code of Practice on the Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms sets forth recommended procedures and practices to diminish the risks of detrimental effects from the intentional introduction and transfer of marine (including brackish water) organisms (ICES, 2005).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem-based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: fishery management bodies; owners, managers and charters of fishing vessels; the federations of fishermen, as well as fishermen, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.4.1 - Promote the implementation of good fishing practices in the North Sea, favourable to fish protection and their habitats, including the implementation of the Common Fishery Policy.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium will promote the implementation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries to ensure the long-term sustainability of living marine resources and protection of their habitat. To help implement the provisions regarding fishing operations (Article 8 of the Code), Technical Guidelines are addressed to the individual states, international organisations, fishery management bodies, owners, managers and charters of fishing vessels as well as fishermen and the general public. They provide practical advice to ensure all fishing operations are conducted responsibly. Particular attention will be paid to minimising bycatch. Implementation of this objective should be in accordance with the management of marine protected areas and an Integrated Coastal Zone Management strategy (see Operational objective 3.2), as well as with the future European Marine Strategy. The CFP is the instrument (legal basis) to implement the fishery-related measures.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem-based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.4.2 - Ensure that recreational and sport fishing practices at sea and inland waters respond to ecological management objectives to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

The impact of recreational fishing at sea on fish stocks or on other elements of the marine biodiversity has not been assessed yet. At present, recreational gill-net fishing at sea is prohibited to limit the bycatch of birds and sea mammals. In the MPA “Vlaamse Banken” that covers about 1/3th of the Belgian Part of the North Sea all recreational fisheries with bottom disturbing gear are prohibited.

Wherever it takes place, inland water fisheries should respect the ecosystem quality by avoiding unnecessary, inefficient or harmful fish stocking (overstocking, ponds connected to other water bodies, etc.). When necessary, the planting of indigenous fish should respect local genetic strains and the populations structure. Populations of species of no fishing interest should be respected. Stocking of non-indigenous species should be avoided in order to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. Introgression of wild fish populations by domestic strains of fish should be avoided. Exaggerated baiting and consequent dystrophication must be avoided, especially in lakes and reservoirs. Furthermore, the monitoring of these activities should be strengthened.

Planning and restoration of inland water systems should be promoted: through biomanipulation, fisheries may contribute to rehabilitation of clear water systems with macrophytes and high species richness instead of poor and banal turbid water systems characterised by algal blooms. Stocking of fish should achieve a balance between the carrying capacity of aquatic ecosystems and the size and structure of fish populations in order to promote clear water systems, so preventing turbid water systems with poor species diversity. Stocking of pools should be avoided: they are too small to carry populations of large fish. Furthermore, maintenance and creation of fish-free ponds should be promoted for specific biota, for example amphibians.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem-based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.4.3 - Prevent GM fish from threatening marine and freshwater biodiversity and populations.

**Rationale for the national target**

GM varieties of fish have already been commercialised in some parts of the world, intended including to grow faster and reach a bigger size. This practice is not applied in Belgium yet. Whereas those fish are supposed to be raised in confined areas, drastic measures should be taken to prevent those varieties from escaping into the wild. After all, some GM varieties of fish have already been shown to threaten the future of the species when they come into reproductive contact with the wild related members. Furthermore, GM fish could threaten local species and ecosystems through their invasive behaviour.

Similarly for other marine GM products, the consequences of interbreeding and competitive behaviour with wild relatives should be carefully investigated and, as a rule, should be avoided at all cost. The Belgian Marine Environmental law prohibits the deliberate introduction of genetically modified organisms.

Specific attention needs to be given to side effects of genetic manipulations aimed at increasing the size of commercial species (amplification of growth hormone gene).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem-based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.5 - Wise use of wetlands.

**Rationale for the national target**

Wetlands are essential components of Belgian biodiversity which are under severe threat. They provide for useful ecosystem services such as water retention, water purification, recreational areas, wildfowl habitats and more.

The Convention requires that “The Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List, and as far as possible the wise use of wetlands in their territory” (art. 3.1). Wise use of wetlands has been defined by the COP of the convention as “the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”. “Ecological character” is “the combination of the ecosystem components, processes and benefits/services that characterise the wetland at a given point in time” (Rés. XI.1. Annex A COP Ramsar Convention, 2005).

Nine Ramsar sites are designated in Belgium (4 in Flanders and 4 in Wallonia).

The Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/CE) sets a framework for a Community policy in the field of water. It establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater in order, among other things, to prevent further deterioration and protect and enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the aquatic ecosystems.

The wise use provisions of the Convention apply, as far as possible, to all wetland ecosystems. Societal choice is inherent in advancing human well-being and poverty alleviation, which depends on the maintenance of ecosystem benefits/services. Within the context of ecosystem approaches, planning processes for promoting the delivery of wetland ecosystem benefits/services should be formulated and implemented in the context of the maintenance or enhancement, as appropriate, of wetland ecological character at appropriate spatial and temporal scales. (Rés. XI.1. Annex A COP Ramsar Convention, 2005).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities competent for wetlands management or wetlands related issues, the Belgian Ramsar Committee, wetland site managers, key business sectors (water and sanitation, irrigation and water supply, agriculture, waste disposal, fishing...) and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.5.1 - Apply Ramsar Convention guidelines on Wise use of Wetlands Concept as far as relevant.

**Rationale for the national target**

The COP of Ramsar Convention has published detailed guidelines on various issues of wetlands use. Main guidelines are about: Integrated Coastal Zone Management; Inventory; Laws and institutions; Management planning; National wetland policies; Participation in management; Restoration; Risk assessment; River basin management; Water and water allocation; Wise Use concept. Those Guidelines should be implemented through relevant public authorities competent with wetlands management or wetlands related uses.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.6 - Forestry

**Rationale for the national target**

The forestry sector plays a multi-functional role as a producer of a renewable natural resource, provider of income and employment, biodiversity manager, guarantor of in situ conservation of local tree varieties and provider of environmental services (like soil and water protection) and of recreational activities.

The biodiversity of Belgian forests is threatened locally, among other things by intensive management, pollution, changes in groundwater levels, fragmentation, recreational activities and high population densities of big game species (ungulates). Indirectly, they also pose a threat to the forest as a productive resource. To ensure that the biodiversity in Belgian forests is maintained, it is necessary to work on quantitative aspects (for instance, halt deforestation and fragmentation) and qualitative aspects, and to focus on “internal measures” within the forest and nature conservation policies and practices, as well as external measures lying outside the forest sector (for example environmental quality, land-use planning). The guiding principle should be the promotion of sustainable forest management. Sustainable forest management (SFM) is defined as “the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems” (Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 1993). In this context, the Flemish Government approved the Act of the Flemish government concerning the determination of criteria for sustainable forest management for forests in the Flemish Region (Decree of the Flemish Government of 27/06/03, Belgian Official Gazette 10/09/2003). Management standards for the



promotion of sustainable forest management have been proposed in Flanders (“Beheervisie”) and Wallonia (“Walloon Biodiversity Guidelines” - Branquart & Liégeois 2005).

The improved pan-European criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are taken into account in regional forest inventories.

Forest certification is seen as one of the most important initiatives from the last decade to promote sustainable forest management and since 1994, work on certification has been carried out in Belgium. Several different certification schemes exist world-wide; the best-known initiatives are the “Forest Stewardship Council” (FSC) and the “Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes” (PEFC). The Flemish Region and Brussels-Capital Region actively encourage the use of FSC-certified wood in public works, while the PEFC is mainly favoured by, and is fully operational in, the Walloon Region. The Federal Government supports all certification systems that prove that the timber comes from sustainable managed forests, for example through its public procurement policy.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, foresters, public and private forest owners, forest industries, forest groups, public procurements actors, NGOs, research institutes, universities and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.6.1 - Promote the conservation of forest biodiversity through independent credible forest certification systems that provide a guarantee for sustainable forest management.

**Rationale for the national target**

This operational objective supports the use of sustainable (certified) timber products and the promotion of credible certification systems. This can be achieved, for example, by actions in several fields such as public procurements policy or public and forest owner’s awareness activities.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.6.2 - Promote nature-oriented forestry that provides a guarantee for sustainable forest management, including forest conservation.

**Rationale for the national target**

The declining health of forests, new insights in forest ecology as well as the increased interest of society in the protection of the environment demand a change in forest-management priorities, with a greater emphasis needing to be laid on close-to-nature forest-management practices. Nature-oriented forest management means the use of management forms where self-regulating natural processes are used and promoted to regulate the required functional efficiency of forests.

Besides the adoption of close-to-nature forest management systems, it is also of vital importance to promote the development of a representative network of protected forest areas (see objective 3.1.).

Nature-oriented forestry has to be understood as a flexible system to maintain the natural characteristics of forests, via adequate planning, harvesting methods, origins of plant material and management practices that take into account the ecological requirements of all the natural values of the forest. This system should provide options rather than strict rules. Its promotion needs to be based on a better knowledge of its economic benefits (for instance, through innovative research) and a better illustration of its advantages for biodiversity (for instance through demonstration areas). Belgian public forests are progressively applying nature-oriented forestry, and it should be promoted for the private forest owners too. In Flanders, voluntary associations (forest groups) offer different services to help the small-scale forest owners with the management of their forests.

Positive incentives need to be enhanced to promote sustainable forestry. In Flanders, subsidies are given for afforestation of farmland and pilot projects are receiving financial and technical support for the development and implementation of forest management plans.

In Wallonia, both public and private owners must meet sustainable forest management (SFM) criteria in order to obtain financial incentives for forest operations.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.6.3 - Protection of forest genetic diversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Genetic diversity has become one of the keywords for the scientists and managers who are concerned with the sustainable management of forests. Scientific evidence suggests that high levels of genetic diversity provide a guarantee for perennial forests. Biodiversity in forests is therefore not only important for its economic potential, but also because the genetic variation within species influences growth and resistance to stresses such as harsh weather, disease and plagues.

For the reasons mentioned above, Belgium needs to protect its forest genetic resources in order to ensure healthy tree populations and to preserve all the potentials of the forests. It is to be achieved through a better knowledge of the conservation of forest genetic resources, in parallel with the adoption of practical measures for conservation. The “Technical Guidelines for genetic conservation and use” that are being produced by the EUFORGEN network can be used as a basis for such work in Belgium.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 13 - By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.6.4 - Prevent GM trees from having a negative impact on forest and general biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Genetically modified trees are currently in development in various countries worldwide mostly for industrial uses, to speed up the growth of the plant, to make them more resistant to various environmental stresses, to enhance the photosynthesis process, to reduce lignin content (reducing the need for toxic chlorinated organic compounds as bleaching method in the paper industry), etc. As for GMOs in agriculture, not only the ecological consequences of the transgenic trait itself and of the spreading of the transgenes into nature should be carefully looked at, but also the impact that economic forces can have on the spreading of those patented GM forests area, leading possibly to loss in forestry biodiversity and to negative social consequences (see also Objective 7.8).

It is also noted that GMO forest trees are not allowed in certified forests.

**Level of application** (Please specify the level to which the target applies):

- Regional/multilateral – please indicate area concerned <Text entry>
- National/federal
- Subnational – please indicate area concerned <Text entry>

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.7 - Hunting

**Rationale for the national target**

Hunting is a leisure activity for about 23,000 hunters in Belgium. It generates a societal debate with discussions on the pro and cons, and compromises always have to be reached. There has been an evolution over the last 20 years, with cooperation between hunters, foresters, farmers and conservationists improving. Important progress has been made in putting new wildlife management insights into practice and in recognising the ecological interactions between hunting and biodiversity.

Belgian hunting was regulated by a law of 1882 but is now a full competence of the Regions, with different regulations in Flanders, Wallonia, and Brussels-Capital Region. These laws differ between the Regions to better fit the respective game situations. The law of 1882 was first revised by the Regions in the 1990s in order to obtain a sustainable use of wild species and their habitats. In Brussels-Capital Region, hunting is completely prohibited since 1991. Since the 1990s, modifications of Walloon and Flemish laws on hunting, along with efforts from hunters, aim to a sustainable use of wild species and their habitats.

In Flanders, management plans for the game management units are controlled, and if necessary amended, by the responsible Minister on a 6 years basis. In Flanders and in Wallonia, cull plans in general are drawn up every year for the most part by game management units for certain big game (red deer in Wallonia and roe deer in Flanders) and approved by the Regions in order to guarantee a coordinated management of these types of game.

Since 1978, both in Flanders and in Wallonia, a compulsory hunting exam aims to guarantee best safety practices, ethics, and good knowledge of game species and their habitats.

For birds, the Council Directive 79/409/EEC provides the framework for the management of bird-hunting in the EU. The Guidance document on hunting under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds published by the European Commission in 2004 accepts hunting activity in accordance with the general objectives of the Birds Directive. The AEWA action plan and Bern Convention foresee the phasing out of the use of lead shot for hunting in order to prevent saturnism. The use of leadshot in wetlands is prohibited since 1993 in Flanders and since 2006 in Wallonia. Since 2008, there has been an absolute ban on the use of leadshot anywhere in Flanders.

Historically, hunters have played an important role in the conservation of habitats. More recently, through their commitment in game management units, hunters took management measures with a positive influence on biodiversity, for instance management of field edges, promotion of agro-environmental methods, planting of indigenous shrubs and trees, infrastructural actions such as roe deer-reflectors along roads.

Hunters' behaviour has changed significantly given they have to take courses and pass an exam on theory and practice to gain a hunting permit. The creation and approval of game management units has had a major impact on vision and attitudes of hunters in Belgium. However, specific efforts need to be done to avoid harmful behaviour that can have an impact on biodiversity by individual hunters and landowners. The hunting sector still needs proactive policy initiatives with a vision on the long term to contribute to the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity in Belgium.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, farmers, foresters, hunters, hunting organizations, environmental NGOs, land owners, landscape and land use planning departments and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.7.1 - Promote integrated management of hunting grounds in cooperation with farmers, foresters and environmental NGOs and the application of good hunting practices.

**Rationale for the national target**

Game habitats should be managed in an integrated manner fully compatible with maintenance and rehabilitation of biodiversity (Objective 3) and in cooperation with farmers, foresters, other users of the countryside and environmental NGOs. For instance, attention should be paid to create and maintain refuge areas for small game, in particular in agricultural habitats. Hunters should participate to semi-natural habitats restoration and small landscape elements conservation in open lands taking into account that today farmers and land owners are the key role players for landscape management. To achieve this goal, legislative initiatives, such as modification of set-aside regulation, should be taken by the competent governments.

In the long term, game management units should be stimulated and plans should be extended to all native game species in all Regions.

Hunters should be aware of the carrying capacity of habitats. Total achievement of annual big game cull plans and game management plans will help restore the equilibrium between economic, ecological and social functions of forest and countryside. High densities of ungulates are locally a problem for foresters that can

be managed in partnership with hunters. Populations of big game have increased over the last 20 years due to a lack of severe winter periods for several years, the positive effect of storms on forests' nutritional potential (CEEW, 2000), but also due to the absence of natural predators since more than 150 years and hunters' tendency to protect females of big game and the feeding of wild boar (CEEW, 2005). This phenomenon has led to an over-density of total population of wild boar, roe deer and red deer in Wallonia (a similar evolution is observed in neighbouring regions) which locally cause damages to trees, hamper forest regeneration, threat several species and sensitive habitats, and cause other problems, including in suburban zones.

It is important to develop legal instruments in order to enable taking concrete measures for field management on favour of biodiversity. Several field measures still miss a legal framework or lack financial incentives (for instance, wildlife set-aside measures).

Some current legislation even has adverse effects on biodiversity (a.o. in Flanders, the berm Decree still allows mowing before 15 July and this hampers the breeding success of partridge and other species; in Wallonia, farmers are obliged to cut some set-aside covers in May-July during the main period of wildlife reproduction).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.7.2 - Promote the involvement of hunters as biodiversity actors.

**Rationale for the national target**

Sustainable hunting should be widely promoted. The use of wild species may not have a significant impact on the long-term viability of all species populations in their natural habitats. Several practices could be improved in order to limit pressure on biodiversity. The breeding and introduction of non-indigenous stocks

of small game should be strictly controlled and avoided in order to limit genetic pollution. In Flanders the introduction of wildfowl is prohibited since 2001; illegal introduction nevertheless remains a concern. Excessive feeding of game should be avoided. As to the control of predators, hunters should strictly follow legislation as predators play an essential role in the natural control of populations.

The issue of alien species detrimental to indigenous biodiversity can partly be dealt with in cooperation with hunters as they could help contain certain species or even be responsible for their systematic elimination.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.7.3 Promote stability within the hunting sector.

**Rationale for the national target**

For their investment in long-term biodiversity protection, hunters must be assured to some extent of their hunting rights in a given area and of a more stable legislative environment. This can stimulate their investment in the preservation and management of hedgerows, edges of woods and fields, game crops, and ponds or wetlands.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.8 - Tourism and leisure.

**Rationale for the national target**

Many people regularly visit parks, green areas, forests and other natural areas, including Belgian protected areas and natural reserves to enjoy nature and observe wildlife. Some of our most attractive destinations encompass the sea coast and the polders (for example the Zwin and the Westhoek), heaths and peat bogs (for example Kalmthout, the Hautes-Fagnes and the Ziepsbeek Valley), ponds and marshes (for example the Zwarte Beek Valley, the Haine Valley, Harchies and Virelles), limestone hills (for example the Meuse escarpments and the Viroin Valley), natural caves and caverns (for example Han-sur-Lesse, Remouchamps, La Merveilleuse and Hotton), and woods and forests (for example the Meerdaelwoud, the Hertogenwald, the Sonian Forest and the Anlier-Rulles Forest).

The development of tourism in natural and protected areas and other nature-based destinations is a source of increasing stress on fragile ecosystems. Its social, economic and environmental impacts are immense and complex. In the absence of appropriate policies and plans, tourism to natural areas may have a negative impact on biodiversity.

The challenge is to ensure that tourism is developed in harmony with environmental considerations. Sustainable tourism can generate employment and income, thus providing an incentive for conservation. Tourism policies should therefore be formulated and implemented in a way that generates incentives and revenues to cover a share of the costs of managing and protecting marine and terrestrial protected areas. Sustainable tourism can also raise public awareness of the many goods and services provided by biodiversity.

Worth mentioning here is the EU expert meeting 'Natura 2000 and Leisure' in 2004 where the participants shared their experiences and approaches to nature and recreation. The report 'Jewels in the crown - Good practices Natura 2000 and leisure' illustrates the synergies existing between recreation and protected Natura 2000 areas.

Another challenge is the development of knowledge on carrying capacity and the raising of consciousness among Belgian tourists abroad and foreign tourists in Belgium.

The Commission has published in 2003 a communication laying down basic orientations for the sustainability of European tourism (COM/2003/0716). This communication addresses current and future possibilities of community intervention in tourism, makes an analysis of the European situation and its difficulties and establishes orientations for the future.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the regional and municipal authorities, recreation and tourism organizations, guides and interpreters, sports/adventure associations, transportation and other service providers, environmental NGOs, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 4.8.1 - Apply CBD tools to monitor and control the impact of tourism on biodiversity, in particular in protected areas.

**Rationale for the national target**

Ideally, the conception of tourism in protected areas should be one of environmentally responsible travel to and visiting of natural areas, promoting conservation, having a low visitor impact, and providing for positive active socio-economic involvement on the part of local populations.

As protected habitats with high biodiversity value are becoming popular tourism destinations, tools (such as environmental impact assessments) and methods (such as the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum\* and the Limits of Acceptable Change\*) should be used in order to balance the frequency and (possible) impacts of the visits in protected areas against the carrying capacity of the area. In vulnerable ecosystems, based on these methodologies, relevant background information and application of the ecosystem approach, tourism should be restricted and where necessary prevented. These tools and methods should be equally applicable to any tourism activities and development that may have an impact on biodiversity in geographical locations and tourist destinations at all levels (including areas that are neither protected nor vulnerable).



**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 11 - By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5 - Improve the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant sectoral policies

**Rationale for the national target**

As biodiversity touches upon almost all economic sectors, the protection of biodiversity cannot be achieved only through environmental policies. Biodiversity must become the base of an integrated economic and social development. The link between social policies (like job creation) and biodiversity needs to be emphasized too, as well as the impact of biodiversity loss on human well-being and health in particular. A major cause of biodiversity loss is the implementation of a number of sectoral and horizontal policies that affect ecosystems and species (cf. Chapter 3 Part I.4 Threats).

The necessity of incorporating into other policies the objective of halting the loss of biodiversity between now and 2020, given the importance of biodiversity for certain economic sectors, was underlined by the Council Conclusions of the European Council in March 2005.

The Belgian Biodiversity Strategy needs to be clearly articulated with the future national Strategy on Sustainable Development as the protection of biodiversity is an essential condition for sustainable development as well as with the actual Belgian programme of structural reform (Lisbon Strategy 2005-2008).

The impact of sectoral activities on biodiversity must be taken into consideration and biodiversity actors should be consulted. This implies that biodiversity concerns must be taken into account during the development and implementation of all relevant sectoral plans, programmes, legislation and policies that may have an impact on biodiversity.

There is also a need to assist administrations and different departments in developing competence and expertise in dealing with biodiversity issues in their own area of influence. Biodiversity is an important socio-economic asset and integration of biodiversity concerns in sectoral policies also benefits the sector as it encourages a more sustainable use of this resource.

Several sectors are particularly important with regard to biodiversity: spatial planning has a major impact on biodiversity, as it can play a major role in habitat fragmentation and can cause uncontrolled development pressures on biodiversity; industry, transport and energy sectors can have global and regional impacts on biodiversity through climate change and acidification, and furthermore can have a local impact through habitat fragmentation, destruction of habitats and disturbance of wildlife; etc. The 2020 objective will only be achieved when all the relevant sectors integrate consideration for biodiversity in their plans and policy.

Specific attention also needs to be given to the involvement of the private sector in biodiversity issues. Furthermore, companies and industries possess relevant knowledge, technological resources and research and communication skills, which, if mobilised, could play an important role in the protection of biodiversity.

According to the subsidiarity principle, the lowest appropriate level has to take efficient and effective action. Therefore, regional and local authorities should be involved in coordinating and facilitating such actions where possible. The use of participative approaches can here be helpful.

Fundamental social and economic processes in society are the key underlying drivers of environmental change. Demographics, consumption and production patterns, scientific and technological innovation, economic demand, markets and trade, institutional and socio-political frameworks and value systems all play a part in determining the impact that humans have on the natural world. This impact is expressed through a number of direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, the most important of which are habitat degradation and land use change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change.

Objective 5 of the NBS is the backbone of achieving sectoral integration of biodiversity concerns and engaging stakeholders in the delivery of the NBS. Important updates have been done hereunder.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal public services, the regional and local authorities, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (e.g. through its Communities of Practice on 'Ecosystems and Society' (BEES) and 'Biodiversity and Health' (COPBH)), the various social and economic sectors, the professional federations involved in the sectors concerned (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, energy, tourism, transport, the chemical industry, finances, sciences policy, the pet trade, imports/exports), farmers, fishermen, conservationists, natural resource managers, foresters, the private sector, researchers, NGOs, the Belgian CITES service, business, civil society, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this national target can be found.)

- <http://www.biodiversity.be/3949> (Belgian Community of Practice on Ecosystems and Society)
- <http://www.biodiversity.be/4033> (Belgian Community of Practice on Biodiversity and Health)
- Keune H. et al. (2013). Science-policy challenges for biodiversity, public health and urbanization: examples from Belgium. *Env. Res. Letters*, 8 (2), doi:10.1088/1748-9326/8/2/025015.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.1 - Promote and support stakeholder involvement inter alia through partnerships at all levels of decision-making relating to biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Stakeholders (Regional, Federal and local authorities, farmers, fishermen, conservationists, natural resource managers, foresters, the private sector, researchers, non-governmental organisations, etc.) must all be able to have a say in the decisions affecting biodiversity. The Aarhus Convention (Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters) grants rights to the public and imposes obligations on public authorities regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice. Belgium signed this convention on 25 June 1998 and ratified it on 23 January 2003.

Individual behaviours need to be addressed, as individuals are biodiversity actors that need to be responsabilized. Specific methodology needs therefore to be developed.

Partnerships that actively link stakeholders should be developed in order to share information and expertise and promote positive linkages between biodiversity and other sectors. This implies consultation and collaboration between and within the different authorities and stakeholders in the field. Participation by the different stakeholders will increase their cooperation and involvement. This will increase the support for biodiversity protection and so stimulate the carrying out of actions in this area.

Furthermore, collaboration in a complementary and integrated way between administrations, both from different sectors as from different policy levels (federal, regional and local levels), on the basis of the subsidiary principle, is crucial to protect biodiversity.

Several initiatives to involve stakeholders have already been taken; there are 'Plan Communaux pour le développement de la Nature, PCDN', which are municipal initiatives based on local partnership on nature development aiming for the preservation and development of biodiversity by taking account of the ecological network; and also River Contracts that brings together all the actors of a river valley with the aim to reach a consensus on an action programme for the restoration of the water course, the river banks and surroundings and the water resources. Invited are representatives of the political, administrative, socio-economic, educational, scientific and associative worlds.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.2 - Encourage the involvement of the private sector in the protection of biodiversity, as an integral part of business planning and operations.

**Rationale for the national target**

Companies are more and more scrutinized on their impacts on biodiversity by stakeholders (investors, employees, consumers, etc.). Many businesses own and manage land, their activities therefore directly affect biodiversity (companies active in sectors such as agriculture, water, woodlands and forestry, tourism and transport for example). Other companies can have indirect impacts, such as financial services companies through loan or investment policies, and retailers, through the purchase of intensively produced agricultural products.

Therefore it is important to consult private sector and ask their advice on the best way to apply enterprise's instruments, such as environmental reports, labels, integrating biodiversity requirements into company management systems, green purchases, etc., to improve their environmental performance and engage more fully in managing and reporting on biodiversity.

The establishment of Company Biodiversity Action Plans to manage the company's overall impacts on biodiversity (including management of sites in its ownership or control) can be an appropriate instrument to manage biodiversity impacts and contribute to biodiversity protection.

Furthermore, the private sector needs to understand the importance of biodiversity and be aware of the legislations protecting it and the opportunities to take actions to preserve it.

State aids to private sector operators are an important instrument to promote activities that take biodiversity concerns into account (see operational Objective 5.5.).

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.3 - Ensure that this Strategy is taken into account in decision-making and policy discussions and encourage the development and use of guidelines for the integration of biodiversity into all relevant sectoral policies.

**Rationale for the national target**

The Belgian Biodiversity Strategy should play a part in decision-making processes and be considered at the decision-making and planning levels. Biodiversity concerns should be considered from the early stages of the drafting process when developing new plans, programs, legislative and regulatory frameworks.

The biodiversity policy should not be seen as independent of sectoral policies, but both should be mutually supportive: sectoral policies should support the implementation of national biodiversity goals while integration of biodiversity goals should be beneficial to the sectoral policies.

The sectoral integration of biodiversity, or its "mainstreaming", means the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in both cross-sectoral plans such as sustainable development, climate change adaptation/mitigation, trade, international cooperation and poverty reduction, and in sector-specific plans such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, energy, tourism, transport, the chemical industry, finances, sciences policy and others. It implies changes in development models, strategies and thought patterns.

To operationalize the integration of biodiversity concerns into decision-making and policy discussions in sectors other than nature conservation, the application of sectoral guidelines on biodiversity mainstreaming will be promoted. The work will build on existing tools (such as the CBD's Capacity Building module on Biodiversity Mainstreaming) and adapt them for Belgium if necessary. It is also extremely important to continually review the adequacy of legislation in furthering the objectives of the Belgian Biodiversity Strategy. The use of participative approaches can here be helpful.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.4 - Identify in strategic planning the negative and positive effects of the different sectoral policies (land-use planning, transport, energy) on priority elements of biodiversity, and take measures to correct or strengthen these effects.

**Rationale for the national target**

Activities with potential negative impacts must be identified and investigated in order to determine the exact causes and effects of those activities on biodiversity. These analyses will allow solutions (including better alternatives) to be identified that avoid or minimise the impacts of sectoral policies on biodiversity.

Activities must be boosted that have a potentially positive effect on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Early discussions between the sectors and biodiversity experts could help identify such 'win-win' situations and improve the positive interactions.

Through clear and legally binding rules, competent authorities should not approve projects and plans that would lead to irreversible damage for the priority elements of biodiversity, unless justified by imperative reasons of major public interest.

Therefore environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) procedures must include biodiversity criteria and should refer to relevant national policy documents such as the Belgian Biodiversity Strategy, the CBD and biodiversity-related conventions and agreements. In this context, the guidance documents on integrating climate change and biodiversity into EIA and SEA issued by the European Commission (2013) under the EIA and SEA Directives (see below) should be implemented.

In order to promote a participative environmental policy, it is important to link the strategic planification (evaluation of impacts of plans and programmes related to environment) with public participation, as required by the European Directives.

The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991) and its protocol and amendments set out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of the planning process. It also lays down the general obligation of individual states to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across national boundaries.

The assessment of impacts caused on biodiversity by projects and plans is already provided for by the European legislative framework:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 85/337/EEC has been amended three times and is codified by Directive 2011/92/EU. It requires Member States to ensure that projects likely to have significant effects on the environment because of their nature, size or location are subject to an assessment of their environmental effects.

- Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires that an appropriate assessment be undertaken for any plan or project which, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) requires that certain plans and programmes from the public sector be made subject to systematic environment assessment. The SEA directive specifically mentions biodiversity as one issue that has to be reported on in the environmental report.

These dispositions have been transposed into the Belgian Federal and Regional legal framework. However, there is a need to provide guidance to the initiators of relevant projects, plans and programmes to assess whether their projects, plans and programmes would be likely to cause any significant effects on biodiversity and if so, whether they should be subject to an SEA (for example, development of guidelines or establishment of an advisory committee including biodiversity experts). Furthermore, a set of criteria on biodiversity aspects to be taken into consideration during the environmental assessment, i.e. in the evaluation report, could also be useful in this regard.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.5 - Eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and encourage the development and application of incentives favourable to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including economic, fiscal and financial instruments.

**Rationale for the national target**

It is crucial to provide the right market signals for biodiversity conservation. Since 2006, the NBS has been planning to combine market-based instruments in addition to normative instruments and processes (regulations, access and market restrictions, management plans, etc.), in order to provide positive incentives for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Such instruments are core elements for the application of the 'polluter pays' principle through the establishment of environmental liability regimes.

There is a need to make greater and more consistent use of domestic economic instruments with respect to biodiversity protection. The adoption of socially and economically sound measures (like subsidies, state aid, grants-in-aid, and measures prescribed in the tax system) that act as incentives for biodiversity is of central importance to the realisation of the three objectives of the CBD. Public authorities should promote companies that have a responsible investments policy that take biodiversity into account. State aids should take a more holistic approach to promote environment. In particular, state aids to operators must be better used to promote and avoid any negative effects on biodiversity. Internalisation (the incorporation of external costs and benefits) should be considered to be one of the guiding principles for selecting appropriate incentive measures to prevent, stop or reverse the loss of biodiversity.

Some Regional initiatives, co-financed by the EU, have already been taken in Belgium: subsidies are granted for activities which take biodiversity into account such as private sustainable management of nature reserves, environmental measures in farming (for example enlargement and maintenance of natural borders, and use of manual or mechanised systems instead of chemicals), sustainable forestry (forest owners receiving subsidies for the development and implementation of forest-management plans that are based on sustainable forest management, for example conservation of indigenous tree species, and use of endemic species in re-afforestation projects), exemption from succession rights for private forests and exemption from

succession rights and a levy for real property for land in the Flemish Ecological Network, exemption from death duties and real-estate deductions for land property situated in Natura 2000 Walloon sites, exemption of succession rights for non-profit associations that make natural area accessible for the public, etc.

Economic incentives measures must be further promoted to encourage the protection of biodiversity in Belgium. For example, imposing a higher cost on products using virgin resources, promoting products obtained from sustainable managed resources (like wood products certified as being harvested in sustainable conditions), creating positive financial incentive for biodiversity friendly products, or providing payment to farmers who maintain biodiversity on their land, could be used as incentives to make sustainable use of biodiversity more attractive than unsustainable activities.

Alongside the introduction of incentives to support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, consideration must be given to removing or redirecting perverse economic incentives that accelerate the loss of biodiversity (these range from public subsidies that support unsustainable farming and fisheries to projects that erode or destroy biodiversity). It is a critical and necessary step in terms of preserving biodiversity that would also generate broader net socio-economic benefits. This also includes work to reform, phase out and eliminate harmful subsidies (Aichi target 3; EU Target 6). The work done at EU level to eliminate the adverse impacts of sectoral EU policies (such as commercial fishing, agriculture, forestry development cooperation) will be complemented by appropriate measures at national level, including the possible reform of economic, fiscal and financial instruments.

As single measures will often not suffice to address the complexities involved in decisions on biodiversity protection or sustainable use, a mix of measures may be needed. It is also important that the different instruments (at the different levels) are linked, that they are efficiently used and that shortcomings are followed up.

Furthermore, the 'value' of biodiversity needs to be addressed (link with Objective 7.6. 'Improve our knowledge of the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity') in order to integrate market and non-market aspects of biodiversity into economic and social decisions. Indeed, the pressures to reduce biodiversity are so great that to demonstrate the value of biodiversity, we need to encourage the introduction of incentives.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.6 - Take biodiversity concerns into account in national export credit policy.

**Rationale for the national target**

Export Credit Agencies provide financial support (loans, guarantees, insurance) for projects in southern and eastern Europe. They aim to help national industries abroad. Export credit policies may have very significant

impacts on environment and biodiversity in particular (for example by supporting construction projects of dams, pipelines, etc.).

The impact on biodiversity needs to be fully incorporated in the procedures for evaluation of projects applying for support by export credit agencies. It is important to examine the environmental criteria used to assess investments by Export Credit Agencies and other publicly funded financial institutions and to ensure that these criteria take biodiversity into consideration. Project screening procedures must ensure that activities that lead to irreversible damage to biodiversity are not promoted.

Export Credit Agencies need to be more transparent in the eligibility criteria used and indicate which international obligation and engagements subscribed by Belgium they take into account. The following actions could also help credit export agencies to take biodiversity concern into account in national export credit policy:

- Implement a harmonised procedure to check whether a project respond to the international biodiversity related obligations and engagements subscribed by Belgium.
- Organise training for credit export agencies staff Belgium's international obligations and engagements related to biodiversity. Another measure to promote integration of biodiversity in credit export policies is to ask companies to sign a declaration of intent setting out the commitments of the companies to meet the objectives of the national biodiversity strategy.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.7 - Consider the potential impact on biodiversity, and in particular the invasiveness of species, in making import and export decisions.

**Rationale for the national target**

The international trade may adversely impact biodiversity by introducing new species such as invasive alien species (IAS), GMOs or diseases that affect related species.

Many alien species enter Belgium unintentionally, for example through wood imports, or they are imported intentionally for use in many areas (agriculture, horticulture, pet trade, etc.).

It is crucial to consider the potential impacts on biodiversity when developing national legislation and regulations that deal with the trade in live animals or plants.

Besides biodiversity-related conventions, several international conventions and organisations are relevant when taking import/exports decision in order to avoid damages on biodiversity. For example, the issue of IAS is dealt by the following forums:

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) was invited by the CBD, through its committee on trade and the environment, to take invasive alien species issues into account when considering the impacts of trade and trade liberalisation.
- The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) is a multilateral treaty deposited with the Director-General of the FAO. Its purpose is to ensure common and effective actions to prevent the spread and introduction of pests and plants and plant products and to promote measures for their control.



- The FAO has compiled codes of practices to deal with alien species and has developed products such as the FAO Database on Introductions of Aquatic Species.

- The IMO International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (adopted in 2004) addresses the introduction of invasive marine species into new environments through ballast water, hull-fouling and other vectors.

- The CITES convention aims to prevent trade from having an impact on species by controlling movements of certain categories of endangered species. The CITES Animals and Plants Committees are working in collaboration with the CBD on the preparation of a list of potentially invasive animal and plant species to be included in the CITES appendices. The EC Regulation for the implementation of CITES within the EU provides a basis for controlling imports of certain species that are recognised as being invasive (Regulation 338/97, Article 4.6(d)).

- The ICES Code of Practice on the Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms sets forth recommended procedures and practices to diminish the risks of detrimental effects from the intentional introduction and transfer of marine (including brackish water) organisms (ICES, 2005).

There are opportunities for synergies between several forums and the CBD in dealing with the introductions of species that are potentially harmful for biodiversity.

On the other hand, experience gained (for example, experience gained under CITES in wildlife trade controls) could contribute to national and international efforts to avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 9 - By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.8 - Maximalise the advantages for health arising from biodiversity and ecosystem services and expand the collaboration between the interested organisations / public services.

**Rationale for the national target**

Inadequate attention is being paid to the important contributions biodiversity can make to human health. The links between biodiversity and human health are complex because they are often indirect, displaced in space and time, and dependent on a number of modifying forces. Human health ultimately depends on ecosystem products and services which are requisite for good human health and productive livelihoods, such as water and air purification, the provision of food and medicines, pest and disease control, medical research.

Since 2011 the Belgian Community of Practice Biodiversity and Health (COPBH), facilitated by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, tries to enhance biodiversity & health related science, policy and practice in Belgium.

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is a science policy practice interface related to biodiversity issues, and is funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO).

In 2011, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform organized a Belgian Biodiversity & Health conference (Keune et al. 2013). This event was where the COPBH was founded. The COPBH facilitates an online expert registry and newsletter, and some research project initiatives emerged from bigger and smaller meetings of the COPBH. Apart from scientific partners, there is also collaboration with practice organization, both with policy institutions and NGO's. Recently, especially connections to the health sector are strengthened with collaboration with a Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Province of Antwerp, with the launch of the Chair Care and the Natural Living Environment at the University of Antwerp. Within this collaborative context on October 4th a big networking event "Nature on prescription" (<http://www.biodiversity.be/4035/>) was organized with over 160 participants. Further, an advisory expert committee working within the framework of the Belgian Superior Health Council was initiated at the end of 2017, with support from the COPBH. The aim is to better connect to health care professionals and other relevant groups for collaboration. In 2016 the COPBH coordinated the organization of the European One Health/Ecohealth workshop in Brussels (see below). This is also an example of how the COPBH tries to enhance international contacts for Belgian experts and practitioners.

The COPBH tries to inspire research programs in relation to health and biodiversity topics, both at the Belgian and international level. An example is an overview of research needs and gaps which was produced before the start of a BELSPO research funding program called BRAIN, in order to inspire research calls regarding biodiversity & health; this overview was included as an addendum in the first BRAIN call where biodiversity & health issues were addressed. Further the COPBH works on mainstreaming & awareness raising by giving on demand introductory presentations, such as in 2017 in the Flemish Parliament, and support with state of the art overviews of scientific knowledge and practice projects. Finally, the COPBH also contributes to Belgian delegations to international processes such as Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services (MAES), IPBES and CBD, focusing mainly on health-related issues.

Many species provide invaluable information for human medicine. By losing species, we lose the anatomical, physiological, behavioural information's they contain.

Plants and microbes have long been, and remain today, an important basis for the development of medicines such as quinine, morphine, penicillin, etc. (approximately a quarter of all prescriptions are taken directly from plants or are chemically modified versions of plant substances and more than half of them are modelled on natural compounds). More recently, great attention has been paid to the potential development of important drugs from animals, some of which are often threatened by extinction.

By ensuring the sustainable productivity of soils and providing genetic resources for crops, livestock and marine species harvested for food, biodiversity also plays a crucial role in world food production and ensures a balanced diet (diversified agricultural agents maintain adequate food supply and prevent malnutrition). Furthermore, genetically diversified agricultural surfaces present a better resistance to environmental stresses, thus providing populations with greater nutritional safety.

Finally, accelerated biodiversity perturbations can have very negative impacts on the propagation of pre-existing transmissible diseases or even on the emergence of new ones, through modifications in vectors and/or target populations and in host-pathogen relationships. Studies of such relationships between biodiversity perturbation and increase in disease diffusion are starting to produce convincing results, as can be seen in the cases of malaria, schistosomiasis and also Lyme disease epidemiology.

There is a need to improve our understanding of the very strong existing link between human health and biodiversity, and consequently development. There should be particular support given to interdisciplinary research around these connected issues. The awareness of this link should be raised through educational programmes. Furthermore, collaboration between health and environment organisations and ministries should be improved to ensure that these issues are considered together when planning and implementing policies.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 14 - By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.9 - Encourage the implementation of CITES with the aim of supporting conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

The aim of the CITES Convention is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Species that are, or in the future might be, endangered by trade, are listed in one of the three CITES annexes. If a species is placed on these lists, the trade in that particular species is subject to strict regulations. By continuous follow-up of the status of the population, trade in specific species-country combinations may be prohibited.

Belgium, as a Member State of the European Community, implements the CITES legislation through two EC Regulations together with the Belgian CITES Act of 1981. Different goals will be prioritised, with the goal of improving the implementation of CITES in Belgium in the short to medium term. In this way, Belgium has and will continue to explore innovative means of increasing capacity and improving enforcement for example by assisting in the exchange of knowledge and expertise at national and EU level.

Belgium has developed an online database system which allows clients to apply for CITES documents via the CITES portal website ([www.citesinbelgium.be](http://www.citesinbelgium.be)). This system is up and running since 2015 and facilitates the application for the clients as well as the handling of applications for the CITES Management Authority. A dedicated website is also developed which provides detailed information on the implementation of CITES in Belgium.

On the enforcement site a special unit has been set up that can undertake CITES investigations for the internal trade. This team comprised of 8 people not only covers the CITES controls but also those for the Invasive Alien Species Act as the European Timber Regulation, thus working in an efficient manner on linked legislations.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.10 - Maintain and reinforce the social function of biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Human beings are dependent on fundamental biological systems and processes for their well-being and enjoyment of life. Until now, there is insufficient recognition (and understanding) of the important connection between biodiversity and social well-being (health, educational attainment, procurement of goods demanded by society, job creation and preservation, relaxation, etc.). The aesthetic values of natural ecosystems and landscapes often contribute to the inspirational, emotional and spiritual well-being of a highly urbanised population.

For all these reasons it is necessary to maintain and learn more about the social benefits of biodiversity and the benefits arising from social variety with a view to reinforcing synergies and reducing social inequalities and the avoidable pressures and negative impacts they exert on biodiversity.

In connection with Objectives 5.8 and 7.5, the social and cultural diversity in Belgium will be duly taken into account when elaborating and implementing biodiversity policies with a view to mobilising in an efficient and equitable way the various publics and actors in society.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 5.11 - Integrate biodiversity values into national (federal and regional) policies, programmes, planning processes and reporting systems, and develop an approach to support incorporation into national accounting if needed.

**Rationale for the national target**

Decision-making in spatial planning and development projects takes the values of biodiversity into account. Where appropriate, payments for ecosystem services are considered a useful policy tool, notably when it promotes measures that go beyond the scope of the sustainable management of natural resources or in the framework of restoration.

As far as national accounts are concerned, the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) already provides a methodology for some aspects of natural capital accounting. But much work remains to be done, especially on accounting for regulating ecosystem services. Belgium contributes to the related international endeavours. Work on adequate means to integrate natural capital considerations into private sector accounting is stimulated.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 2 - By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6 - Promote and contribute to an equitable access to and sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources - ABS

**Rationale for the national target**

The fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the use of genetic resources forms the third objective of the CBD and is as important as the other two for the purpose of achieving the goal of halting biodiversity loss by 2020.

As access to GRs usually only involves taking small samples of material, its impact on biodiversity as such is relatively limited. However, respect for the ABS dispositions of the CBD and the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol once it comes into force, is of paramount importance to biodiversity as it could provide a direct incentive for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in particular in the world's biologically richer (but often economically poorer) countries.

Between 2004 and 2010, Belgium actively took part in the negotiations and development of a transparent International Regime on Access and Benefit-Sharing according to the mandate adopted at the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the CBD. The adoption of the ABS Protocol in Nagoya at the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the CBD on 30 October 2010, under the Belgian Presidency of the EU, was an essential part of the package that made this Conference a success (together with the adoption of an ambitious Strategic Plan until 2020 and of a Resource Mobilization Strategy) but it is also just the first step.

The Nagoya Protocol

In 2010, the Parties to the CBD adopted the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing arising from their utilization.

In the meantime, other instruments dealing with Access and Benefit-Sharing were also negotiated and / or entered into force, and are mutually supportive, as stated in the recitals and Article 4 of the Nagoya Protocol. Some of these are directly relevant to Belgium. For instance, Belgium ratified the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in 2007.

Belgium is bound by the relevant ABS provisions of the CBD, which provides the general framework for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, and has already taken several initiatives to implement the ABS dispositions of the CBD. This is done through its patent legislation and by developing a voluntary code of conduct to help countries comply with the requirements on Access and Benefit-Sharing for transferring microbial genetic resources ('Micro-organisms Sustainable Use and Access Regulation International Code of Conduct, MOSAICC'). Furthermore, the Royal Botanic Garden of Belgium is a member of the International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN) programme of various EU botanic gardens for the exchange of plant material. IPEN allows participating gardens to exchange material for non-commercial purposes in accordance with the objectives of the CBD.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal, regional and municipal authorities and institutions, the regional nature agencies, various sectors active in Research and Development (including healthcare, biotechnology...), universities, professional federations involved in the sectors concerned, the general public, TK holders, the CBD Secretariat, users of GRs, and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6.1 - By 2014, raise awareness about the concept of ABS in the context of the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol, and widely disseminate information on ABS.

**Rationale for the national target**

It is important to raise the level of awareness of users and providers of genetic resources on the CBD and related ABS provisions, including the Nagoya Protocol, as well as on 'best practices'. As the ABS provisions of the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol are insufficiently known and can be ambiguous and difficult to understand for practitioners, it is important that more efforts are made to promote their understanding, explain their relevance and implications, and build capacities.

A first step towards an information campaign on ABS issues has been taken by Belgium by launching an analysis of Belgian stakeholders' awareness of the ABS provisions, and the impact of these provisions on their policy towards the implementation of ABS principles. Following this assessment, Belgium has included several awareness-raising and capacity building activities in the Federal Plan for the integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (2009-2013).

Within the context of the national study on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, two stakeholder workshops took place in 2012. These stakeholder workshops had a dual purpose: raising awareness among stakeholders about the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol; and providing stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on the study and feed these back into the process of implementation.

An important supporting tool to exchange information on the CBD and its related Protocols is the Belgian Clearing-House Mechanism of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD CHM) which is part of an international network of CBD CHMs. It was set up to illustrate what Belgium is doing within the framework and the implementation of the CBD (Belgian CBD CHM: <http://www.biodiv.be/>).

In the Belgian development cooperation programmes related to biodiversity, which are implemented in the southern partner countries, support for the implementation of the national CBD clearing houses is a priority.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6.2 - By 2014, ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium signed the Nagoya Protocol on 20 September 2011. On 27 October 2011, the Inter-ministerial Conference on the Environment confirmed that the “speedy ratification of the ABS protocol is a high priority for Belgium”. By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization was to be in force and operational, consistent with national legislation (Aichi Target 16). However in 2014, the first meeting of the Parties to the NP was expected to take place concurrently with CBD COP12. Given the long-term involvement of Belgium in the development of the Protocol, and its role as EU representative (2010-2014), it was politically important for Belgium to be able to participate as a Party to the first COP/MOP. It was therefore necessary to ratify the NP by 2014 and to start the process towards implementing it.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6.3 - By 2020, have mechanisms in place to enhance national and global cooperation on ABS issues.

**Rationale for the national target**

Access and benefit-sharing is a major CBD issue, but the issue of access, exchange and use of genetic resources is also of concern for other forums.

Some of the most important international forums addressing ABS issues are:

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Phytosanitary agreements)
- The World Trade Organisation (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights – TRIPS – agreement)
- The World Intellectual Property Organisation and in particular its Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.
- The World Health Organization and more specifically, the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework for the sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits

Better cooperation between CBD and these forums is necessary to improve effective implementation and ensure coherent and consistent positions in these forums.

There might also be a link between CBD and CITES on ABS issues where it could be relevant for CITES implementation authorities and CBD-related authorities to have a full understanding of ABS issues and how they might be affected by CITES implementation and vice versa. A better understanding of ABS issues could ensure that decisions taken under CITES and CBD are coherent so as to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

At Belgian level, coordination mechanisms under the Coordination Committee for the International Environment Policy should be further refined to ensure cooperation between focal points for the coherent national implementation of ABS related provisions under the different relevant processes.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6.4 - By 2020, create operational mechanisms to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Indigenous and local communities are closely linked with biodiversity and contribute to its protection. Traditional knowledge possessed by indigenous and local communities on the possible uses of the biodiversity that surrounds them forms an important basis for the conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use. It is an important resource, particularly in the search for genetic resources of potential value. This age-old knowledge needs to be preserved and maintained.

Holders of traditional knowledge are key stakeholders in ABS agreements and initiatives. Article 8j of the CBD addresses specifically the respect, preservation and maintenance of the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It also encourages the wider application of this knowledge, with the approval and involvement of those holding it, on the understanding that any benefits that arise from the use of such traditional knowledge associated with GRs will be shared.

Moreover, the Nagoya Protocol reinforces Article 8j of the CBD by requiring Parties to take measures, as appropriate, in order that the benefits arising from the utilization of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and of genetic resources that are held by indigenous and local communities (in accordance with domestic legislation regarding the established rights of these indigenous and local communities over these genetic resources) are shared in a fair and equitable way with indigenous and local communities (ILCs) holding such knowledge or such genetic resources (Article 5). Similarly, Articles 6 and 7 of the Nagoya Protocol require that Parties shall take measures with the aim of ensuring that Prior Informed Consent or approval and involvement of ILC is obtained (in accordance with domestic law) to access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources held by those ILCs.



Article 15.1 of ILO Convention 169 specifically recognizes the rights of indigenous and local communities to the natural resources on their territories, including the right to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources.

Belgium participates in relevant international discussions and has subscribed to several processes concerning traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices should be recognised in access and benefit-sharing arrangements. The participation of representatives of indigenous and local communities in appropriate forums should be supported. Furthermore, the preservation and sharing of traditional knowledge will be integrated into those Belgian development cooperation or scientific cooperation projects that target indigenous and local communities as primary stakeholders.

Considering GMOs in agriculture covered by patents owned by multinationals, special care should be taken to avoid that their use would alter or eliminate traditional agricultural practices, leading to biodiversity as well as to social threats (cf. obj. 4c.7; 4d.3 and 4f.4). Moreover, transgenes being sometimes possibly issued from living organisms traditionally known for their interesting properties, equitable sharing of benefits arising from those genes should be promoted.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 18 - By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this national target can be found.)

<Add link> <Add file>

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 6.5 - By 2015, have a functional Access and Benefit Sharing Clearing House in place.

**Rationale for the national target**

The Nagoya Protocol in particular establishes an Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing House (ABS-CH) as part of the CBD CHM. The ABS CH should serve as a means for sharing information related to access and benefit sharing (art.14 of the Protocol). Moreover it has a role to play in awareness-raising including about the importance of genetic resources and traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and is seen

as an important tool to promote and enhance legal certainty, clarity and transparency in the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. In this respect, one of the main goals of the CH should be to support compliance by contributing to clearness, transparency and certainty.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7 - Improve and communicate scientific knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services

**Rationale for the national target**

Effective conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity requires the correct identification and spatio-temporal monitoring of all its components at all its levels of organisation, i.e. from genes to ecosystems. Adequate knowledge of the status and trends of biodiversity and of the services it provides is a prerequisite for an adaptive management of the ecosystems. Yet we are faced with many gaps in our knowledge on biodiversity primary data and on the role of taxa in ecosystem functioning.

The consequences of present and future biodiversity loss, both for ecosystem health and for human well-being, are poorly understood, while the effectiveness of policy responses remains largely undocumented. Impacts of alien invasive species have been insufficiently addressed. Creating synergy between policy responses and research depends largely on our ability to improve and communicate our existing knowledge as well as the necessary additional knowledge on biodiversity.

Addressing the gaps will require (i) more investment and capacity-building in key biological disciplines such as taxonomy and ecology, (ii) easy and open access to biodiversity data and research information [78], and (iii) improvement of the coordination and communication between policy and research.

The aforementioned gaps are particularly prevalent in developing countries. The Belgian Government provides increasing support and funding to research and training, with the aim of improving knowledge of and capacity-building for biodiversity in these countries. These efforts will in turn contribute to improve the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements ratified by these countries.

The operational objectives in this National Biodiversity Strategy draw on the research objectives in the Message from Malahide (Duke, 2005), in particular on Objective 16, the Killarney Declaration and Recommendations, and on the European Action Plan for Biodiversity Research ([www.epbrs.org](http://www.epbrs.org)).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal authority and regional authorities for environment and agriculture, educational establishments, national networks of scientific and policy experts in support of the IPBES, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform (focusing on knowledge brokerage, topical knowledge incubation, and mobilizing/publishing biodiversity data), universities, Federal Research Institutes, NGOs, sectors, The National Biosafety Council, researchers, the Belgian Development Agency, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.1 - Compile and synthesise existing data and information and disseminate this knowledge to a wider audience.

**Rationale for the national target**

The book 'Biodiversity in Belgium, a country study' (*Peeters et al.*, 2003) presents a detailed overview of existing knowledge on Belgium's biodiversity (status, trends and threats). In addition, this country study also emphasises the urgent need to extend and deepen our understanding of all components of our biodiversity.

Further compilations and synthesis of existing data and (meta) information, making full use of electronic tools, will provide an even more solid background for detecting gaps in research needs and policy-relevant priorities, and could serve as an essential catalogue to support the access to genetic resources. The development of a web portal, in accordance with obligations in the framework of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), could serve as a basis for a national register of species.

The dissemination of scientific data and information on biodiversity should not only be aimed at the scientific community, but should reach the widest audience possible in an adapted language, including decision-makers, teachers, students and the general public. The development of databases to access ongoing and past studies and research could be a very useful tool to this end. This will require the primary scientific data and conclusions to be presented in a format and language accessible for a non-specialist audience. This will be particularly important when biodiversity themes are incorporated in educational and public awareness programmes.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Mobilising and publishing biodiversity data is one of the key areas of work of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform, also serving as national focal point to GBIF. The [Belgian Data Portal](#) showcases biodiversity data published by Belgium through [GBIF](#) and its scientific use by Belgian authors.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this national target can be found.)

GBIF Belgian Country report:

[https://www.gbif.org/sites/default/files/gbif\\_analytics/country/BE/GBIF\\_CountryReport\\_BE.pdf](https://www.gbif.org/sites/default/files/gbif_analytics/country/BE/GBIF_CountryReport_BE.pdf)

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.2 - Promote and encourage research that contributes to the knowledge and understanding of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services and their values.

**Rationale for the national target**

Full and effective implementation of many of the actions identified in the Belgian Biodiversity Strategy requires a considerable improvement in the knowledge and understanding of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services provided. Methodologies to value biodiversity and ecosystem services, including the ecological aspects related to ecosystem structure and functions, the socio-economic aspects and the monetary aspects, are being developed, notably in support of operational objective 5.11. More research is also needed on biodiversity at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels, while the peer-reviewed output of this research must be disseminated rapidly, in order to allow for adaptive management.

Obviously, several issues in the Belgian Biodiversity Strategy need immediate action, for instance to remedy imminent threats for which there is insufficient time to allow for in-depth research to underpin rescue actions. On the other hand, in the absence of extensive research data, such immediate actions risk failure or producing negative, unexpected side effects. It is therefore essential to design research projects in such a way that the expected results can guide and underpin immediate actions, and also generate data that may help to plan and achieve biodiversity conservation and management in the long term.

Major research impulses are required in the areas of taxonomy and ecology, including inventory projects, protocols for rapid biodiversity assessment, and programmes for long-term monitoring, as well as in detailed ad hoc conservation initiatives (for example in nature reserves and other protected areas). The establishment of thematic inventories (agricultural biodiversity, medicinal plants biodiversity) should be promoted as well as the establishment of a precise cartography of plants related to potentially imminent GMO cultures.

Specific research should also focus on the links between, inter alia, biodiversity and health, biodiversity and climate change, in terms of potential and opportunity to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.3 - Develop adequate monitoring methodologies and biodiversity indicators.

**Rationale for the national target**

Monitoring of biodiversity and remedying of the causes of threatening processes are inherent to all the objectives of Belgium's Biodiversity Strategy, and in particular to its Objectives 1 and 2. Hence more research should be carried out on monitoring methodologies and the development of biodiversity indicators. These research efforts should be conducted in agreement and, if possible, in collaboration with similar programmes carried out at a European and international level, and should take the Aichi biodiversity targets and SEBI-initiative into consideration.

The definition of national standards for biodiversity inventories and monitoring using an appropriate set of common indicators (see Objective 1) will enable the evaluation and communication of progress made by Belgium towards the 2020 target, and help fulfil reporting obligations to international bodies. It will also allow for an adaptive management of components of biodiversity (in particular with regard to climate change), and for strengthening policies related to activities and processes that threaten biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.4 - Map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services and assess the values of such services.

**Rationale for the national target**

The EU "Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services" (MAES) initiative aims to improve knowledge of ecosystems and their services (EU Biodiversity Strategy target 2, action 5). This implies that Member States, with the assistance of the European Commission, map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services on their national territory (by 2014) and assess the values of such services and promote the integration of these values into accounting and reporting systems at EU and national levels (by 2020).

Research will be needed to attain these goals, and to come to a better understanding of ecosystem processes as well as of how humans use biodiversity, how these uses affect biodiversity and ecosystem services, and how this usage can be sustainable. Initiatives under the community of practice on Belgian Ecosystems and Society (BEES community [80]) of the Belgian Biodiversity Platform are being taken in this context. The Belgian MAES working group was initiated in 2012 and includes Belgian biodiversity and ecosystem services experts and stakeholders (see also operational objective 7.5 hereunder).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

Other National Indicators:

\* FLE111 - Flemish Region 11. Conservation status of habitats of European interest

\* WAL005 - Walloon Region: Conservation status of habitats

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.5 - Evaluate the level of integration of biodiversity into sectoral policies and their impact on biodiversity

**Rationale for the national target**

Biodiversity in Belgium is mainly threatened by anthropogenic activities, often governed by sectoral policies. Specific research should be developed both to increase current knowledge on the impact of sectoral policies on biodiversity, and to assess the level of integration of biodiversity into these sectoral policies.

The integration of biodiversity management into sectoral policies implies that biodiversity-related issues will be mainstreamed into all socio-economic sectors, such as agriculture, biotechnology, energy, fishery, forestry and tourism.

More research is needed to evaluate the level of integration of biodiversity and for example gain an idea of the effects of present day agrotechnology on both agricultural biodiversity and wild flora and fauna (for example pollinators). Research should also include the study of the effects of emerging technologies (for example GMOs and nanotechnologies) on biodiversity (see Operational Objective 2.1).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.6 - Improve our knowledge of the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### **Rationale for the national target**

The integration of socio-economic sciences into the field of biodiversity research is of major importance in order to slow down and halt the continuing human-mediated loss of biodiversity. This should include the analysis of public awareness and perceptions, and consumers' attitudes and preferences with regard to biodiversity, and then how both of these factors relate to behaviour and public policy.

To influence policy-making and stimulate public awareness, increased knowledge of the values of biodiversity (not limited to pure economic value) is needed, for instance by improving methods for their valuation and by conducting high-profile studies on the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services in ecosystems of topical interest. In the valuation process, the relationships between health (physical and mental well-being) and biodiversity should also be investigated. More research should be dedicated to the link between changes in biodiversity and the rise in incidence of some already existing human and animal diseases or in the emergence of new ones.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.7 - Improve the Science-Policy interface in biodiversity and promote actor participation.

### **Rationale for the national target**

The existing interfaces between policy and research, with not enough research being policy-relevant, and insufficient application of existing knowledge in policy-making, should be strengthened. This will require efforts at different levels: not only from the scientific to the policy level, but also the other way round.

The recent establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) creates an appropriate stage for the improvement of the science-policy interface. Belgium plays an active role in the operationalization of the Platform through its membership and through national networks of scientific and policy experts in support of the IPBES, such as the BEES Community of Practice or the Belgian Community of Practice on Biodiversity and Health (COPBH). Belgium also has a platform dedicated to science-policy interfacing (i.e. the Belgian Biodiversity Platform), hosting the national focal points for GBIF, IPBES and IUCN – and coordinating several communities of practice as the ones mentioned above.

Previous and ongoing research and science communication programmes could be valorised as useful models for bringing together different experts, generalists, and other stakeholders driven by the need to deliver a response to a complex problem. They could also contribute to translating research outcomes into policy advice, developing policy support tools, and promoting policy-relevant research.

Innovative solutions and methodologies are required to optimise the links between research and policy and promote actor's participation in the development and implementation of new policies. The fragmentation of

the institutional framework in Belgium often brings many people together in discussions on biodiversity, which does not always lead to an efficient work. Creative solutions should be proposed to install a mechanism and institutional arrangements aiming to simplify procedures and ensure participation (a.o. participation and consultation methods, effective communication models, etc.). The positive and negative impacts of socio-cultural and economic factors (a.o. recreation) must also be assessed.

An important aspect of linking research to policy is effective communication. Training courses and materials could be developed to help researchers communicate more effectively, not only the results of their research but also the process of research, in order to better highlight the way research is planned and executed. Decision-makers could also benefit from training in using and requesting scientific advice (e.g. how to ask the right questions) and in the identification of suitable sources of information.

The ability of administrations to make use of scientific information could be enhanced by encouraging secondments from universities and scientific institutions, into government. Secondments the other way – of officials taking a sabbatical in a university or in a scientific institution – might also help develop expertise and networks.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Relevant websites, web links, and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this national target can be found.)

Belgian Biodiversity Platform: [www.biodiversity.be](http://www.biodiversity.be).  
IPBES Belgian Focal Point: [www.biodiversity.be/ipbes](http://www.biodiversity.be/ipbes).

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 7.8 - Promote research on the effects of GMOs and products of synthetic biology on biodiversity and on related socio-economic aspects, and on methodologies to assess these.

**Rationale for the national target**

Methods are needed to predict and prevent potential invasive behaviour of GMOs released into the environment, especially for new types of GMOs, and if already relevant, for products ensuing from synthetic biology or other new genetic modification techniques. In order to allow coexistence of different forms of culture and to avoid potential negative effects of transgenes on the wild environment, research is also needed to develop reliable methods to predict and reduce the probability of transfers of genetic material from transgenic organisms.

There is also a need to adapt and, if necessary develop methodologies in order to monitor and coordinate data on potential unforeseen effects of GMOs, not only on individual species but also on community structures of the ecosystem, after their deliberated release and commercialisation. In order to pursue objective 4c.7, case-by-case monitoring of potentially adverse effects on biodiversity as a result of the



introduction of GMO cultures in Belgium should be undertaken. If risk evaluation and monitoring methods are already suggested by the guidelines of the strongest world biosafety regulations like those of the EU, the implementation of such guidelines should be seriously and completely pursued in a professional and transparent way.

As such GMO risk evaluations need to consider different ecosystems and agro- ecosystems as well as various species, including non-targets species, and especially those that are of particular relevance such as biological indicator species, or that play a specific role in the ecosystem (earthworms, mycorrhizal fungi associated with roots, etc.). Better risk assessments on GMOs and avoidance of negative impacts on human health and the environment must be ensured to contribute to the Aichi objectives.

Furthermore, as encouraged by Article 26 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, extensive socio-economic studies on the impacts of GMO cultures introduction in Belgium and elsewhere in the world should in particular be undertaken (link with Objectives 4c.7, 4d.3, 4f.4, 5.8, and 6). Capacity building on biosecurity can and should be integrated into development plans with partner countries.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 8 - Involve the community through communication, education, public awareness and training

**Rationale for the national target**

As for many measures related to sustainable development, the success of the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy will depend on the understanding by civil society, private organisations and the public authorities of the importance of, and the measures required for the protection of biodiversity.

Several initiatives have already been taken, in different forms at different levels, by the different bodies involved in nature education activities. Local plans ('Plan Communaux pour le développement de la Nature', 'Gemeentelijke en provinciale milieubeleidsplannen', river contracts, etc.) have been developed to communicate and involve stakeholders. The primary and secondary education programmes have included some basic education on nature issues. Some initiatives have also been taken at the higher-education level. Volunteer associations are involved in nature and environmental education. Administrations and scientific institutions are also involved in communication activities (publication of brochures, articles, etc.). However, the work done has been fragmented and not sufficiently complementary. Furthermore, groups having a greater impact on nature are not targeted enough and should receive specialised education.

In communication, it is crucial to link biodiversity to culture and to make use of the new and traditional media to raise awareness on the problems encountered by biodiversity (a.o. games, theatre, press, radio, video, TV, internet).

Belgium can also draw on the results of existing programmes of Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) that proved to be successful in a similar context. CEPA programmes were developed by the Ramsar Convention and by the EU for Natura 2000.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:**

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal, regional and municipal authorities, media organizations, associations of teachers and educational establishments, naturalist associations, youth organisations, educational institutions and museums, research institutions, government agencies, NGOs, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 8.1 - Strive to include biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as the ecosystem approach in educational programmes.

**Rationale for the national target**

Many students place environmental issues, and even biodiversity protection, high on their list of concerns. Unfortunately, few are aware either of the threats to their immediate surroundings or of the opportunities for taking concrete steps in their everyday life. The education system has an essential role to play in this regard.

Teaching and training should focus on the development of skills that will enhance understanding and acceptance of the need for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Information should be presented not simply as science, but in a social, economic and political context, so that students can better understand which complex circumstances form the background for the making of decisions on biodiversity conservation. The practical knowledge, such as the recognition of plants and animals should also be promoted. Courses addressing the values attached to biodiversity and ecosystem services, and planning programmes applying the ecosystem approach should be proposed throughout the educational system, from primary and secondary school to technical colleges and universities as well as outside the school system (youth organisations, continuous training). For example, awareness campaigns for youth organisations and particularly scouts would be very useful to explain how they can cause damages to natural areas, directly or indirectly.

There are at present several environmental and sustainable development education programmes in the formal education system in Belgium, particularly at the primary school level. Biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services must be systematically included in the executive terms\* of all school programmes at the different school and higher education levels. To this end, better educational support must be provided to schools and teachers (for example, development of educative packages and publications on biodiversity aimed at the students).

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 8.2 - Promote understanding of the importance of biodiversity and improve knowledge of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Rationale for the national target**

It is necessary to encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of biodiversity and its functions in ecosystems for human well-being at all levels of decision-making and among enterprises, the general public, etc. The public must understand how it impacts on nature and biodiversity and what it can do to limit this. Belgian household consumption and production patterns have a significant impact on the environment and on biodiversity. It is crucial to convince people of the necessity to evolve towards sustainable production, consumption, land use and mobility patterns.

There are plentiful proposals to help make of nature and biodiversity a citizen stake. Modern technologies and expanding access to electronic communication bring innovative possibilities for promoting and encouraging understanding of the importance of, and measures required for its conservation. Nevertheless, the importance of traditional communication systems must not be neglected (public media, local press, weekly TV and radio programmes on nature and biodiversity, thematic exhibitions, round-table discussions, etc.). Besides, the meaning of biodiversity, and the ecosystem services it provides, and the consequences of its decline should be communicated in terms that are tailored to the specific audience concerned.

NGOs, naturalist associations, youth organisations, educational institutions and museums, research institutions, government agencies and the media play a key role in raising public awareness and communicating the importance of local and global biodiversity protection. They should be encouraged by Federal, Regional or municipality bodies to ensure the continued availability of accurate and persuasive information about the benefits, costs and means of biodiversity protection. Specific yearly programmes and fairs organized by these organisations (such as the International Biodiversity Day on 22 May and events related to specific sites or species) should also be supported.

Several local participatory instruments aiming, among other things, at raising public awareness (for instance Communal Plans for Nature Development, River Contracts and Natural Parks) and local initiatives providing a public service on environmental information and awareness (for instance Nature Education Centres for visitors near the main natural reserves, CRIE) must be supported and developed further. The importance and the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as the richness of our natural patrimony, should be explained to all the citizens.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 8.3 - Raise awareness among, and provide thematic training courses for the sectors that impact directly or indirectly on biodiversity, including the private sector, using language tailored to the specific nature of the target sector.

**Rationale for the national target**

Several sectors that have quite a considerable (direct or indirect) impact on biodiversity and which should integrate biodiversity consideration (conservation and sustainable use) into their practices must be the target audience for awareness-raising activities. Communication strategies and adapted training cycles must be set up to explain how the respective sectors can improve their practices to help meet the 2020 target of halting the loss of biodiversity. These sectors must be made to commit themselves to adopting and promoting good practice.

Specific communication strategies also must be developed to address the private sector as the activities of business and industry have major impacts on biodiversity. The private sector has the potential to make a significant contribution towards achieving the 2020 target by adopting and promoting good biodiversity practice, sharing relevant expertise and technologies with the public sector, and helping to mainstream biodiversity.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 9 - Strengthen the biodiversity-related regulatory framework and ensure the implementation of, compliance with and enforcement of biodiversity related legislations

**Rationale for the national target**

Legislation is an important tool that can contribute to achieving the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components.

The regulatory framework needs to be clear and precise. It must be respected by everybody and adapted where necessary.

As many people will not comply with the law unless there are clear consequences for noncompliance, enforcement is essential to ensure compliance with existing legislations aiming at protecting biodiversity. Penalties have to be proportional, deterrent and effective.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, the judiciary, the law enforcement departments, customs, the police, and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 9.1 - Ensure that the National Strategy is supported by effective legislation and improve its enforcement.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium needs to review existing legislative framework with respect to the goals of this Strategy, and take the necessary steps to improve it where necessary.

Besides, authorities must make sure that the relevant legislation is duly implemented and enforced.

The “National Security Plan 2012-2015” (Federale Politie – Police Fédérale, 2012) aims at helping police forces address security issues on a global and integrated way and enhance the cohesion of their action. It identifies ten priority criminal areas for 2012-2015, which includes the environment, restricted to waste traffic.

Within the customs and excise administration (FPS Finances), emphasis is currently put on security in the broad sense, including several areas such as the protection of the fauna and flora (CITES). In this optic, a CITES target group has been established; its purpose is to analyse risks in this field. All enforcement actors related to CITES are united in the Belgian Enforcement Group which regularly interacts with the federal CITES team to ensure adequate enforcement of CITES in Belgium.

Belgium should make sure that biodiversity is included in priority security areas. In addition, the various aspects of biodiversity must be included in legal information processing tools, such as FEEDIS (Feeding Information System) or the national databank.

The staff responsible for checking compliance with biodiversity related regulations must be strengthened, both in term of capacity and organisation, in order to make the presence of these services more effective on the ground and to be able to effectively implement prosecution policy and execute penalties related to biodiversity offences.

A proactive approach and the use of specific investigation methods could also be developed since tracking offences related to biodiversity regulations proves to be very difficult.

As a result of the division of powers in Belgium, most biodiversity-related offences are recorded by the regional authorities while the prosecution policy falls within the scope of the Federal State. Therefore, cooperation and coordination at the national level among all the actors involved (including inspection services, administrations and customs services) need to be enhanced in order to ensure coherent and compatible measures and methodologies. International information exchange mechanisms also need to be optimised (Interpol, Europol, etc.).

Finally, given the complex nature of the issue, specific training need to be set up for the actors involved in combating biodiversity-related crime (police and control services, customs, etc.). In this respect, the needs relate in particular to improving legal as well as technical and scientific knowledge.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 9.2 - Ensure full implementation and improve enforcement of biodiversity-related legislations, including the Birds and Habitats Directives, through inter alia training programmes for the relevant authorities, in particular judges, prosecutors, inspectors and custom officials.

**Rationale for the national target**

As foreseen by the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (Action 3c), Belgium will facilitate enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives by providing specific training programmes on Natura 2000 for judges and public prosecutors, and by developing better compliance promotion capacities.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 9.3 - Ensure full compliance with and enforcement of the environmental liability regime (i.e. Directive 2004/35 CE on environmental liability) towards biodiversity offences.

**Rationale for the national target**

Environmental liability aims at making the person or organization that caused the environmental damage (the polluter) pay for remedying the damage that he has caused (the "polluter pays" principle).

Directive 2004/35/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establish a framework of environmental liability based on the 'polluter-pays' principle, to prevent and remedy environmental damage. The fundamental principle of this Directive is that an operator whose activity has caused environmental damages or imminent threat of such damage is to be held financially liable for preventing or remedying this damage. It is expected this regulation will induce operators to adopt measures and develop

practices to minimize the risks of environmental damage so that their exposure to financial liabilities is reduced.

The Directive puts in place a comprehensive liability regime for damage to the environment. In particular, it introduces a comprehensive regime for damage to valuable elements of biodiversity - protected species and natural habitats, to water and land, and to services provided by these natural resources.

A permanent working group gathering regional and federal authorities has been established to ensure, to a certain extent and in respect of the share of competences between the different authorities, adequate and coherent implementation of the Directive.

National laws on liability for damage caused by activities that are hazardous to the environment will be thus different from the common civil liability regime as they will not concern the classical range of damages (human health or property) but will cover biodiversity and ecosystem services damage as well as land damage or water damage. This will encourage parties concerned to take more precautions towards biodiversity.

Nevertheless, one of the major difficulties when implementing the directive concerns the evaluation of damage caused to biodiversity and this has to be done taking account of the cost of restoration or the cost of alternative solutions if restoration is not possible.

This should be taken into account when transposing the EU directive into national legislations.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 10 - Ensure a coherent implementation of / and between biodiversity-related commitments and agreements

**Rationale for the national target**

There are five global “biodiversity-related conventions”: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), and the World Heritage Convention (WHC). The two other Rio conventions (the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) are also relevant to biodiversity.

All these conventions overlap in regard to requirements for the Parties in the field of research, reporting, education and public awareness, the need for capacity-building, synthesising scientific data, the involvement of stakeholders, etc.

Furthermore, some specific biodiversity-related issues are dealt with under several conventions (for example, invasive alien species are tackled by the CBD, CITES, CMS, Ramsar and UNFCCC).

Besides these international commitments and agreements, several regional conventions and agreements relevant to biodiversity also have to be implemented (Bern Convention, Birds and Habitats Directives, AEWA, EUROBATS, etc.).

This underlines the strong need for synergies in the national implementation of these commitments to guarantee complementary and mutual reinforcement. Stronger synergies at national level will decrease duplication of effort, avoid contradiction and mean more efficient use of the available resources.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions, steering groups within the CCIEP, the Belgian Development Agency, universities, and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 10.1 - Ensure a coherent implementation of biodiversity-related agreements to which Belgium is a Party.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium is a Party to most major international and regional agreements related to biodiversity. It is necessary for Belgium to ensure its continued involvement with these agreements. To this end, Belgium needs to review the status of implementation of all international agreements relevant to the protection of biodiversity and take the necessary steps to ensure their full implementation where needed. Belgium will also continue to adopt other relevant agreements when appropriate.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 10.2 - Reduce overlaps, duplications or contradictions in the implementation of different biodiversity-related conventions.

**Rationale for the national target**

The decisions of biodiversity-related conventions must be implemented in a coherent and harmonised way. To this end, Belgium needs in the first place a global view of the package of decisions related to issues crosscutting different biodiversity-related conventions (such as deforestation, sustainable use of natural resources, inland waters, climate change, etc.) in order to use and distribute its resources in an optimal fashion. This overview will also help to identify mutual obligatory actions (projects can be designed jointly) and possible conflicting actions between the different biodiversity-related conventions.



One issue particularly relevant in this context is the issue of national reporting. National reports are useful tools to evaluate the degree of implementation of international agreements and to improve implementation. However, reports rarely meet these objectives.

As the national reporting exercises for several conventions are mainly based on similar environmental data, it is important to streamline and harmonise reporting processes across different biodiversity-related conventions to allow countries to meet their reporting requirements and avoid duplication of work.

Furthermore, more communication is needed between the national focal points of biodiversity-related conventions to ensure a more coherent implementation of biodiversity-related commitments and optimise opportunities for synergies. This can be facilitated within existing institutional structures (such as steering groups within the CCIEP) but implies also the development of means at national level to enhance coordination and collaboration between biodiversity-related conventions' focal points on planning, capacity-building, research, reporting, information systems, etc., i.e. through more sharing of information and experiences.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 10.3 - All climate change, biodiversity and desertification cooperation projects funded by Belgium should be assessed to ensure that they are mutually supportive of the objectives of the three Rio conventions.

**Rationale for the national target**

The three Rio conventions address a number of common substantive and procedural issues. For example, measures to reduce negative impacts from deforestation are relevant to the implementation of the three conventions. Each of these conventions calls for capacity-building, scientific and technical cooperation, the development of specific national plans and strategies, periodic reporting, etc.

The rising impact of climate change on biodiversity as well as the effects of some actions to combat climate change may be relevant to the objectives of the CBD. On the other hand, protection of biodiversity can contribute to climate change mitigation (healthy forests, peat lands and other habitats can limit atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations by storing carbon) and can protect against natural hazards aggravated by climate change.

Desertification has significant impacts on biodiversity. It leads to decreasing soil productivity, has an impact on the hydrological cycle, has the potential to cause local extinction of wild species, etc.

It is important to check that projects initiated by Belgium are in line with the objectives and recommendations of the three Rio conventions. Indeed, numerous climate change, biodiversity or desertification projects face challenges beyond those of a single sector project.

For example, initiatives such as reforestation, adaptation and Clean Development Mechanism projects, as foreseen in the Kyoto Protocol in the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, may have significant impacts on biodiversity and should be designed to enhance biodiversity or, at least, avoid negative impacts on biodiversity (for example by planting multiple species of native trees rather than monospecific plantations of exotic species). Supporting biodiversity to adapt to climate change is fundamental as well as enhancing positive effects of climate change mitigation measures to strengthen biodiversity's resilience. But preventing and minimising potential negative impacts from certain climate change mitigation measures are as important, such as promotion and development of bio fuels and other

forms of renewable energy sources. The external dimension of the relation between climate change and biodiversity should therefore be emphasised.

Therefore, Belgium will develop mechanisms to assess that projects initiated in the framework of one of the Rio conventions are in line with the requirements of the other two.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11 - Ensure continued and effective international cooperation for the protection of biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

The protection of biodiversity is a global issue and is best tackled through multilateral cooperation. This is underlined by the CBD stressing the need for countries to cooperate in order to ensure the protection of Earth's biodiversity.

The Millennium Development Goals provide the framework for the entire United Nations system to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Biodiversity plays an important role in ensuring that the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (and in goal 1 'Combating poverty and hunger', Goal 6 'Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases', and goal 7 'Ensuring environmental sustainability') for sustainable development are successfully achieved.

The Clearing-House Mechanism is an important tool for the exchange of information and for promoting and facilitating scientific and technical cooperation.

Belgium has developed interregional and bilateral cooperation with countries in its immediate vicinity for an integrated management of transboundary ecosystems.

Also through its development cooperation, Belgium promotes the sustainability of the environment as a crosscutting issue, in which biodiversity is considered.

Biodiversity loss has direct effects on economic development and especially on the livelihood of people in developing countries. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report (2006) has shown that negative impacts of biodiversity loss and diminution of the benefits arising out of ecosystem services will mainly harm the world's poorest people, who are the least able to adjust to these changes. Intact ecosystems in protected areas provide clean water, food security, and medicine and help prevent natural disasters.

Tackling the loss of biodiversity in those countries will be essential to achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development. Furthermore most developing countries play a crucial role in the conservation of global biodiversity, as they still possess areas with a natural environment and a high biodiversity. All partner countries of Belgian Development Cooperation have also signed the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as many other biodiversity-related agreements. Belgium needs to continue supporting their efforts to respect and implement their commitments under these conventions.

Belgium has already taken some initiatives through its development cooperation policy to improve synergies between MEAs in general and for their synergetic implementation in partner countries.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, universities, NGOs, institutions, etc. involved in research, environment and/or development cooperation, CHM national focal point, and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.1 - Gain a comprehensive view of all cooperation and interregional projects supported by Belgium.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium is cooperating with developing countries in a broad range of activities and is also involved in several interregional projects. For the moment, no instrument can give an overview of all the projects supported by Belgium. As some of these projects can and will have an impact on biodiversity, it would be helpful to develop a mechanism where information about these initiatives is collected. This would enable the various authorities to have an overview of all the initiatives supported by the different authorities in Belgium and their potential impact on biodiversity. Furthermore, there is need to evaluate whether environment criteria have effectively been taken into account in cooperation projects.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.2 - All programmes and projects funded in partner countries have an ex ante environmental assessment procedure, ranging, as appropriate, from environmental screening to full environmental impact assessment or strategic environmental assessment.

**Rationale for the national target**

All Belgium's development cooperation projects will be more systematically assessed prior to the decision to allocate funds so that potential negative impacts on the biodiversity of recipient countries can be identified at an early stage and be avoided or mitigated. A screening procedure should be systematically applied and, when it proves necessary, a full Environmental Impact Assessment\* (EIA) carried out.

Broader strategic approaches, such as "Indicative Cooperation Programmes, "Country Strategic Papers" or "Sector-Wide Approaches" (SWAP), etc., should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment\* (SEA) that includes biodiversity considerations.

Both EIAs and SEAs should be performed by using the existing assessment systems of the recipient country as much as possible. Joint EIAs or SEAs by several donors will be encouraged whenever possible.

Furthermore, ex post evaluations of development cooperation programmes or projects should also integrate biodiversity considerations, even in projects/programmes that are not related to natural resources.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.3 - Make best use of Belgian expertise to support implementation of the Convention in developing countries.

**Rationale for the national target**

A stronger commitment of developing countries to the Convention will not only contribute to a more successful sustainable development at the global level, but will also allow them to meet the ultimate challenge posed by the 2020 Aichi targets.

Through its multilateral and bilateral activities with developing countries, Belgium will offer its expertise to support institutional and individual capacity-building for the development of effective policies towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including for the identification and monitoring of biodiversity and the development of appropriate science-based policy tools. Scientific and technical cooperation will be promoted, including by facilitating access to biodiversity data stored in Belgian repositories, by transferring relevant technologies, by promoting the further development and use of the CBD Clearing House Mechanism at national level and by supporting the development of ABS relevant legislation. Belgian actors are further encouraged to support this objective through adequate educational and public awareness programmes both in Belgium and in the developing country.

Enhancing and streamlining capacity-building for biodiversity management is a prerequisite for developing countries to improve their scientific capacity in key areas of the Convention, and thus to achieve a better implementation of the obligations imposed by the Convention. Belgium should make full use of its scientific expertise, in universities, institutes and NGOs, to assist developing countries, which are often rich in biodiversity but poor in resources, to make further progress in their implementation of the objectives of the Convention.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.4 - Promote integration of biodiversity and biosafety into the development plans of partner countries.

**Rationale for the national target**

The loss of biodiversity threatens the livelihood of the poorest people in the world, as they depend the most on biodiversity for their subsistence. It has previously been the case that there has been little interest in the integration of biodiversity screening mechanisms into partner countries' own development plans. Such plans tend to set out broad goals and include projects and activities to improve the direct economic development of the country. However, in order to achieve lasting poverty reduction and sustainable development, the environmental dimension and biodiversity in particular should be fully taken into account in these plans. Therefore, Belgium (for example, through the EU or other multi-donor partnerships) will encourage partner countries to integrate biodiversity and biosafety into their Poverty Reduction Strategies and/or National Strategies for Sustainable Development, as well as in their Health programmes and any other of their development initiatives they undertake.

Direct budget support, whether general or sectoral, is an emerging trend in development cooperation. Attention will be focused on this new form of aid, so that policy dialogues leading to budget support decisions are used as opportunities to promote such integration.

Awareness of the concept of the ecological footprint should also be raised.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.5 - Enhance international coordination and effective exchange of information between ex situ conservation centres (zoos, botanic gardens).

**Rationale for the national target**

Gene banks, zoos, plant nurseries, botanic gardens, aquariums, etc. contribute to the ex situ conservation of wild plant and animal species of foreign origin by securing the long-term conservation of species outside their natural habitat (ex situ).

For species and varieties of crops and for domesticated animal races, ex situ conservation centres allow a broad genetic pool to be maintained to ensure the viability and the improvement of quality in the future. On the basis of scientific knowledge, ex situ conservation centres will be encouraged to keep species, varieties and domesticated animal races in a manner that guarantees their conservation. Due to the wide diversity of collections, there is a need to reinforce coordination between ex situ conservation centres, for instance through information-sharing and facilitated access to data of foreign origin for the countries of origin, in order to ensure long-term conservation and facilitated access to information and collections.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 11.6 - Contribute to the creation of an enabling environment for biodiversity in partner countries, based on national priorities, in particular in support of the development of National Protected Area programmes, National Forest Programmes, integrated coastal and marine programmes, or other equivalent instruments, as well as their integration into relevant policy instruments.

## **Rationale for the national target**

Belgium, through its development cooperation policy, will promote and support participatory income-generating activities that are based on the sustainable use of biodiversity and that benefit local populations. In particular the role of farmers as actors for biodiversity protection through implementation of good farming practices and technologies should be encouraged and supported by Belgian development cooperation.

The Belgian DC will also support, on a sustainable way, other biodiversity-based income-generating activities or mechanisms with a potential of local benefits, such as ecotourism, community-managed hunting, fishing and gathering, and maintenance of ecosystem services with collective benefits.

Biosafety capacity building projects, aimed at helping in various ways developing countries to avoid potential negative impacts of GMOs on biodiversity and health, will also be undertaken by Belgian development cooperation policy.

Through policy dialogues with partner countries and other donors, Belgium will also seek to enhance the promotion of access rights, property rights and shared responsibility of indigenous and local communities on biodiversity assets. This policy dialogue will be carried out in accordance with existing international agreements and processes.

The creation of an enabling environment for biodiversity in partner countries needs to be based on their national priorities. However, with due regard for the global Aichi Targets, it is also important that key areas for biodiversity are supported. In particular protected areas, forests and the marine environment have been frequently highlighted as priorities by partner countries during bilateral and multilateral discussions.

Specific attention needs also to be given in development cooperation policy to the establishment of a worldwide representative network of protected areas. National Protected area programmes are the base for achieving numerous Aichi targets in a sustainable way. Protected areas have been in place for many decades; however, their management has not always been as optimal as it might in terms of stopping the loss of biodiversity by 2020. To ensure that the existing and additional to be created protected areas support the implementation of the CBD, Belgium will, based on demands of the partner countries and their national priorities, in its bilateral and multilateral efforts, actively promote the development of National Protected area programmes and the integration of different policy instruments to enhance coordination and coherence of policies aimed at the national protected areas and their biodiversity.

Biodiversity in forests is the richest of all terrestrial ecosystems. Along with the protection of forest areas of high conservation value, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) will play a crucial role in stopping the loss of biodiversity by 2020. There is an urgent need to enhance the conservation of forest biodiversity by improving forest management and planning practices that incorporate socio-economic and cultural values.

Many wood-producing countries need financial, technical and legislative assistance to prepare and implement national forest programmes for the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, develop good governance practices, review and implement forest related regulations, tenure and planning systems, promote transparency, combat corruption and strengthen civil society involvement, to provide a basis for sustainable use of forest biodiversity.

National Forest Programmes (NFPs) for the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests are understood as country-led, broadly participative processes to formulate and implement policies and instruments that effectively promote the development of the sector in the context of broader policies and strategies for sustainable development. The goal of NFPs is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of forest resources to meet local, national and global needs, through fostering national and international partnerships to manage, protect and restore forest resources and land, for the benefit of present and future generations. The main objectives are to:

- ✓ introduce intersectoral planning approaches involving all relevant partners, in order to resolve conflicts and generate effective policies and programmes to address problems;
- ✓ raise awareness and mobilise commitments at all levels in order to address the issues related to sustainable forestry development;
- ✓ increase the efficiency and effectiveness of both public and private actions for sustainable forestry development;
- ✓ foster local, national, regional and international partnerships;
- ✓ mobilise and organise national and (if necessary) international resources and catalyse action to implement programmes/plans in a coordinated manner;
- ✓ plan and implement how forests and the forestry sector could contribute to national and global initiatives, for example the Environmental Action Plans and the actions agreed upon to implement the Forest Principles, Chapter 11 of Agenda 21, the Conventions on Biodiversity, on Climate Change and on Desertification.

In its bilateral and multilateral efforts, Belgium will actively promote the development of national forestry programmes and the integration of different policy instruments to enhance coordination and coherence of policies aimed at the promotion of sustainable forest management and the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological diversity.

Today, integrated coastal management (ICM), also known as integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), has become the preferred approach to sustainable development and resource use of coastal areas. Given the dependence of many developing countries on the marine environment for food security, supporting integrated coastal and marine programmes will largely benefit both the partner countries and biodiversity. It will be important to support the partner country to develop the necessary knowledge and capacity (including of the relevant institutions) in order to create the enabling environment to integrate concerns for marine and coastal biodiversity into the relevant sectoral plans.

In its bilateral and multilateral efforts, Belgium will, based on demands of the partner countries and their national priorities, actively promote the development of ICZM to support the partner countries in enhancing coordination and coherence of policies aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 12 - Influence the international agenda within biodiversity-related conventions

**Rationale for the national target**

The protection of biodiversity is a common task that cannot be tackled by one country. In the international and European forums where Belgium is represented, Belgium will actively emphasise the paramount role of biodiversity and promote international involvement.

Belgium can also enhance its contribution to the protection of global biodiversity through the promotion of better coherence and cooperation between biodiversity-related conventions. The promotion of synergies must not result in diluting the content of biodiversity-related conventions. On the contrary, it will ensure their mutual supportiveness while respecting their different characters. Strengthening of synergies and cooperation will make it possible to use the existing resources in a more efficient way and will make the pressures of implementation and reporting more manageable.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the regional and federal authorities, biodiversity-related conventions national focal points.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 12.1 - Enhance Belgium's contribution to the protection of global biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Through active participation in international meetings and, when relevant, in the various bureaus and task forces, Belgium will strive for ambitious multilateral goals, targets and actions. Belgium will also contribute better to financial and technical support for their implementation.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 17 - By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.



Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 12.2 - Keep up our leading role in different international and EU forums to strengthen and ensure coherence, within the framework of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets, between biodiversity related conventions.

**Rationale for the national target**

When participating in international agreements, Belgium will continue its efforts to ensure the coherence of the provisions of biodiversity-related conventions in order to promote policy consistency, enhance synergies and increase the efficiency of implementing measures. In particular, Belgium will support the establishment of a global partnership on biodiversity in order to enhance implementation through improved cooperation between all the conventions, organisations and bodies, and continue to cooperate in the process of harmonisation and streamlining of reporting on biodiversity.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 12.3 - Enhance synergies between CBD and the bodies of the Antarctic Treaty System and UNCLOS.

**Rationale for the national target**

Biodiversity is a key issue in the Antarctic region. The Antarctic's biodiversity is of unique value due to its relatively pristine state, with its high rate of endemic species with a highly adapted character. The Antarctic Treaty area is of particular interest due to the high level of scientific cooperation between countries.

Biodiversity in the high seas and Antarctica needs to be protected through the establishment of marine protected areas beyond national jurisdiction, which should become key elements of a global representative network of MPAs [87]. Furthermore, climate change, increased tourism and unregulated bioprospection [88] activities in the marine and terrestrial parts of Antarctica are creating rising concern.

Those issues need to be addressed in a coherent and coordinated way within the CBD, UNCLOS and the bodies of the Antarctic Treaty System (Committee for Environmental Protection, Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources - CCAMLR), in particular regarding marine protected areas and ABS. Particular attention will also be devoted to human impacts on cetacean populations in the Antarctic region and to, in this regard, the work of the International Whaling Commission.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 13 - Enhance Belgium's efforts to integrate biodiversity concerns into relevant international organisations and programmes

**Rationale for the national target**

Specific CBD issues are undoubtedly linked with discussions within other organisations and programmes such as FAO, UNDP, WTO, WHO, WIPO, ITTO, etc. whose mandates cover issues relevant to the implementation of the CBD. However, links between agreements directly relevant to biodiversity and the other relevant international organisations remain weak. It is therefore important to enhance synergies and coherence both at national and international level given the positive impacts that the protection of biodiversity can have on the implementation of several of those programmes.

An interesting tool to achieve this objective is the Green Diplomacy Network (GDN) [89], an initiative aimed at promoting the integration of environment into external relations of EU-25 through the creation of an informal network of experts as an information exchange mechanism between the designated environmental focal points of the Member State Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

Special efforts should for example ensure greater coherence and consistency between trade and economic agreements and the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. This is of the utmost importance given the major impact that other institutions and programmes can have on the implementation of the CBD.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional authorities, the judiciary, the law enforcement departments, the ministry of foreign affairs, the Belgian CITES service, the private sector.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 13.1 - Integrate biodiversity concerns into all international organisations and programmes that are relevant to biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium will continue and strengthen its participation in international and European conventions, agreements and programmes relevant to biodiversity, and will ensure that positions taken are in line with and supportive of the three objectives of the CBD. This will promote compatibility and mutual supportiveness between institutions and programmes. This implies improved coordination and sharing of information at national level to ensure that Belgian delegations to meetings of different but related bodies present consistent and mutually reinforcing positions.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 13.2 - Support efforts of developing countries to combat illegal logging and associated illegal trade as well as their efforts to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+).

## **Rationale for the national target**

A first step in contributing to SFM is to help developing countries restrict and impede illegal logging activities.

Illegal logging and its associated trade not only threaten biodiversity in timber-producing countries (through overexploitation, depletion of scarce natural resources, destruction of ecosystems, etc.) but also have serious economic and social consequences (loss of revenue for local governments, corruption, impoverishment of rural communities that depend on forest products, etc.).

In 2003, the EU adopted an Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT Action Plan) to combat illegal logging and associated illegal trade. On the one hand this plan emphasises governance reform and capacity-building in producer countries to control illegal logging and that primarily through the development of Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA's) between the EU and timber-producing countries. The final aim of these agreements is to set up a licensing scheme in partner countries in order to ensure that only legally produced timber (identified by means of licenses issued in those producer countries) is exported to the EU. The framework has been set up by means of the FLEGT Regulations [91].

Indonesia is the first country to have fully implemented its licensing scheme and has been issuing licenses for the export of timber and timber products to the EU since 15 November 2016. Belgium has set up a control system to check whether the licensing obligation is being complied with by importers, using the European Commission online management tool TRACES. Belgium will continuously evaluate the national control system, contribute to the evaluation at EU level, make adjustments where necessary and will proactively anticipate the arrival of additional producer countries issuing FLEGT licenses.

Belgium should continue to support this initiative on the ground by initiating projects in timber-producing countries to prepare for the establishment of voluntary partnership agreements, as has been the case in the DRC.

On the other hand the plan also underlines demand-side measures to reduce the consumption of illegal timber within the EU.

In this context, the EU adopted "Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market" in 2010. This Regulation, together with its Implementing Regulation [92], Delegated Act [93] and Guidelines [94], prohibits the placing on the EU market of illegal timber and timber products from any origin as of 3 March 2013.

Belgium will continue to focus on the appropriate enforcement of this Regulation and actively participate in its evaluation. In this context, additional staff were recruited in 2017.

Belgium will continue to focus on the development of public procurement policies to promote sustainable management of forests. Belgium, for example, concluded a sectoral agreement in 2011 to increase the share of primary timber products from sustainably managed forests on the Belgian market. That sectoral agreement will be renewed in 2019 and the scope will be extended to more secondary timber products such as paper and packaging, furniture, pallets, etc.

For CITES-listed wood, Belgium will work closely with the countries of origin to ensure that CITES permits are only issued when a clear non-detriment-finding has been carried out and the legality and sustainability of the tropical wood is proven. In case of seizures of large quantities of CITES-listed wood, and, where possible, the subsequent public sale of this timber, revenue will be invested in local projects to enhance local sustainable use of forests.

Agricultural production, one-third of which is internationally traded, is the main driver of deforestation in the world. Conversion of forest to agricultural land itself is responsible for an estimated 80 % of forest loss in

tropical and subtropical regions. Therefore Belgium will support and actively contribute to upcoming initiatives on the elimination of deforestation from the production of agricultural commodities such as soy, cacao, palm oil and beef.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 14 - Promote the commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020

**Rationale for the national target**

See below

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the regional and local authorities (including the provinces and municipalities), the nature conservation agencies, actors involved in local Agenda 21 programmes and other local programmes and plans, professional federations active in the sector, the general public and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 14.1 - Encourage local authorities to develop and implement local biodiversity strategies and related action plans.

**Rationale for the national target**

The commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities is crucial to the achievement of the objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy at all levels. Local action could be facilitated through the enhancement and dissemination of appropriate policy tools and guidelines, and the diffusion of best practices supporting the multifunctional use of natural spaces. In particular, biodiversity concerns should be integrated into existing local action plans, like the Local Agendas 21, communal plans for rural development, as well as

in plans that are being developed. Capacity-building programmes and exchange platforms can provide appropriate technical assistance and/or guidance. Awareness-raising campaigns for local residents on the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and appropriate subsidies for local authorities should be put in place to stimulate and support local commitment to biodiversity. The importance of a bottom-up information flow is crucial as residents are good reporters of their environment. This can be promoted for example through the organization of events or above-mentioned exchange platforms to collect observations on specific themes related to biodiversity. Cities and local authorities are encouraged to monitor and report on their progress by means of standardized biodiversity indices, such as the city biodiversity index (CBI).

Biodiversity must keep or regain its place in the urban space as it performs important natural functions while contributing to physical and mental health, recreation, education and public awareness. To this end, it is important to better preserve and connect green spaces and open spaces around and within urbanized areas by developing a green infrastructure. Most importantly, their quality needs to be improved to facilitate their multifunctional use. Historically, we note that, despite heavy land use and dense urbanization, urban areas often host an important natural heritage for the same historical reasons that led to the human presence and economic development in this location. This is notably the case in the Brussels-Capital Region.

National target has no corresponding Aichi Biodiversity Target.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 15 - Ensure the provision of adequate resources for biodiversity

**Rationale for the national target**

Belgium has committed itself at international and European level to the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity and its Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 (SP). This includes financial support both with regard to adequately financing our own national efforts as well as supporting developing countries to implement the CBD.

Objectives 15.1-15.4 of the updated NSB express this national and global engagement and need to be seen in light of CBD Article 20 (§1-4) as well as several subsequent COP decisions (COP9/11-COP10/2-COP11/4). Furthermore UNGA resolutions 65/161 and 67/212 also expressed political commitment to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. Finally, this was internalized at EU level through several Council Conclusions (in particular December 2010 and June 2011) and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Resource mobilization under the CBD relates to increasing funding for biodiversity-related activities, both nationally and globally to reach the Aichi Targets in line with CBD Article 20. However, the overall picture must be kept in mind when addressing SNB Objective 15, since this is not just about 'flows' of funding but also about engaging the private sector, reducing costs, increasing sectoral integration, enhancing effectiveness of funding (both nationally & in developing countries), etc. Therefore many actions have already been taken by and remain still available to the relevant administrations and other actors to contribute to Objectives 15.1 – 15.4 in line with their own capacities and/or competences and are not limited to increasing net funding flows towards third countries.

The set of 4 objectives 15.1-15.4 covers a whole range of ways to mobilize biodiversity resources which are mutually supportive. Several of these are directly related to other SNB Objectives, in particular Objectives 5-11-12 and 13. Just like Aichi Target 20 will contribute to and also benefit from the proper implementation of the other Aichi Targets, this Objective 15 will both contribute to and benefit from progress under the other NSB Objectives, depending on how those are implemented.

To carry out the present National Biodiversity Strategy, there is a need to carry out further actions in key areas. Investments in coherent and integrated biodiversity activities should be substantially increased. Financing will be supported by Regional and Federal environmental administrations, other relevant administrations and funding bodies, including the private sector.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

**Other relevant information** (Please use this field to provide any other relevant information, such as the process of developing and adopting the national target, the stakeholders involved or the strategies and plans in which this national target has been included.)

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this objective are: the federal and regional finance, economy, development cooperation and environment authorities, the provincial and municipal authorities, the private sector and markets, NGOs, and any association working towards the same goal as the NBS.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 15.1 - By 2020 at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for biodiversity from all sources (including possible innovative financial mechanisms) should increase substantially compared to the average annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006-2010.

**Rationale for the national target**

This objective covers both national and global financing for biodiversity and is based on Articles 20.1 – 20.4 of the CBD. It is close to the wording of Aichi Target 20 which was based on Article 20 and which is globally the politically most recognized commitment. The implementation of the Strategic Plan with its Aichi Targets is guiding all biodiversity efforts during the UN Decade, as decided by the United Nations General Assembly in resolutions 65/161 and 67/212. Target 20 was confirmed at EU level through the Council Conclusions of December 2010 (§9) and of June 2011 (§16) and also referred to the need to deliver on the CBD Strategy for Resource Mobilisation. The Strategic Plan and Aichi Targets became the basis for the EU Biodiversity Strategy and in particular Targets 1 (Act. 2 - financing Natura 2000) and 6 (Act. 18 - link to CBD COP-11) directly support Operational Objective 15.1.

Belgium needs to ensure, adequate financing of biodiversity from all sources. Therefore it is important to investigate financing possibilities at national level such as the establishment of specific funds for biodiversity, the integration of biodiversity in sectoral budgets and programmes (in particular in Research and Development plans and programs), the establishment of partnerships with the finance and business sectors, etc. Other innovative financial mechanisms should be investigated, such as partnerships with the private sector.

In Flanders, a specific funds (Minafonds) has been established to deals with financial aspects of investments in the field of environment.

The federal level should investigate possibilities to use the Raw Material Funds for biodiversity.

Belgium will investigate and mobilise additional financial resources from all sources to effectively implement the NBS and to contribute to averting global biodiversity loss. In accordance with the CBD Strategy for Resource Mobilization, it should substantially increase from the levels of 2010. In CBD Decision XI/4, it is agreed to use the average annual biodiversity funding between 2006 and 2010 as a baseline.

The existing financial institutions will be strengthened and, the replication and scaling-up of successful financial mechanisms and instruments will be promoted (Resource Mobilization Strategy Goal 3). Enabling conditions will be established to encourage private sector involvement in supporting the Convention's three objectives, including the financial sector.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 15.2 - Fully use existing EU financing instruments to promote biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

This objective supports Aichi Targets 2, 3 and 20. At EU level, again Targets 1 (Act. 2) and 6 (Act 18) are directly linked. The EU CCs of June 2011 (§13) stressed the need to mobilise additional resources from all possible sources and ensure adequate funding through, inter alia, the future EU financial framework, national sources and innovative financial mechanisms, as appropriate, for the effective implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, including predictable, adequate and regular financing for the Natura 2000 network.

This objective in itself contributes to Objectives 15.1 and 15.4 and at EU and national level, several initiatives are already ongoing. For example Belgium is already engaged in several efforts to use existing EU financial mechanisms to promote support for biodiversity (cf. EU Council Conclusions of December 2010 (§5, §13, §19) regarding rural development, CAP, CFP, etc.).

Co-financing opportunities through European financing programmes will be promoted, for instance through specific programmes of the forthcoming EU Multiannual Financial framework 2014-2020 including LIFE+, the European Fisheries Fund (EFF), the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Funds (the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund), and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Belgium will support financing biodiversity in European Financing Funds.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 2 - By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

**Other related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is indirectly related.)

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio economic conditions.

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 15.3 - By 2015, contribute towards the doubling of the total biodiversity-related financial resource flows to developing countries and at least maintain this level until 2020, including through a country-driven prioritization of biodiversity within development plans in recipient countries, using as preliminary baseline the average annual biodiversity funding to developing countries for the years 2006–2010.

**Rationale for the national target**

The justification for this kind of target is in CBD Article 20, paragraphs 1 to 4. At COP-11 (Hyderabad, October 2012), the Parties decided to add this specific target to implement their commitments under CBD Article 20, the Resource Mobilization Strategy and Aichi Target 20 (COP-11/4, §7).

International flows of financial resources originate from several sources (see figure 7). Official development assistance (ODA) is one of these sources. ODA can be either bilateral (directly from a donor country to a recipient country) or multilateral (resources channelled through international financial institutions and the United Nations organization, funds and programmes). International financial flows can also include non-ODA public funding such as economic cooperation, through private companies and through international not-for-profit organizations. This can be both North-South and South-South cooperation.

Belgium will adopt a methodology and calculate its baseline of international financial flow to developing countries devoted to CBD implementation and biodiversity activities. The baseline will be the annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006–2010. This will contribute to the implementation of the provisions of the Monterrey Consensus on mobilizing international and domestic funding as related to biodiversity



A strategy to double this baseline will be developed and implemented by 2015 with the actors involved (the federal and regional authorities, the private sector, NGOs, foundations and academia). In the context of this process, the term “biodiversity activity” refers to all activities that have a positive impact on biodiversity regardless of whether they take the form of direct benefits or indirect benefits. A proposed categorization of biodiversity resources is provided for in the CBD reporting framework to assist Parties in accounting for the various types of information which should be considered.

In the context of this objective, Belgium will provide support to strengthen existing financial institutions and promote replication and scaling-up of successful financial mechanisms and instruments. This may take the form of enhanced efforts to mobilize co-financing and other modes of project financing for biological diversity or the promotion of biological diversity in debt relief and conversion initiatives, including debt-for-nature swaps. The development and implementation of economic incentives that are supportive of the Convention's three objectives at local and national level and consistent and in harmony with the other relevant international obligations could be considered.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

**National Target** (Please use the official title, if available)

Objective 15.4 - By 2020, support, as appropriate, developing countries to enhance institutional, national, administrative and managerial capacities, in order to increase the effectiveness and sustainability of international and national financial flows for biodiversity.

**Rationale for the national target**

This objective was already included in the CBD Resource Mobilisation Strategy COP9/11 (§6) and repeated in paragraph 14 of decision COP-11/4 in order to create the enabling environment to mobilize private and public-sector investments in biological diversity and its associated ecosystem services.

This objective is essential in terms of reaching the objectives to implement the CBD as not only the amount of funding but also its management and the absorption capacity of the recipient countries are key. In particular Operational Objectives 11.3 and 11.6 directly support Operational Objective 15.4.

In its bilateral and multilateral interactions with partner countries, Belgium will provide support, inter alia:

- ✓ to strengthen institutional capacities for effective resource mobilization and utilization, including strengthening the capacities of the relevant ministries and agencies to make a case for including biodiversity and its associated ecosystem services in discussions with donors and relevant financial institutions;

- ✓ to strengthen the capacity for the integration of biodiversity issues and associated ecosystem services into national and sectoral planning, and promote budgetary allocations for biological diversity and its associated ecosystem services in national and relevant sectoral budgets.
- ✓ to strive to increase official development assistance associated with biological diversity, where biodiversity is identified as a priority by developing country Parties in poverty reduction strategies, national development strategies, United Nations development assistance frameworks and other development assistance strategies and in accordance with priorities identified in national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

**Relevance of the national targets to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Links between national targets and Aichi Biodiversity Targets.)

**Main related Aichi Biodiversity Targets** (Please select one or more Aichi Biodiversity Target to which the national target is wholly or partially related. Parties can select an entire target or a target component (not shown below))

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

## SECTION II. IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES TAKEN, ASSESSMENT OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, ASSOCIATED OBSTACLES AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL NEEDS TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL TARGETS

### **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

#### Action 1.1

Related to objective 1.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Define a common Belgian methodology for the identification and monitoring of priority components of biodiversity according to EU guidelines.

Flanders and Wallonia already use biodiversity indicators closely linked to the SEBI and CBD indicators to evaluate and report on the status of biodiversity in their region upon on a yearly basis (<http://www.biodiversityindicators.be>; <https://www.inbo.be/en>; <http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home/fr/a-propos.html>). The City-biodiversity index (CBI indicators) is tested in the Brussels-Capital Region.

The Statistical Office (Statistics Belgium) publishes and sends to OECD a national biodiversity indicator (% existing and threatened species).

<https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/environnement/biodiversite#panel-12>.

#### Walloon Region

Comparison SEBI indicators versus Walloon indicators:

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicatorsheets/INSTIT%204.html>.

See also page 330 of the state of environment report 2017.

In the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European commission has drawn up a list of indicators to monitor and assess environment performance. The table in the following link gives the corresponding Walloon indicators.

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicatorsheets/INSTIT%203.html>

#### Flemish Region

Besides the yearly report on the biodiversity indicators giving the information on the conservation status and trends of habitats and species, coverage of protected areas and areas with nature-based management, the "[Natuurrapport 2014: toestand en trends ecosystemen en ecosysteemdiensten](#)" gives a comprehensive report on the status of ecosystems and ecosystem services in Flanders. For the following reporting on the conservation status, trends and threats of habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives in 2019 a more focused monitoring has been developed, priorities and inventory networks were determined and methodologies were worked out. A comprehensive summary of the outcomes is expected in the course of 2019.

### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 1.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Define a common Belgian methodology for the identification and monitoring of priority components of biodiversity according to EU guidelines.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Actions for harmonizing approach for monitoring of EU relevant habitats and species are being taken under the LIFE Belgium Integrated Project for Nature (BNIP).

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

À l'exception de l'indicateur pour Aïchi Target 11, pour lequel existe une méthodologie commune, celle-ci reste à définir pour l'identification et la surveillance des éléments prioritaires de la biodiversité au niveau terrestre. La définition d'un petit nombre d'indicateurs et de critères d'évaluation communs, tel que prévu par la SNB, n'a pas été initié de manière coordonnée. L'application des indicateurs développés au sein de la CDB et par l'UE est examinée de manière indépendante par chaque région. Les méthodes de collecte et d'agrégation des données appliquées dans chaque région devraient être comparées.

Seule une comparaison « macro » du statut de chaque espèce dans les 4 régions a été effectué pour obtenir un statut national mais c'est un minimum (il faudrait les cartes de répartition et l'application de critères au niveau national). Quelques listes rouges ont cependant été coordonnées au niveau national, comme la liste des libellules.

Data on protected areas designation and implementation are compiled in the uniform CDDA database (UNEP/WCMC).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/1#1.1>

**Other relevant information**, including case studies to illustrate how the measure taken has resulted in (or is expected to result in) outcomes that contribute to the implementation of the NBSAP

<Text entry>

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information can be found)

<https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/environnement/biodiversite>

<http://www.especes.be>

<http://www.observations.be>

**Obstacles and scientific and technical needs related to the measure taken:** Please describe what obstacles have been encountered and any scientific and technical needs for addressing these, including technical and scientific cooperation, capacity development activities or the need for guidance materials.

The responsibilities for biodiversity are regionalized since a long period, the political demand and resources are not aligned in time and species groups. Regional red lists occur at different periods and periodicity which makes them difficult to aggregate. However, citizen scientists observations occur at a coordinated way on [www.observations.be](http://www.observations.be) / [www.waarnemingen.be](http://www.waarnemingen.be) which offers an opportunity.

## **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

### Action 1.2

Related to objective 1.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify and monitor priority species, habitats, genetic and functional components of biodiversity.

Monitoring, indicators and assessments: contribution to the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) that collects data on the status and trends of biodiversity in Europe.

### Flemish Region

For status and trends on main species groups: <http://www.biodiversityindicators.be>.

See also the indicators on <http://www.milieurapport.be/en/facts-figures/> and <http://www.natuurindicatoren.be>.

### Monitoring and reporting

An extensive monitoring programme has been developed to monitor habitats and species of European interest and the effects of management measures in nature and forest reserves and government domains. The important role of nature organisations in monitoring has been concretised through cooperation in improving data entry and quality control on the online system "waarnemingen.be" – observation on species by thousands of volunteers are being compiled to support evaluation of trends and distributions of species in Flanders: <https://www.natuurpunt.be/pagina/waarnemingenbe>.

Besides the yearly report on the biodiversity indicators giving the information on the conservation status and the trends of habitats and species, coverage of protected areas and areas with nature-based management, the "Natuurrapport 2014: toestand en trends ecosystemen en ecosysteemdiensten" gives a comprehensive report on the status of ecosystems and ecosystem services in Flanders.

The 2013 reports for the EU Nature directives indicated: of the 47 occurring habitats, 5 are in a favourable conservation status, and 7 habitats that have currently an unfavourable conservation status improve. For the species the picture is more diverse. Of the 59 species, 9 are in a favourable conservation status, and 14 other species improve. However, 17 species worsen, while for the remaining 28 species the conservation status is stable or data are inadequate to assess a global trend. Concerning breeding bird species: for the majority of the species, although some of them are slowly increasing in numbers, the population is actually depleted or too low and there is still a long way to go. Concerning wintering bird species most of the species show a clear negative trend during the last ten years: for 19 yearly counted wintering bird species, we can conclude that population goals are met for seven species. Numbers of four species are just below the targets. For 8 species, there is rather a large gap between actual numbers and population goals. Main pressures identified were intensive agricultural practices, pollution, urbanization, land conversion.

See composite reports INBO: Rapportage Habitatrichtlijn 2013; Rapportage Vogelrichtlijn 2013 [https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/bb91caf9-6bc6-4c45-b649-68f6603be6f7/BE\\_20140528.doc](https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/bb91caf9-6bc6-4c45-b649-68f6603be6f7/BE_20140528.doc) [https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/8912c96b-d9ce-453f-bdaa-ee03de049914/BE\\_A12NatSum\\_20141031.pdf](https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/8912c96b-d9ce-453f-bdaa-ee03de049914/BE_A12NatSum_20141031.pdf)

For the following reporting on the conservation status, trends and threats of habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives in 2019 a more focused monitoring has been developed,

priorities and inventory networks are determined and methodologies are worked out: see INBO publication: methodology species monitoring (in Dutch). A comprehensive summary of the outcomes is expected in the course of 2019.

### Walloon Region

According to the last Natura 2000 report covering the period 2007-2012, the conservation status of habitats was considered unfavourable for 88% of the number of habitat types concerned in CBR and 96% in ABR. For forests, this is mainly due to the lack of deadwood or soil compaction. Open agro-pastoral environments suffer from overgrazing, excessive use of inputs, drainage (humid meadows), growth of woody species that leads to their closing over, conversion to crops and artificialisation. For habitats of stagnant waters and peatlands, the penalising factors are drainage (sometimes old) and eutrophication - which also affects water courses that also suffer from the artificialisation of their banks. In general, habitats are threatened by the expansion of alien species. The next Natura 2000 report will be issued out in 2019 with updated information on the status and trends of habitats and species.

<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/contents/indicator sheets/FFH%201.html>

- The permanent inventory of the forestry resources.

- Observatory for forest health.

- Species-based data for Wallonia can be consulted on-line at the following URL (in French):

<http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/especes.html?IDC=3025>.

### Brussels-Capital Region

The Report on the state of the natural environment in the Brussels-Capital Region is intended to provide an objective basis for directing policy and defining the regional strategy for natural development.

Using indicators and situational inventories, it provides an update on the state of the natural environment and of biodiversity in Brussels (conservation state of habitats and species, main threats assessment). It also evaluates the impact of current nature and biodiversity policies. It is intended for political and administrative decision-makers and the other actors – who are numerous – whose activities affect nature conservation. (Source: Brussels Environment, 2012 and ICLEI Africa Secretariat, 2013. Challenges for nature in Brussels. Summary of the nature report).

Information on species-based data for the Brussels-Capital Region can be found at:

[http://documentation.bruxellesenvironnement.be/documents/NARABRU\\_20120910\\_FR\\_150dpi.pdf](http://documentation.bruxellesenvironnement.be/documents/NARABRU_20120910_FR_150dpi.pdf)  
(French)

[http://documentatie.leefmilieubrussel.be/documents/NARABRU\\_20121004\\_NL\\_150dpi.PDF](http://documentatie.leefmilieubrussel.be/documents/NARABRU_20121004_NL_150dpi.PDF)  
(Dutch).

The Statistical Office (Statistics Belgium) publishes and sends to OECD a national biodiversity indicator (% existing and threatened species).

<https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/themes/environnement/biodiversite#panel-12>.

### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 1.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify and monitor priority species, habitats, genetic and functional components of biodiversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

X Measure taken has been effective

Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

The detailed list of all evaluated species disappeared from the Statistics Belgium site but it's available on request at [steven.dubaere@economie.fgov.be](mailto:steven.dubaere@economie.fgov.be). Latest update databank of > 5000 species is available as a file in annexe.

The site [www.species.be](http://www.species.be) gives the list of known species in Belgium, with a link to supplementary information as red list status or protection status if available.

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/1#1.2>

**Obstacles and scientific and technical needs related to the measure taken:** Please describe what obstacles have been encountered and any scientific and technical needs for addressing these, including technical and scientific cooperation, capacity development activities or the need for guidance materials.

Statistics Belgium ceased to publish the full list of species status in 2018. This is due to a lack of cooperation between administrations. Statistics Belgium has a separate agenda, biodiversity and the publication of detailed species data being of lower priority compared to global aggregated indicators.

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 2.1

Related to Objective 2.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate And Monitor The Effects And Causes Of Activities And Processes, Including New And Emerging Risks, That Threaten Components Of Biodiversity In Belgium

Flemish Region

Monitoring and reporting of pressures is published in the 2-yearly reports NARA and MIRA.

The State of the Environment Report (SOER) on the Flemish Region provides:

- a description, analysis and assessment of the actual environmental state
- a description, analysis and assessment of the actual environment policy
- a description of the expected environmental development in case of both unchanged and alternative policy, according to a number of relevant scenarios.

Main pressures remain land degradation and conversion for urbanisation and infrastructure enhancing fragmentation of green open areas, intensive agricultural practices with fertilizer and pesticides uses, impacts on eco-hydrological systems by changes in water courses, water pollution, drainage; soil erosion; air pollution and NOx depositions.

Walloon Region

The 2017 State of environment report for Wallonia mentions pressures such as land artificialization, land fragmentation, land degradation, and other land use changes, simplification and standardisation of agricultural habitats, water catchment, wood exploitation, fertilizer and pesticides uses, waste water, water pollution, water eutrophication, drainage, soil erosion, soil compaction, the lack of deadwood in forests, overgrazing, invasive alien species, climate change etc. <http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home.html>

Fragmentation and artificialization: Wallonia is a territory which is particularly fragmented by artificialised areas. The development of transport networks has made it possible to connect towns and villages and has facilitated the gradual artificialisation of rural areas, mainly at the expense of agricultural areas. In 2015, artificialised land occupied at least 1,756 km<sup>2</sup> (or at least 10.4% of Walloon territory), compared to 1,260 km<sup>2</sup> in 1985. In the space of 30 years, artificialised land has therefore increased by 39.3%, corresponding to an average growth rate of 16.5 km<sup>2</sup>/year. In order to achieve a "no net land take" by 2050, Wallonia would need to adopt binding numerical targets relating to land take, at the risk of seeing the sustainable use of the territory relegated to secondary importance compared to other concerns (see Territ 2 of SER Wallonia 2017). Between 2001 and 2007, the average level of fragmentation of the Walloon territory increased by 5.4%, with the average value of the Jaeger index moving from 90 ha to 85 ha, whereas the median value of the index remained stable (15 ha). The contrasting evolution of the mean and median is a sign of localised deterioration of ecological connections within areas which were initially barely fragmented. It is primarily the conversion of permanent grasslands into annual crops or temporary grasslands that accounted for the increase in fragmentation between 2001 and 2007 (see Territ 3 of SER Wallonia 2017). Between 2000 and 2013, total water abstractions decreased by 39% mainly due to a 44% reduction in the quantities of water used by industry (see Res 2 of SER Wallonia 2017).

Timber Harvest: In Wallonia, over the period 2001 - 2011, the harvested volumes of timber represented 110% of the increase, which is higher than the equilibrium threshold (see res 5 of SER Wallonia 2017).

Fertiliser consumption in Wallonia: Between 1995 and 2014, the average amount of mineral nitrogen (mineral N) applied to Walloon agricultural soils decreased by -18.4 % while the average amount of mineral phosphorus decreased by -64.5%. However, in 2014, the amounts of mineral N applied in Wallonia were almost twice as high as the European average, whereas the opposite was true for mineral P. Average inputs of organic N from livestock manure have been declining since 1995 by 14.8% (see Agri 5 of SER Wallonia 2017).

Plant protection products (PPPs) laWith 5.6 kg of a.s. sold per hectare of utilised agricultural area (UAA), the level of use of PPPs in Belgium was above the EU-28 average (2.3 kg/ha of UAA3). Between 2004 and 2014, with the exception of potatoes, application rates per hectare showed a relatively stable trend between 2004 and 2014(see Agri 6 of SER Wallonia 2017).

Between 1993 and 2015, pollutant loads in water courses of C, N and P from runoff to soils, urban waste water discharges, industrial discharges and inputs by cattle decreased. Simulations show that more than 61% of total inputs came from diffuse inputs by runoff to soils (agricultural and non-agricultural), while 27% came from urban waste water discharge and 8% from industrial discharges. Between 1994 and 2013, the industrial pollutant loads discharged into water courses decreased from 16% to 94%, depending on the substance. This development is the result of the application of a waste water discharge tax, the phasing-out of the most polluting activities and measures taken by industry to clean up and improve certain processes (see water 4 of SER Wallonia 2017).



Eutrophication of water courses (see Water 5 of SER Wallonia 2017): Water quality has improved due to various factors, including:

- the reduction of phosphorus fertiliser inputs in agriculture (-65% between 1995 and 2014);
- the reduction of industrial pollutant loads;
- the reduction of domestic pollutant loads, in particular following the ban on phosphates in detergents;
- the compliance of treatment plants in tertiary treatment;

However, this overall improvement was characterised by one-off variations, mainly linked to:

- the increase in water courses flows in some years (e.g. 2012) which diluted the pollution;
- diffuse inputs (runoff, eroded soil particles) which are larger in rainy years;
- a local increase in industrial phosphorus discharges (uncontrolled spillages).

Unsustainable erosion on more than one third of agricultural land (see soil 3 of SER Wallonia 2017): As regards agricultural land, soil losses in 2015 exceeded 5 t/ha on 35% of their total area, and 10 t/ha on 9% of their total area. The observed trend seems to indicate an improvement, since the shares of agricultural area with soil losses above 5 t/(ha.year) and 10 t/(ha.year) declined by 21% and 45% respectively over the period 2006 - 2015. However, on the ground, no improvement is confirmed at this stage.

Longitudinal fragmentation of water courses: In Wallonia, an inventory of obstacles to the free movement of fish has been organised since 1997. It defines the degree to which obstacles can be crossed and establishes a priority plan for their removal or management, based on the quality of upstream fishing waters and implementation opportunities. By November 2016, 4,789 obstacles had been inventoried. Of these, 15% were considered impassable, 18% were considered major and 24% significant, and 2% (116 obstacles) had been removed or managed. The most interventions were made in the sub-basins of the Meuse upstream, the Ourthe, the Meuse downstream and the Moselle (see FFH focus 2 of SER 2017).

Atmospheric deposition of sulphur and nitrogen pollutants: Estimates show that in 2013, less than 1% of Walloon forest areas were still affected by atmospheric deposition exceeding the acceptable critical load of acidifying compounds; other semi-natural ecosystems no longer showed an area exceeding the critical load for these pollutants. As regards eutrophying nitrogen, the situation for forest ecosystems has improved considerably: since 1990, the area of forest affected by critical load exceedances has gradually fallen, to 1.3% in 2010, although it rose again to 8% in 2013 (mainly due to the decrease in water flow in the soil<sup>3</sup> over the period 2009-2013). For other semi-natural ecosystems, particularly oligotrophic environments which cannot tolerate excess nitrogen (even in small quantities), the situation has remained problematic: 93% of these open environments (heaths, fens, bogs, etc.) were still affected by exceedances of critical loads of eutrophying nitrogen in 2013. Significant exceedances (loads of eu (ha.year)) were still recorded, particularly in the northern part of the Sambre-et-Meuse line (see FFH4 of SER 2017).

Invasive alien species: Of the 37 species listed in the EU regulation on IAS, 14 are now naturalised in Wallonia (with various distribution patterns), 16 are absent but likely to become established in the near future, and 7 are occasionally sighted but will probably never settle (as they are not adapted to our climate). The most widespread species from the regulation in Wallonia are northern raccoons, signal crayfish, spinycheek crayfish, topmouth gudgeon, floating pennywort and parrot feather watermilfoil.

## Brussels-Capital Region

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Using indicators and situational inventories, it provides an update on the state of the natural environment and of biodiversity in Brussels (conservation state of habitats and species, main threats assessment). It also evaluates the impact of current nature and biodiversity policies. It is intended for political and administrative decision-makers and the other actors – who are numerous – whose activities affect nature conservation. (Source: Bruxelles Environnement, 2012, and ICLEI Africa Secretariat, 2013. Challenges for nature in Brussels. Summary of the nature report)

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 2.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate and monitor the effects and causes of activities and processes, including new and emerging risks, that threaten components of biodiversity in Belgium.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

X Measure taken has been effective

Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Le suivi de la destruction et de la fragmentation des habitats est approprié. Les principales sources de pollution sont surveillées de manière adéquate et leur ampleur diminue progressivement. Le programme opérationnel belge « Fonds européen pour la pêche » pour la période 2007-2013 vise à promouvoir le développement d'une pêche durable. Une surveillance générale post-commercialisation adéquate des OGM nécessiterait une adaptation des réseaux de surveillance environnement existants.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/2#2.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 2.2

Related to objective 2.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate and monitor the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Belgian National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

To prevent or limit severe damage to the environment, society and economies, climate adaptation strategies for affected systems must be developed at national, regional and local level. In 2010, Belgium adopted its national climate adaptation strategy. It has 3 objectives:

- to improve the coherence between existing adaptation activities in Belgium (assessing the impacts of climate change, vulnerability to climate change and adaptation measures already implemented);
- to improve communication at national, European and international levels;

- to initiate a process to develop a national action plan.

The Strategy summarizes the expected impacts of climate change in Belgium in several areas including biodiversity and gives an overview of the adaptation measures that have already been made in these areas as well as two cross-cutting areas: research and international cooperation. This strategy has initiated the process of developing a National Adaptation Plan (NAP). The NAP was adopted in 2017 and complements the existing Flemish, Brussels Capital, Walloon and Federal adaptation plans:

- provide clear and concise information about the adaptation policies (at regional and federal level) and their implementation in Belgium;
- identify national adaptation measures that will strengthen cooperation and develop synergies between the various governments (federal, regions).

It contains 11 measures that need to be taken at national level in order to strengthen cooperation and synergies between the different entities on adaptation, one measure address the link between climate change impacts and biodiversity (measure 5: “Take climate change into account in risk analysis for invasive alien species”).

The different levels of government (Federal Government, Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels-Capital) have carried out studies in order to prepare their Federal/Regional adaptation plans.

Regional studies have led to the development of regional climate projections and provided information on sectoral vulnerability to future climate conditions.

For more information on the Belgian National Climate Adaptation Strategy and the National Adaptation Plan, see: <https://www.cnc-nkc.be/en/wg-adaptation>.

#### Flemish Region

The Flemish Region has published in 2013 the regional plan for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change (Het Vlaams Klimaatbeleidsplan 2013-2020). Measures for nature development and restoration of ecosystems contributing to adaptation and mitigation are also included. Plan and information documents (in Dutch) are available on: <http://www.lne.be/themas/klimaatverandering/klimaattips/klimaattips/wat-doet-de-vlaamse-overheid/vlaams-klimaatbeleidsplan>.

Main measures related to nature:

- Measure 3.1 Connect and extend nature areas to make them more robust, eg LIFE project ‘LIFE SPARC’ (“Space for Adaptating the River Scheldt to Climate Change) in the Schelde river: <https://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/project/sparc-space-adaptating-river-scheldt-climate-change>; SIGMA plan: <https://sigmaplan.be/en/>
- Measure 3.3 and 3.4 Adaptation of nature and forest and green spaces development and management practices
- Measure 3.5 Adaptation of management of road verges
- Measure 3.6 Climate adaptation in development of species protection programmes
- Measure 3.7 Research and monitoring of impact of climate change on species: <https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/files/13848084/Natuurindicatoren2017.pdf>
- Measures 3.8 and 3.9: Ecosystem based adaptation: <https://www.ruimtelijkeoordening.be/studies/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/9012>

Progress reports on implementation of the Climate plan of Flanders – in Dutch:  
[https://www.lne.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/VORA2016-2017\\_Adaptatie.pdf](https://www.lne.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/VORA2016-2017_Adaptatie.pdf)

More research is being carried out on the impact of climate change on changes in migration of species, changes in species compositions of vegetations, and impact on site management practices:.

Eg INBO: studies and reports on climate change issues and nature (in Dutch).

Such as Impact on forest vitality:

[https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/files/12937745/Sioen\\_etal\\_2017\\_Bosvitaliteitsinventaris2016.pdf](https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/files/12937745/Sioen_etal_2017_Bosvitaliteitsinventaris2016.pdf)  
(in Dutch)

The draft of the new Climate plan for Flanders 2021-2030 was recently submitted for principal approval and advisory process.

### Walloon region

Wallonia has updated its climate policy through the new Air-Climate-Energy Plan (PACE). This plan was adopted by the Walloon Government in April 2016. The 2016-2022 PACE contains 142 measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants, improve air quality, mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts. Different sectors are concerned: agriculture, industry, transport, household, ...

The PACE is the main instrument to implement the Climate Decree adopted by the Walloon Parliament in February 2014. It should enable Wallonia to respect the emissions budgets fixed every 5 years by the Walloon Government.

<http://www.awac.be/index.php/en/thematiques/politiques-actions/plan-pace>

Several of its measures should have positive impacts on biodiversity:

- ADAP09 Appuyer, soutenir et pérenniser le financement des réseaux de suivi et d'alertes sur les espèces exotiques envahissantes pouvant être favorisées par les changements climatiques
- ADAP10 Maintenir et restaurer les tourbières et zones humides en Wallonie
- ADAP03 Poursuivre la lutte contre l'érosion du sol
- ADAP07 Poursuivre les missions d'évaluation et de surveillance de l'OWSF et combler les lacunes de connaissance
- ADAP08 Encourager les initiatives pour une sylviculture durable et respectueuse du fonctionnement naturel de l'écosystème
- A02 Réduire l'usage des pesticides
- A07 Mettre en place les nouvelles réglementations imposées par la Politique agricole commune
- A08 Maintenir les stocks de carbone existants
- A09 Gérer les forêts wallonnes dans le but de favoriser leur adaptation aux changements climatiques

Impacts of climate change on birds (see SOER2017 FFH Focus 3): The influence of climate change on birds communities of species can be analysed using the Community Temperature Index (CTI). It is the average of the mean breeding range temperatures of each species in the community, weighted by the abundance of each species in the community. In Europe, the evolution of the CTI is correlated to a return northwards by 37 km of the communities between 1990 and 2008. In Wallonia, the CTI showed a slight upward trend of 0.027. In Wallonia, the CTI showed a slight TI i a value very similar to the European average (0.026 a slight peaty

environments of the Ardenne plateaus were characterised by a greater increase in the CTI, which could indicate a more marked influence of climate change on the avifauna of these environments. An indicator of climate impact on bird populations has recently been developed. It is based on the ratio between the populations of species predicted to be favourably influenced by global warming and likely to extend their natural range, and those predicted to be affected and for which a contraction in their range is expected. At the European level, the indicator has risen sharply over the last 30 years, suggesting a growing impact of climate change on bird populations. In Wallonia, the indicator shows an increase since 2001, followed by a possible stabilisation that began in 2009. Several species owe their current regression at least in part to a change in climate; the progression of other species is probably also linked to this.

Federal level

The federal government has conducted a study to analyse the contribution it can make to climate change adaptation (available on [www.climatechange.be](http://www.climatechange.be)).

The federal contribution to the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan ([https://www.climat.be/index.php/download\\_file/view/1628/1207/](https://www.climat.be/index.php/download_file/view/1628/1207/)), adopted on 28 October 2016, aims to pursue a coordinated adaptation policy at the federal level. The federal contribution identifies 12 federal adaptation actions to meet the needs of: building capacity to assess, anticipate and respond to risks associated with the consequences of climate change (improved knowledge); anticipating and limiting risks and maximizing the potential benefits of climate change. The actions proposed under this contribution aims to integrate climate change adaptation in two sectors: transport and crisis management. Cross-cutting measures, related to the coherent integration of adaptation in different domains/policies and to awareness and understanding of the issues, are also identified.

A mid-term evaluation ([https://www.climat.be/index.php/download\\_file/view/2562/1207/](https://www.climat.be/index.php/download_file/view/2562/1207/)) of the implementation of the federal contribution to the National Adaptation Plan was conducted for the period 2016-2018. A final evaluation is planned for 2020.

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences develops through the Management Unit of the North Sea Mathematical Models and the Scheldt estuary ([www2.mumm.ac.be/coherens/applications.php](http://www2.mumm.ac.be/coherens/applications.php)) and with funding of development cooperation (CEBioS) a mathematical model to better understand fragile ecosystems such as coastal areas and mangroves in Asia and Latin America in order to be better able at developing integrated management plans taking into account the protection of sensitive areas.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 2.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate and monitor the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

L'étude et la surveillance des menaces des changements climatiques sur la biodiversité est satisfaisante.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/2#2.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 2.3

Related to objective 2.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate the potential impact on biodiversity of the internal trade (legal and illegal) of live animals and plants at a Belgian level and potentially adapt relevant regulations, including market regulation when appropriate.

Federal level

Reviewing/update of existing legislation to prevent introduction of IAS in Belgium (which will lead to an import/export ban of some IAS at federal level, ban of introduction of IAS into the environment in Brussels (art. 77 and 75 Ord. nature), etc.),

The Federal law on nature conservation of 12 July 2012 (modifying the law of 12 July 1973) foresees a number of provisions on IAS (regulate, suspend or prohibit the import, export and transit of non-indigenous plant and animal species and their remains). In implementation of this law, Pest Risk Assessments have been prepared in 2013 for 21 species.

The federal and regional governments agreed on continuing the state membership of IUCN.

A Belgian expert group was set up to identify the obstacles to tackle illegal wildlife trade in Belgium and to propose means of action. This group has handed over its conclusions to all competent administrations.

Others

WWF-Belgium endeavors against the illegal species trade: baseline studies, training, position papers, awareness events, etc.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 2.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Investigate the potential impact on biodiversity of the internal trade (legal and illegal) of live animals and plants at a Belgian level and potentially adapt relevant regulations, including market regulation when appropriate.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La surveillance des espèces exotiques envahissantes est intégrée dans les relevés régionaux concernant la biodiversité; elle est aussi bien étudiée sauf pour les invertébrés (moustiques, frelons asiatiques, etc.).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/2#2.3>.

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.1

Related to objective 3.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: At least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider landscapes.

Action 3.1.1

Flemish region

Extensive participatory process and consultations on Natura 2000 management programme and conservation objectives and implementation with other authorities and stakeholders aim to enhance the integration of species and habitat protection into land and water use policies and spatial planning. Specific cooperation agreements have been developed with each of those actors.

Consultation has been established with other administrations and with stakeholders on regional level and on-site level. The designation acts including the conservation objectives and priority measures were adopted by the Government of Flanders and have been published in October 2014: [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/natuurbeleid/natuur-en-natura-2000/natura\\_2000/Aanwijzingsbesluiten](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/natuurbeleid/natuur-en-natura-2000/natura_2000/Aanwijzingsbesluiten)

These objectives and measures have been screened in other plans with the aim to include adjustments for contributing to the implementation of the nature objectives: water, spatial planning and land use policies, existing nature and forest management plans. Consultations on site level with all relevant actors are now ongoing to develop the management measures for the implementation of the conservation objectives and establish divisions of tasks. On the basis of the new subsidy system for nature management and the new format of the nature management plan – approved in 2017 – land owners and users can obtain technical and financial support from the Agency for Nature & Forests. The subsidy system provides subsidies for keeping stand-still of biodiversity, providing public access to their sites, carrying out appropriate management measures to realise the nature objectives allocated to their site and for monitoring, designating site as nature reserve. The higher the ambition to implement the objectives the higher the subsidy level being obtained. The new format of nature management plan is meant for all types of green spaces with nature values.

See info on nature management plan: [Fact sheet on nature management plan and subsidies](#)

Data on relevant surfaces (end of 2018):

- nature and forest areas with recognised reserve status (= strict protection): 29.500 ha (2,22% of Flanders)
- Natura 2000 surface: 166.322 ha (12,3%) composed of 38 sites under Habitat directive, 24 sites under Birds directive – without counting overlapping surfaces
- Flemish Ecological Network: 92.976 ha
- certified forest: 23.894 ha
- total surface covered with ‘effective nature management’ based on an approved management plan: 88.888 ha
- surface of “nature” agri-environment agreements 9.690 ha

Taking into account the total surface (counting overlapping surfaces only once!) of areas designated with a status with legal nature protection regulation (Natura 2000, Flemish Ecological Network), the areas with approved nature management plan, certified forests – these cover together 16,6% of the land surface of Flanders.

Including the longer term nature agri-environment agreements including nature-based management measures – a surface of 17,3% is reached. But it should also be mentioned that as some Natura 2000 also include roads, some villages or other building sites this total surface is over-estimated. At the other hand large areas of industrial zones are under nature development and management practices in the framework of the Green Deal Biodiversity@Business and these surfaces have not yet been measured.

<http://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/>

## Brussels-Capital Region

The Regional Nature Plan (in development) foresees the following measures:

- \* Promote the participative management of public green spaces.
- \* Adopt an operational action plan for the conservation and the development of the Brussels ecological network.
- \* Install a ‘nature facilitator’ service aimed towards the developers of plans and projects.
- \* Promote good management practices of the green spaces.
- \* Adopt multifunction management plans for all regional parcs.

## Walloon Region

In January 2019, 1.3% of the Walloon territory is under strict nature protection status (réserves naturelles domaniales et agréées (RND et RNA), zones humides d'intérêt biologique (ZHIB), cavités souterraines d'intérêt scientifique (CSIS), les réserves forestières (RF)). These are central areas designated for priority species and habitats protection. Natura 2000 covers 13,11% of the Walloon territory (220 994 ha for 240 sites).

In Wallonia, we have other effective area-based conservation measure such as areas under « pro sylvia », forests areas under hydromorphe soils protection, forests areas benefiting from biodiversity conservation management plans. If we add these to the Natura 2000 network and strict nature reserves, avoiding any double counting, 16,6% of the Walloon territory is under Protected area or OECM (Aichi target 11).

If we take Forest certification (PEFC) into account (17,7% of the Walloon territory in 2017) and avoiding any double counting, we get up to 26% of our territory which is under protected area,



OECM and sustainable management. This later does not correspond to Aichi target 11 as forest certifications primary goal is not biodiversity conservation, but is still interesting to mention.

Others

NGOs such as Natuurpunt, Natagora, WWF-Belgium and others contribute significantly to the implementation of this action / objective by the purchase of important surfaces to turn them into nature reserves and foresee an adapted management.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: At least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider landscapes.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

C'est pratiquement 15,1% du territoire belge qui est désigné Natura 2000 (ce réseau comprenant des sites marins et terrestres). Seul un faible pourcentage des sites Natura 2000 (3,5%) bénéficie d'un plan de gestion approprié; on regrette également que la gestion différenciée des autres sites naturels ne soit pas d'application partout et la majorité d'espèces et types d'habitats se trouvent encore dans un état de conservation non-favorable.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.1.1>

**Obstacles and scientific and technical needs related to the measure taken:** Please describe what obstacles have been encountered and any scientific and technical needs for addressing these, including technical and scientific cooperation, capacity development activities or the need for guidance materials.

Enhancing full participation of land owners and users to take up responsibility for conserving the natural values on their private land requires time to build trust and understanding. The regular and extensive consultations with various groups of actors at regional and at site level, negotiations for division of tasks, capacity building and provision of technical support requires an enormous deployment of personnel and financial resources.

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

## Action 3.2

Related to objective 3.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: At least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider seascapes.

### Federal level

As mentioned above, the Federal authorities are competent for the environmental policy in the Belgian part of the North Sea. About 35.85% at sea are designated as Natura 2000 sites.

The sustainable management of human activities at sea is the ultimate goal for the North Sea Vision 2050 developed in 2017 and was used to develop the new Marine Spatial Plan (2020-2016). The 'MMM' (Marien Milieu Marin) act of 20 January 1999 on the protection of the marine environment and on the organisation of the marine spatial planning in sea areas under Belgian jurisdiction establishes the legal basis for the protection of the Belgian part of the North Sea against sea-related pollution and for the conservation, restoration and development of nature. The Marine Spatial Plan (Royal Decree of 20 March 2014) includes all marine protected areas (Vlaamse Banken, SBZ1, SBZ2, SBZ3 and the 'Baai van Heist'). In 2018 management plans for the Natura 2000 sites (all area's except 'Baai van Heist') in the Belgian Part of the North Sea were adopted. One Natura 2000 area designated in 2005, the Vlakte van de Raan, was nullified by the Court of Justice in 2008 but it remained at the European list of Sites of Community Importance. In the new Marine Spatial Plan (2020-2026) a solution was included for this area, and the designation of an enlarged MPA 'Vlakte van de Raan' is proposed.

In Belgium, the Marine Environment Service of the Federal Public Service for Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment is responsible for supporting the national implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD - 2008/56/EC). The Belgian transposition of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive took effect in the Royal Decree of 23/06/2010 concerning the marine strategy for the Belgian sea grounds.

In 2012, the initial assessment of the environmental status and the environmental impact of human activities was elaborated, as well as the description of a good environmental status. Furthermore, a number of environmental objectives and related indicators have to be established. In 2014, a monitoring programme was established and implemented. Finally, in 2016, the programme of measures was adopted and implementation of the measures started.

The definition of good ecological status and environmental objectives for the Belgian marine waters have been defined in 2012, in response to the Articles 9 and 10 of the MSFD, and was reviewed in 2018. For each of the 11 descriptors defined by the directive, among which descriptor 1 on biodiversity and descriptor 2 on exotic species, indicators and objectives are defined to achieve the good ecological status.

Belgium is a Party to the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR plays a crucial role as a regional cooperation structure in the implementation of the European Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD; Directive 2008/56/EC), introduced by the European Parliament and of the Council on 17 June 2008. Belgium contributed to the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2017 (see <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/intermediate-assessment-2017/>).

Belgium has undertaken an assessment of the Marine Environment, implementing the MSFD, that describes 11 qualitative descriptors for determining Good Environmental Status (GES). There is a synergy between the processes of OSPAR and the MSFD, and Belgium has used some of the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment outcomes, and indicators, for its national MSFD implementation. The draft of the assessment was submitted to a public consultation procedure from 15 May to 15 July 2018 (see <https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/openbare-raadpleging-de-gezondheidstoestand-van-onze-noordzee>).

Belgium is currently updating its marine spatial plan, that takes not only account of human activities, but also of biodiversity related issues. The plan was submitted to a public consultation procedure from 29 June to 28 September 2018 (see <https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/openbare-raadpleging-het-marien-ruimtelijk-plan-voor-het-belgische-deel-van-de-noordzee-2020-2026>).

### Action 3.2.1

#### Federal level

North Sea: The 'MMM' (Marien Milieu Marin) act of 20 January 1999 on the protection of the marine environment in sea areas under Belgian jurisdiction establishes the legal basis for the protection of the Belgian part of the North Sea against sea-related pollution and for the conservation, restoration and development of nature.

The Marine Spatial Plan (Royal Decree of 20 March 2014) includes all marine protected areas Vlaamse Banken, SBZ1, SBZ2, SBZ3 and the 'Baai van Heist). In 2018 management plans for the Natura 2000 sites (all area's except 'Baai van Heist') in the Belgian Part of the North Sea were adopted. One Natura 2000 area designated in 2005, the 'Vlakte van de Raan', was nullified by the Court of Justice in 2008 but it remained at the European list of Sites of Community Importance. In the new Marine Spatial Plan (2020-2026) a solution was included for this area, and the designation of an enlarged MPA 'Vlakte van de Raan' is proposed.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: At least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through the development of effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and are integrated into the wider seascapes.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

#### **Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

C'est pratiquement 15,1 % du territoire belge qui est désigné Natura 2000 (ce réseau comprenant des sites marins et terrestres). Seul un faible pourcentage des sites Natura 2000 (3,5 %) bénéficie d'un plan de gestion approprié; on regrette également que la gestion différenciée des autres sites naturels ne soit pas d'application partout et la majorité d'espèces et types d'habitats se trouvent

encore dans un état de conservation non-favorable. La surexploitation ne constitue pas une pression majeure sur les écosystèmes terrestre et marins. Par contre, une stratégie pour le milieu marin sera adoptée d'ici 2014 et celle ci devrait aussi se pencher sur la préservation des stocks de poissons.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.3

Related to objective 3.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ecosystems, their resilience and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing, *inter alia*, a green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems.

Flemish Region

Restoration of natural flood plains and river borders in the estuary of the Schelde and the IJzer, and other main river systems, restoration and nature development of nature and forest zones on military areas, sustainable management of nature and forest areas.

To realise the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and of species of European interest wide spread restoration and nature re-development projects have been carried out mainly through LIFE projects (in the period 2014-2018 about 22 LIFE projects by public authority and/or NGOs ongoing) and will be further initiated through the implementation plan for Natura 2000 and the Prioritised Action Framework. Under the EU 2014-2020 Rural Development programme 2 subsidy packages supported investments for Natura 2000 and (re-)afforestation projects.

Through afforestation projects and restoration of peatlands and wetlands contribution to fixation of carbon is enhanced.

Nature development projects are initiated to restore and extend natural values and develop infrastructure for public access. 19 projects are finalised – covering more than 6,000 ha realised natural surface, 11 projects are ongoing – having mainly focus on Natura 2000 objectives.

Walloon Region

The restoration of degraded ecosystems occurs mainly within LIFE-projects and habitat restoration projects within protected areas; an example are the LIFE-projects in relation to the peaty plateaus having a positive impact on the water quality, water circle and water reservoirs.

Walloon working group on restoration gathering representatives from the administration, stakeholders, landowners, ...

The Walloon rural development program 2014-2020: permet de soutenir la mise en œuvre de mesures à destination des secteurs agricole et sylvicole ainsi qu'en faveur de l'environnement et du développement économique des zones rurales. Il entend améliorer la compétitivité des secteurs agricole et sylvicole, renforcer la complémentarité entre ces secteurs et l'environnement et

favoriser un monde rural dynamique, en améliorant la qualité de vie et en aidant à la création d'emplois. Parmi les 17 mesures du programme, au nombre de 17, la mesure 7.6 « Restauration de pelouses, de landes et d'habitats situés en Natura 2000 et dans la structure écologique principale (SEP) » a pour objectif de soutenir les investissements nécessaires à la restauration et à l'entretien des habitats typiques de certaines zones situées dans la structure écologique principale dont fait partie Natura 2000.

### Brussels-Capital Region

Connectivity in the urban context is a concern in the Brussels Capital Region since 2002, when the Green and Blue Network programs were established.

The initial Green Network Program intends to gradually build a network of green spaces (parks, woods, forests and gardens) linked together by green corridors (green avenues, road and railway embankments, etc). The program emphasizes the cohesion and continuity of green spaces and semi-natural areas in the urban environment. Its purpose is to integrate the scenic, aesthetic, social, recreational and ecological functions of green spaces and develop their interconnectivity. One of the prime objectives of the Green Network Program is to increase biodiversity through the creation and adapted management of green areas.

The initial Blue Network Program aims to have an integrated, durable and ecologically justified management of open waterways in Brussels. The "blue network" is made up of small rivers, ponds and marshes. It is dedicated to the enhancement of natural values and biodiversity while maintaining the access of the public to the areas concerned.

The nature conservation order foresees in the writing of a nature report as support of the regional planning tool for Nature (The Nature Plan) that has been established for 5 years (2016-2020).

The first nature report states the following: re-establishing proper connectivity between and within the different zones and making it possible for species to move from one zone to another according to their needs (looking for food, breeding, migrating, etc.) is a key challenge in the urban setting.

Ecological corridors therefore need to be established or improved, in particular between the Natura 2000 sites. Connectivity could make use of existing facilities such as public parks and the Green Trail, the implementation of previous initiative (Green and Blue Network), private green spaces in residential districts and the open spaces within housing blocks, wasteland sites and the green spaces associated with roads and other transport infrastructure. Where there are extensive tracts of natural land, the construction of appropriately sized wildlife crossings over the busiest roads is a necessary to these measures.

Nature knows no administrative boundaries, so collaboration between the local and regional authorities on either side of the regional boundaries would be beneficial, as would the development of a metropolitan vision.

The Brussels Nature plan adopted on 14 April 2016, amongst the 27 measures, promote the multi-functionality of areas while preserving biodiversity at the same time. Jumping on the already existing blue and green networks, this plan promotes the development of the Brussels ecological network aiming at reconnecting areas of value. This Brussels Ecological Network is made of central, development and linking zones. If the central areas have an active protection status, (natural reserve or Natura 2000 status), the so-called development areas are under urbanistic pressure. Some of those areas already have the status of green areas under the regional plan soil assignment (like regional or municipal parks) which give them a certain level of protection. But most of them are private garden/property (building areas) with no strong protection status. The

Nature will target those areas in priorities for consolidating the Brussels ecological network and has already developed ad-hoc and ready to use tools like the referential for a sustainable management of green public parks and the eco-potential tool that targets real state and building promoters to maximize the integration of biodiversity into their project.

#### Federal level

In 2012, the increase of the ecosystem resilience is one of the underpinning elements of the implementation of the Marine Strategy Directive (Belgische Staat 2012. Omschrijving van Goede Milieutoestand en vaststelling van Milieudoelen voor de Belgische mariene wateren. Kaderrichtlijn Mariene Strategie – Art 9 & 10. BMM, Federale Overheidsdienst Volksgezondheid, Veiligheid van de Voedselketen en Leefmilieu, Brussel, België, 34 pp.).

In 2016 a new Royal Decree on the designation and management of protected areas in the Belgian Part of the North Sea was adopted. This decree has to improve the implementation of the Birds- and Habitat Directives in the Belgian Part of the North Sea. The adoption of this decree was followed by the adoption of conservation objectives and of the management plans for the Marine Natura 2000 sites.

#### Action 3.3.1

##### Green Infrastructure development

In 2017 an overview of green infrastructure related measures and projects was compiled upon notification of the EU: <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/countries/gi/belgium>.

#### Flemish Region

Main implementation policies and actions for GI:

The Flemish Ecological Network (Vlaams Ecologisch Netwerk, VEN) is based on the Spatial Structural Plan Flanders (Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen), while the Nature Decree (Natuurdecreet) deals with the regulation of the VEN. The VEN comprises large natural units and large natural units in development and will comprise 125,000 ha. It partly overlaps with Natura 2000. An Integral Connecting and Supporting Network (Integraal Verwevend en Ondersteunden Netwerk, IVON) buffers, supports and connects these core natural areas. The government of Flanders uses positive incentives to promote ecological quality of these supporting areas (Agentschap Natuur en Bos, n.d.).

The Agency for Nature and Forest and the Department for Environment (“Omgeving”) Flanders issued guidelines for the design of a local green vision, to support municipalities in integrating green space into urban structures in order to take advantage of the multiple benefits (Agentschap Natuur en Bos, 2016a).

Other planning processes contributing to restoration and development of GI include the designation of Natura 2000 sites with the establishment of conservation objectives and priority measures, species protection programmes identifying specific habitats within and outside Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000, and nature areas (reserves and domains of the regional and local authorities) form core areas of the ecological network. Several measures under the Rural Development Programme include nature development and restoration in Natura 2000 sites, re-forestation and forest management measures, agri-environment schemes for species protection measures and nature-oriented management of grasslands, hedges and borders.

Spatial planning policy includes development of green-blue network systems between and within rural and urbanised areas and their city parks. A new long-term vision on Urban Greenery and Urban Forestry is currently under development by the Agency for Nature and Forests. The vision should inspire the many stakeholders involved and lead to a strategy which seeks to drastically

increase the amount, quality and linkages of nature and greenery in the built environment (urban and peri-urban). The strategy should change business-as-usual mind-sets and improve mainstreaming of GI in many other policy areas. Ultimately, it should lead to choosing the GI options and variants in urban and spatial planning, transport infrastructure, etc. Flanders published a Restoration Prioritisation Framework in 2016 (Prioriteitenkader voor ecosysteemherstel in Vlaanderen), as required under the EU Biodiversity Strategy Target 2 (Action 6a) (Agentschap Natuur en Bos, 2016b).

Examples of main projects:

- The Hoge Kempen National Park is Belgium's only national park. It contributes to the social cohesion and regeneration of a former coal mining region that was at risk of economic decline. Innovative approaches to developing the park's infrastructure have helped balance economic and biodiversity objectives, providing 400 jobs and direct annual economic benefits of EUR 20 million (European Commission, 2017).
- The 'Nature in your neighbourhood' programme in Flanders promotes greening elements in urban and residential areas, as well as research on improvement of local life through public and private green space (European Commission, 2017). The project call for local authorities to invest in innovative greening projects is available at: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/projectoproep-groen>
- Yearly project call for co-financing of nature management and restoration measures to contribute to the realisation of the Natura 2000 conservation objectives: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/beleid-wetgeving/subsidies/natuurprojectovereenkomst>
- Examples at local level include: subsidies for schools to green the school play grounds (<http://www.pimpjespeelplaats.be/>); stimulating actions for development of greening buildings and immediate surroundings, as implemented for example by the City of Antwerp: <https://www.antwerpen.be/nl/info/52d5051f39d8a6ec798b47e4/een-geveltuin-aanleggen#!>
- All LIFE Nature and Biodiversity projects contribute to restoration and development of the nature areas and often connectivity zones between nature sites, and thus contribute to Green Infrastructure development. An example of a relevant project is LIFE Oostkustpolders - Grassland restoration in the East Coast polders (07/2013-12/2019), whose main objective is the large-scale restoration of typical grassland habitats in the polders of the eastern Belgian coast (Natuurpunt, n.d.). A new LIFE Clima project, SPARC, has been approved for the development of natural flooding areas in the Schelde river basin supporting climate adaptation by restoring and enhancing green infrastructure.
- The Sigma plan is a multifunctional project that aims to protect Flanders against flooding of the Schelde and tributary rivers and at the same time boost natural values, recreation and economy (Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV and Agentschap Natuur en Bos, n.d.). Twelve newly created floodplains were effective during storms in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Parts of the natural areas surrounding the Schelde are being restored and designated as Natura 2000 areas. In total, around 4000 ha of nature will be restored until 2030 (Agentschap Natuur en Bos, 2016a).
- Nature development in the harbour area of Antwerp: The Strategic Plan for the Antwerp harbour areas describes how GI should contribute to reaching several objectives, including European nature goals, developing the harbour and protecting against floods (Agentschap Natuur en Bos, 2016a).
- The Interreg '2B Connect' project is committed to increase biodiversity on industrial sites in the cross-border region of the Netherlands and Belgium. A more nature friendly design and management of these sites will create stepping stones and corridors for plants and animals. '2B Connect' supports companies by providing the necessary tools.

- The Sonian forest near the centre of Brussels is divided in several smaller entities which are separated by major roads. The ‘LIFE+ OZON’ project reconnects the natural habitats across the three Belgian regions by constructing several wildlife crossings. In 2015, three new ecotunnels were constructed under the ring road and 18 existing tunnels were restored in order to allow a passage for animals. In 2016, the construction of a 60 m wide wildlife crossing started and in 2017 the project will end with the construction of a 24 km ecofence
- A transboundary project developed an ecoduct structure restoring connectivity between nature sites of Flanders and Netherlands: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/pers-nieuws/nieuws/feest-op-het-ecoduct>
- The City of Lommel and an organisation of companies initiated a project to develop the open spaces in the industrial zone into natural green areas to support green infrastructure and to enhance butterfly populations in their surroundings. The project area is being extended continuously and also includes educational activities with schools: <http://www.locdevlinder.be/>
- The city of Genk participates in the Horizon 2020 project COproductionN with NatureE for City Transitioning, INnovation and Governance (CONNECTING) which aims to co-develop the policy and practices necessary to scale up urban resilience, innovation and governance via nature-based solutions. An open innovation ecosystem approach bringing together city governments, SMEs, academia and civic society will be used to co-produce usable and actionable knowledge in all cities.
- Antwerp is one of the cities participating in the EnRoute project (Enhancing Resilience of Urban Ecosystems through Green Infrastructure) implemented in the framework of EU MAES, which runs from 2017 until 2018. The project aims to introduce the MAES approach into the local policy arena, connecting the governance levels horizontally and vertically, with a view to contributing to the further deployment of GI in cities and in urban contexts. In the “city labs”, the URBAN-MAES framework will be implemented using local data, involving local stakeholders in the process and focusing on specific issues (Maes *et al.* 2017).
- ‘Green Deals on Business@Biodiversity’ launched in 2018 as agreements between (private) partners and the Government of Flanders. They support companies, NGOs, knowledge institutions and other organisations in initiatives for greening their surroundings. More than 100 companies already subscribed.
- Other projects for nature development integrating objectives for nature, recreation and tourism include:
  - Bosland: <http://www.bosland.be/>
  - Parkbos Gent: <http://www.parkbos.be/situering-en-site>

## Walloon Region

Many measures contribute to the green infrastructure in the Walloon region via tools and measures in place to preserve and restore natural habitats (threatened habitats as well as the more common ones):

- \* agri-environmental measures
- \* PEFC certification of forests
- \* 'Plans Communaux de Développement de la Nature', delayed mowing, River contracts
- \* agreements with the private sector (quarries, electricity companies, railroad companies ...)
- \* the natural zones, green spaces and forests under the ‘Code wallon de l’Aménagement du Territoire, de l’Urbanisme et du Patrimoine’
- \* catalogue of actions of the ‘réseau Wallonie nature’
- \* the new Air-Climate-Energy Plan (PACE). Walloon strategy to adapt to climate change
- \* some agreements with the quarries, energy... sectors.



\* Landscape Platform paysage DGO4: [www.plateformepaysagedewallonie.be](http://www.plateformepaysagedewallonie.be). Landscape charter in Natural parks.

The Water Code and some resulting plans and programs:

- \* the 'Plans d'Assainissement par Sous-bassin Hydrographiques' PASH define the decontamination and clean up regime for the relevant areas
- \* the programme for the sustainable management of nitrogen is the application of the Nitrate Directive (part of the Water Framework Directive)
- \* les plans de gestion par bassin hydrographiques
- \* les PARIS (programmes d'actions sur les rivières par approche intégrée et sectorisée): projet visant à intégrer les exigences diverses de la DCE, de NATURA 2000, de la Directive Inondation, ... dans la gestion courante des cours d'eau en planifiant les interventions à réaliser à court et à moyen terme.

### Brussels-Capital Region

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measures:

- \* to ensure an adequate protection and management of the sites with a high biological value and to ensure the implementation of the ecological network
- \* to develop an integrated vision for the preservation and restoration of (ancient) agricultural zones and sites
- \* to implement the management plans within the protected sites the different policy levels competent for the ecological management of public green spaces should adopt a common language
- \* to develop and implement plans for the multifunctional management of green spaces

The Blue Network Programme: this programme aims to have an integrated, durable and ecologically justified management of open waterways in Brussels. The "blue network" is made up of small rivers, ponds and marshes. It is dedicated to the enhancement of natural values and biodiversity while maintaining the access of the public to the areas concerned.

A new Plan for water management adopted by the BCR in 2017 for the period 2016-2021 is in line with this programme (See chapter II, item 4.4 on water management).

### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ecosystems, their resilience and their services are maintained and enhanced by establishing, *inter alia*, a green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems.

### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

### **Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

C'est pratiquement 15,1% du territoire belge qui est désigné Natura 2000 (ce réseau comprenant

des sites marins et terrestres). Seul un faible pourcentage des sites Natura 2000 (3,5 %) bénéficie d'un plan de gestion approprié; on regrette également que la gestion différenciée des autres sites naturels ne soit pas d'application partout et la majorité d'espèces et types d'habitats se trouvent encore dans un état de conservation non-favorable. La surexploitation ne constitue pas une pression majeure sur les écosystèmes terrestre et marins. Par contre, une stratégie pour le milieu marin sera adoptée d'ici 2014 et celle ci devrait aussi se pencher sur la préservation des stocks de poissons. Des stratégies régionales et le Plan national d'adaptation aux changements climatiques sont en cours d'élaboration; il s'agira de veiller à ce que les mesures d'adaptation aux changements climatiques (et dans la mesure du possible ces mesures devraient utiliser la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques) n'affectent pas la biodiversité et que l'adaptation de la biodiversité à ces changements soient bien prise en compte.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.3>

### **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

#### Action 3.4

Related to objective 3.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Develop and implement action plans so as to ensure the maintenance or rehabilitation of our most threatened species to a favourable conservation status.

#### Flemish Region

For the protection and management of species a new Executive law for species protection was adopted 15th May 2009 that includes horizontal measures for the management and protection of species with specific attention to species of European interest. For the development of species protection programmes a format, procedure and prioritization of species was prepared.

The evaluation of the status of biodiversity in Flanders and the follow-up of the implementation of this policy plan are carried out by means of 21 biodiversity indicators, which are closely linked to SEBI European biodiversity indicators. The indicators are published and regularly updated on the biodiversity indicators website ([www.biodiversityindicators.be](http://www.biodiversityindicators.be)), on the website of the plan and on the environment indicators website ([www.milieuraapport.be](http://www.milieuraapport.be)). Pages in English are available.

- From the 2013 Habitats directive report:

More than 50% of the species assessed (34 of 59) are in very unfavourable status of conservation, 10 species (16%) in a moderate status and for 6 species (10%) there are not enough data for evaluation. Only 9 species, 3 amphibians, 1 fish and 5 bat species have a good status of conservation. Comparing with 2007 this indicates that 14 species improved in status but at the same time the status deteriorated for another 17 species. The assessment for the 2018 reporting is ongoing but provisional data showed for some species groups further improvement.

- Review of the Red List Species: <https://www.inbo.be/en/search-flanders-red-lists>:

- Overview: <https://www.inbo.be/nl/natuurindicator/rode-lijststatus-groep>  
Presently, there are validated Red Lists available for amphibians, breeding birds, butterflies, higher plants, dragonflies, ladybugs, ground beetles, moths, reptiles, grasshoppers, wood-dwelling beetles, water bugs, freshwater fish and mammals. For the calculation of this indicator only the recently validated Red Lists are used.

Of the 2,624 species on the validated Red Lists, 182 species, or 7%, have disappeared from Flanders in the course of the last century. Of the remaining 2,442 species, almost one in three are 'Seriously endangered', 'Endangered' or 'Vulnerable'. Their populations have declined sharply over the research period (differently according to species groups) and / or have reached a critical minimum so that the species is about to disappear. This is the case, for example, for the strawberry butterfly, the hazel mouse, the garlic pad and the gray bunting. The Red List status differs greatly between the different species groups. The category 'Regional extinct' varies from 27% in the case of butterflies to around 4% in the breeding birds and 0% in the case of reptiles.

The disappearance or decline of species is a consequence of various factors such as the deterioration of the surface suitable habitat, the fragmentation of the habitat and declining habitat quality. Also species from the agricultural area are increasingly on the Red List.

- Red List assessment of Breeding birds in 2016: of 161 species assessed against IUCN categories: RE - Regional Extinct 6 (3,7 %), CR – Serious Endangered 25 (15,5 %) - EN-Endangered 16 (9,9 %), VU - Vulnerable 20 (12,4 %), NT – almost endangered 25 (15,5 %), LC – not endangered 67 (41.6%) DD – not enough data 2 (1,2%).

### Operational Plan of the Agency for Nature and Forests

The objectives and projects implement the vision to realise more and better nature, forests and green spaces and to bring nature to the heart of people in the middle of society (See: [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Over-ons/Missie\\_en\\_visie.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Over-ons/Missie_en_visie.aspx)).

On policy implementation for species protection: development of 4 protection programmes for prioritised species or species groups per year, to be adopted by the minister competent for nature, after consultation with actors and stakeholders. End of 2018 there are 17 species protection programmes adopted and being implemented. <https://www.natuurenbos.be/SBP>

Main impacts identified include: agricultural practices, urbanization and infrastructure development inducing fragmentation of open green areas, use changes and degradation, climate change, fertilizer and pesticides. For many species the required restoration and maintenance of their living habitats also need action outside protected areas or Natura 2000.

Actions are undertaken to inform the public on the protected species as well as on the procedures to follow when species caused damages to private property: (info in Dutch) <https://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/natuur-en-milieu/dieren/beschermde-diersoorten>

Belgium also signed the Coalition of the Willing for pollinators:

<https://promotepollinators.org/2016/12/12/signing-of-the-declaration-on-the-coalition-of-the-willing-on-pollinators/>

For the follow-up of the processes under the Coalitions' work and for the implementation of the EU Strategy on Pollinators, a Belgian Pollinators working group has been established to enhance initiation and follow-up of restoration and conservation of pollinators, compile the actions undertaken and exchange knowledge and expertise.

Flanders also supports the yearly event of European Land Owners organisation on the Bee Award: <https://www.europeanlandowners.org/awards/bee-award>

### Antwerp port area

With the authority of the port of Antwerp and the NGO Natuurpunt a site-specific species protection programme for the Antwerp port area was developed in 2011 and formally approved in 2014:

<http://www.portofantwerp.com/nl/natuur>. The objective is to preserve and manage up to 5% of the port area, about 600 ha, as suitable habitat for the species of European importance. In the course of 2019 the implementation will be evaluated and the programme will be revised for the next 5 years.

## Walloon Region

### Species status

Red list species: According to the red lists drawn up for different groups of species, 31% of the animal and plant species studied are threatened with extinction<sup>1</sup> at the Walloon level and almost 9% have disappeared from the regional territory. For fish, reptiles, day butterflies and dragonflies, more than half of the species are in an unfavourable situation. (see SOER 2017 FFH5).

Species of Community interest according to Natura 2000: For the period 2007 - 2012, the conservation status of species was considered unfavourable for 63% of the number of species concerned in the Continental biogeographical region and 71% in Atlantic biogeographical region. Among the pressures exerted on species, the most frequently identified are agricultural intensification (affecting more than 3/4 of species), the fragmentation of favourable habitats and the resulting loss of connectivity, the incidence of pollution (especially eutrophication<sup>5</sup>), land take<sup>6</sup> (especially in the Atlantic area) and intensification of forestry (especially in continental areas) (see SOER2017 FFH6).

Common birds: The populations of common birds in Wallonia are generally in long-term decline: -25% between 1990 and 2015. Of the 75 species considered, 15 were significantly increasing over the period, 18 were stable, 41 were declining and one species showed an uncertain trend. Farmland birds showed the most marked decrease (-47%). The woodland bird curve shows a moderate decline (-11%) with a trend which may have been reversing since 2011. As regards generalist species, populations have fallen to a level 20% below the 1990 average population size (see SOER2017 FFH8).

Bats: The populations of the bats being monitored (15 taxa) almost tripled between 1995 and 2016. Of the 13 representative taxa, 12 were significantly increasing and 1 taxon showed an uncertain trend (the latter, the Western barbastelle, is a very rare forest species in Wallonia, and moreover, barely present underground in winter). The most striking increase was in the populations of Geoffroy's bat, the Greater mouse-eared bat, and the Greater Horseshoe bat. Long-eared bats showed the most moderate increase. These apparent increases are very encouraging but should be qualified: they could reflect the improvement in prospecting techniques and the amplification of observer networks. Furthermore, the total numbers remain low and far removed from those observed in the 1950s, prior to the significant decline recorded in the second half of the 20th century. A study has reported major changes in the composition of bat populations in Wallonia by comparing the results of ringing campaigns for bats wintering between 1939 and 1952 with the results of winter counts between 1995 and 2008: the specific diversity within hibernation sites decreased by half between these periods (see SOER2017 FFH9).

Badger: No significant variations were observed between 2010 and 2016, reflecting population stability.

### Species action plans

Action plans are ongoing for the sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), the adder (*Vipera berus*), the Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*) and 3 butterflies (LIFE papillon) (*Euphydryas aurinia*, *Lycaena helle* and *Lycaena dispar*). An integrated LIFE project also foresees several action plans:

- Amphibians: *Bombina variegata*, *Alytes obstetricans*, *Triturus cristatus*, *Rana lessonae*
- Bats: *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Reed birds: *Botaurus stellaris*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Acrocephalus arundinacea*, *Locustella luscinioides*
- Farmland birds: *Circus cyaneus*, *Circus pygargus*

And part of the implementation of action plans on mammals (*Barbastella barbastellus*) and amphibians (*Bombina variegata*, *Alytes obstetricans*, *Triturus cristatus*, *Rana lessonae*) and 2 plant species (*Luronium natans* et *Bromus grossus*).

Sand Martin: a LIFE project « Quarries » takes measure for several swallow specie, including the sand martin: <http://www.lifeinquarries.eu/actions/#mesuretemporaires>.

A reintroduction program for *Lyrurus tetrrix* also undergoing in the Hautes Fagnes since 2017.

- Pour ce qui concerne les gestionnaires cours d'eau, toutes catégories confondues, de nombreuses passes à poissons ont été réalisées au cours des années passées.
- La problématique de la libre circulation des poissons est aussi prise en compte dans le cadre du renouvellement des permis/concessions/autorisations des centrales hydroélectriques.
- Operations de repoissonnements d'espèces migratrices (saumon atlantique et de truite de mer) ;
- Hirondelle de rivage : Le Life in « Quarries » qui favorise différentes espèces dans les carrières dont l'Hirondelle de rivage : <http://www.lifeinquarries.eu/actions/#mesuretemporaires>.
- plan d'action Hirondelles (essentiellement rustiques et de fenêtrés), avec la mise en œuvre de différentes actions sur 5 communes pilotes en 2017.

- Concerning the black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*), although no action plan has been drafted recently, reintroduction of individuals have taken place in the Hautes Fagnes in 2017 and 2018.

### Brussels-Capital Region

The coordinated regional law about nature

A new coordinated regional law about nature was adopted in March 2012, consisting of 119 articles and 8 annexes, with the general aim of contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of components of biodiversity. Measures taken under this nature law are intended to:

- maintain or restore to a favourable conservation status natural habitats and species of fauna and flora of community and regional interest;
- contribute to the establishment of an ecological network in Brussels;
- contribute to the integration of biodiversity in an urban context.

This regional law requires the elaboration of a regional plan for nature, which should be adopted at the latest two years after the coming into force of the law (articles 6 and 8 to 11). It also foresees the elaboration of more specific action plans (art. 6 and 12 to 14). These action plans would aim at:

- the improvement of the conservation status of natural species and habitats.
- the struggle against biodiversity threats such as invasive alien species.
- the encouragement of sustainable use of biodiversity components.

[http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu\\_du\\_site/News/Ord\\_Nature\\_Natuur\\_2012.pdf?langtype=2060](http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu_du_site/News/Ord_Nature_Natuur_2012.pdf?langtype=2060)

### Regional Plan for Nature

The Regional Plan for Nature foresees to “Take active protection measures for plant and animal heritage species” and to develop and implement action plans for the restoration and development of species population with a regional of community interest. This implies that by 2016, BCR will work and adopt action plans in order to improve the conservation of:

- swallows and swifts, or more broadly, species of regional interest nesting in buildings. Subsidies have been given to municipalities and association in order to protect and promote swallows and swifts;
- species of wetlands and aquatic environments (ponds action plan) and more specifically for amphibians and yellow iris. Subsidies have been given to municipalities and association in order to

- protect and promote aquatic environment. Two new regional natural reserves in the Neerpede valley have been officially designated for a better protection of the aquatic environment;
- pollinators action plan. The strategy is under construction based on an ongoing monitoring process.

#### Federal level

##### The harbour porpoise

As part of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, an environmental objective has been defined for the harbour porpoise in the Belgian part of the North Sea. This objective aims to reduce by 2020 the annual bycatch levels of this species to levels below 1.7% of its population size (which is also the OSPAR Ecological Quality Objective EcoQO).

##### Bee Health, Our Health: Federal Bee Plans

In 2013, a specific plan dedicated to the preservation of pollinators, in particular, bees, has been carried out. It includes about 30 actions and measures which deal with six main issues: the risk assessment and management for pollinators (including pesticides risk analysis), the integration of pollination in other policies and measures (including economy), the orientation of markets in favour of pollinators (in the broader framework of biodiversity and ecosystem services), the monitoring of honey bees and wild bees, animal health policy and the traceability of hives (for honey bees only).

This first plan established a collaboration methodology between policy makers, researchers and civil society in general. A “bee governance” at federal and national levels through which concrete actions could be carried out but that needed a follow-up for several long-term projects. That is why the federal government adopted a second Federal Bee Plan 2017-2019. This plan has 4 objectives: assist the bee-keepers, better understand the causes of bee decline, better control the risks for bee health and engage all the stakeholders.

[www.health.belgium.be/fr/le-plan-federal-abeilles-2017-2019-0](http://www.health.belgium.be/fr/le-plan-federal-abeilles-2017-2019-0)

#### Action 3.4.1

##### Flemish Region - see above on species protection programmes

Implementation of Species Protection Programmes: Development and implementation of action plans, contracts with land owners for species protection measures under the Rural Development Programme (meadow birds, hamster, farmland birds), financial support for bird rehabilitation centres, research for re-introduction projects (e.g. fish and amphibian species).

Priority species of European concern have been listed for development and implementation of species action programmes – policy aim to have 4 new programmes adopted per year.

##### Brussels-Capital Region

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measure: to develop and implement action plans for the restoration and development of species population with a regional or community interest, with priority given to wetland and aquatic species.

##### Walloon Region

Chapter II of the law on the conservation of nature protects a list of animal and plant species.

The law on the conservation of nature allows also that municipalities take more stringent measures for the protection of animal and plant species. This could be a good way to protect particular sites such as the migration routes of amphibians. Unfortunately, municipalities rarely use this possibility.

Action plans for species are running for the sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*), the common European adder (*Vipera berus*), the natterjack toad (*Bufo calamita*), the marsh fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) and the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*).

More localised actions are implemented for the freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) and the whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*).

Other projects aim to improve the status of threatened populations of fish species.

Several LIFE-project and restoration projects are favourable to populations of threatened species (three butterfly species are also targeted: *Euphydryas aurinia*, *Lycaena helle* and *Lycaena dispar*).

Study and scientific monitoring in order to restore populations of the Atlantic salmon; inventory of obstacles for fish circulation in the hydrographical network, etc.

Federal level

As part of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, an environmental objective has been defined for the harbour porpoise in the Belgian part of the North Sea. This objective aims to reduce by 2020 the annual bycatch levels of this species to levels below 1.7% of its population size (which is also the OSPAR Ecological Quality Objective EcoQO).

Data links for status and trends on main species groups:

<http://www.biodiversityindicators.be>

<https://www.inbo.be/nl/natuurindicator/de-staat-van-instandhouding-van-de-soorten-van-de-habitatrichtlijn>

<https://www.inbo.be/nl/natuurindicator/oppervlakte-beheerovereenkomsten-met-natuurdoelen>

Data links for information on projects:

<http://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/>

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Develop and implement action plans so as to ensure the maintenance or rehabilitation of our most threatened species to a favourable conservation status.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des plans d'action pour la conservation *in situ* des espèces sont développés et mis en oeuvre dans les Régions ou sont en préparation, c'est toutefois 20% à 70% des espèces qui sont menacées en fonction des groupes.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.4>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.5

Related to objective 3.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Adopt an integrated strategy for *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity together with measures for its implementation.

*Ex-situ* conservation: European and international projects through universities and scientific institutions: e.g. KULeuven and the INIBAP project on bananas strains (see below), ENSCONET or the European native seed conservation network through the National Botanic Garden of Belgium ([www.ensconet.eu](http://www.ensconet.eu)); Universiteit Gent and the Belgian Co-Ordinated Collections of Microorganisms (BCCM), a member of the World Federation of Culture Collections.

The Laboratory of Tropical Crop Improvement (**KU Leuven**) focuses its research on breeding tropical crops by integrating conventional breeding with molecular breeding, functional genomics and phenotyping. The Laboratory also actively contributes to safeguarding biodiversity. It hosts the Bioersity International office in Belgium.

The improvement of the livelihood of subsistence farmers in the tropics through sustainable agriculture by acting as a bridge between fundamental research on model plants and applied research in support of the improvement of tropical crops, with special emphasis on banana and plantain.

The International Transit Centre hosts the world banana collection consisting of nearly 1544 accessions. This is conserved under *in vitro* conditions (medium term), as a cryopreserved collection and lyophilized leaf collection. Therefore a MOU was signed between Bioersity International and KU Leuven.

European zoos keep approximately 6500 animal species in their collections. About 400 species, of which 250 are listed as endangered in the IUCN Red List, are closely monitored and managed within European Endangered Species Breeding Programmes (EEPs) and European Studbooks (ESBs) under auspices of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). Generally, these populations are managed to minimise inbreeding and to retain as much genetic diversity of the wild population as possible.

To be able to successfully manage these breeding programmes all zoos collect as much data as possible from all individual animals in their collection, to ultimate allow the construction a reliable pedigree. Such pedigree information is usually collated and maintained in a studbook by a dedicated studbook keeper. **Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp** staff members, for example, maintain the European studbooks for the Mexican military macaw, the Eurasian black vulture and Fischer's Turaco, and collect the pedigree records for Okapi, Bonobo, Congo peafowl and Golden-headed lion tamarins in a global studbook.

**Pairi Daiza** has been a member of EAZA (the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums) since 1994, which groups 400 institutions. The initiation objective was to promote international cooperation for the conservation of endangered species, including establishment in the EEP programmes. Pairi Daiza actively participates in about 40 of these programmes; including the European sea eagle (Red Sea) and the Siberian cranes. For more information, see: [www.eaza.net](http://www.eaza.net).

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Adopt an integrated strategy for *ex situ* conservation of biodiversity together with measures for its implementation.



**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Un groupe de travail national a été mis en place pour coordonner les nombreux projets de conservation *ex situ* entrepris à l'échelle du pays.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.5>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.6

Related to objective 3.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Take measures to minimise the impact of the identified processes and activities threatening biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Flemish Region

Stricter control on the use of impact assessments of new developments allow to introduce more general measures in the projects to reduce pressures on environment and nature as regulated through the environment permits procedures. Enforcement of existing environmental law and imposed restrictions on emissions, land use changes and water use also contribute to reducing pressures. Consultations are ongoing to integrate the value of ecosystems and ecosystem services in the Environmental impact assessment procedure and regulation.

For the assessments of projects/plans/programmes with possible impacts on Natura 2000 and the relevant natural values an online system has been developed for a scoping of possible effects and to identify whether further studies of impact may be required:

<https://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/passendebeoordeling>.

Pollution

The Decree on integrated water management contains concrete requirements with respect to riparian zones along water bodies with specific requirements on soil cultivation, use of pesticides and manure use. Water quality in general terms improved, although the required levels are not yet reached for all chemicals in all water ways: <http://www.vmm.be/water/kwaliteit-oppervlaktewater>.

The Manure Decree and implementation programme MAP 5 transposes the European Nitrate Directive action program (for the period 2015-2018) into Flemish legislation and contains the required regulations on distance rules for manure use, timing of manure use and other requirements (sleep slopes, snow cover, green cover, residual nitrate in soil (soil and crop specific values), mandatory advise on manure use in horticulture) and overall reduction measures of manure chemicals. Excess fosfates and nitrates in soil pose the main problems for effective revering of habitats and the related ecosystem functions:

[https://www.vlm.be/nl/.../Mestbank/.../MAP5/MAP5 deel 1 algemeen deel.pdf](https://www.vlm.be/nl/.../Mestbank/.../MAP5/MAP5_deel_1_algemeen_deel.pdf)

Compared to the previous MAP the regulations are stricter with lower levels that can be permitted taking into account vulnerability of environmental (especially eco-hydrological) and natural values:

[www.vilt.be/map-5-is-een-duidelijke-verstrenging-van-de-wetgeving](http://www.vilt.be/map-5-is-een-duidelijke-verstrenging-van-de-wetgeving).

<http://www.milieurapport.be/nl/feitencijfers/sectoren/landbouw/>

Stricted enforcement of the follow-up of lower levels of manure release is especially important for vulnerable Natura 2000 habitats and habitats of species for which a specific Programmatic Approach on nitrogen was set up: <https://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/pas>.

The use of pesticides and herbicides by local authorities in public domains or parks is forbidden since January 2004. Pesticide reduction programmes in agricultural practices are promoted through stimulating measures under the Rural Development Programme and codes of good practices.

<http://www.milieurapport.be/nl/feitencijfers/milieuthemas/verspreiding-van-pesticiden/druk-op-oppevlaktewater-door-pesticiden/druk-op-het-waterleven-door-gewasbescherming-seq-en-seq/>

### Fragmentation

Due to high urbanised character and highly concentrated transport infrastructure in Flanders fragmentation of green open spaces forms one of the main pressures for ecological connectivity and biodiversity. The construction of green bridges (also known as wildlife overpasses) is one of the responses of the Flemish government to address this issue. Experiences on establishing green bridges show that it is a complex process with a high variety of stakeholders and interests, which can make progress slow and laborious, besides sometimes requiring very high financial investments. In the first phase attention was given to enhance awareness for the main actors at regional and local level and set up partnerships:

<https://www.lne.be/beleid-over-ontsnippering>

Several projects have been carried out for the defragmentation of roads dividing important natural areas by construction of ecoducts, and on river systems by installations resolving fish migration barriers (till now 53% of the barriers on main rivers solved).

One of the largest ecoducts have been constructed, with EU co-financing under LIFE project OZON, for re-connecting 2 main parts of the Soniën Forest: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/projecten/vlaams-brabant/ozon>

### Climate change

The publication of the Policy Plan of Flanders on Climate Change also includes measures related to nature and values of ecosystems. In studies on valuation of ecosystems services contribution of ecosystems and of green spaces in cities on air quality and on absorption capacity of CO<sub>2</sub> delivers arguments on the role of healthy ecosystems and more green spaces for adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Such data help to initiate more projects on greening the environment and on restoration of ecosystems.

The Flemish Institute for Technological Research (VITO) and the universities of Antwerp and Ghent assessed the value of the Natura 2000 network in Flanders. The 166,000 hectares of protected areas in Flanders were shown to provide, among others, the following benefits: more than 34 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> stored each year, 4,000 to 8,000 tons of fine dust eliminated from the air each year, 16 million m<sup>3</sup> of water purified each year, a gain of 2100 healthy life years (for about 1.8 million people), and 26 to 43 million visitors annually. The authors concluded that the Natura 2000 areas in Flanders have a total value for society of EUR 800 million to 1.2 billion. This is considered an underestimate given the fact that only 11 of the known 36 ecosystem services were taken into account. The study is now being revised based on new data and mapping of ecosystem services.

[https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/files/8636883/Meiresonne\\_Turkelboom\\_2015\\_BiodiversiteitAlsBasisVoorEcosysteemdienstenInVlaanderen.pdf](https://pureportal.inbo.be/portal/files/8636883/Meiresonne_Turkelboom_2015_BiodiversiteitAlsBasisVoorEcosysteemdienstenInVlaanderen.pdf).

Based on new data and maps more projects are stimulated through yearly project calls with financial support. Through such afforestation projects and restoration of peatlands and wetlands the contribution to fixation of carbon is enhanced.

## Walloon Region

Several general measures are implemented in different frameworks to reduce pressure on the ecosystems:

- the law on nature conservation
- one of the objectives of the Water Code ('Code de l'Eau') is to prevent supplementary degradation as well as to preserve and enhance the state of the aquatic ecosystems as well as the wetlands depending on them
- the 'Circulaire Biodiversité en Forêt'
- the new Forestry Code
- agri-environmental measures
- the agricultural conditionality
- The Environment Code and certain resulting dispositions:
  - \* the environmental permit and 'permis unique'
  - \* environment impact assessments as foreseen in the Environment Code
- The evaluation of incidences is imposed for all plans and projects that could affect a Natura 2000 site in a significant way.

## Pollution

List of Walloon tools and measures in place for pollution:

- The Forestry Code forbids the utilisation of pesticides. The only exceptions are defined by the Walloon government to combat certain diseases or invasive alien species that threaten the indigenous fauna and flora.
- The Forestry Code also offers the possibility to impose the utilisation of vegetal oil for chain saws and other forestry exploitation tools.
- The use of herbicides is forbidden in some public areas such as parks, waterways, ponds and lakes, road verges and ditches.
- The Water Code and some resulting plans and programs:
  - \* the 'Plans d'Assainissement par Sous-bassin Hydrographiques' define the decontamination and clean up regime for the relevant areas
  - \* the programme for the sustainable management of nitrogen is the application of the Nitrate Directive (part of the Water Framework Directive)
- 159 municipalities have signed the 'Plan Maya' thereby committing themselves 1) to put in place a plan to reduce the use of pesticides and 2) to manage green spaces more ecologically.
- In the framework of the implementation of the Walloon decree on soil management, an inventory of (potentially) polluted soils is currently in development.
- The Walloon authorities have elaborated a pesticides reduction programme to further decrease their use.
- The Walloon Nitrogen sustainable management plan.

See also 'Etat de l'environnement wallon' (<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be>).

## Brussels-Capital Region

### Land use planning

One of the most important threats to biodiversity in Brussels is urbanization. The integration of biodiversity in land use policy is not easy. Nevertheless, the Regional plan of soil allocation (PRAS) indicates the sites where nature conservation has the priority. A distinction is even done between high nature value areas and other nature areas. The plan assigns allocations to areas it defines. Requirements in relation to all areas and each type of assignment are enacted. But these provisions do not confer a protected status on areas of ecological interest: some acts and works are banned but nothing is required in terms of maintaining the biological value of the site or type of management. In addition, the scope of protection varies depending on the assignment in question. However, there are eight assignments likely to confer protected status, small but real, to sites of ecological interest (Green areas, Green areas of high biological value, Park areas, Areas of

sports or outdoor recreation, Cemeteries areas, Forest areas, Areas of easements on the edges of woods and forests, Agricultural areas).

This plan was updated in 2013. See: <http://www.pras.irisnet.be/PRAS/>

#### Pollution

- A very strict legislation is in place concerning the use of pesticides in public green spaces. In public regional green spaces: no use of pesticides or very restricted. A new regional plan for avoiding the use of pesticides has been adopted for the period 2018-2022: <https://environnement.brussels/thematiques/espaces-verts-et-biodiversite/action-de-la-region/le-programme-regional-de-reduction-des>.
- Water pollution is gradually removed thanks to the actions taken in the framework of the water plan.
- The Regional Nature Plan foresees also the following measure: to develop an integrated vision for the preservation and restoration of (ancient) agricultural zones and sites.
- Large efforts to reduce GES and pollutants that cause acidification are made in the framework of air quality and air plans. In 2016, the Brussels-Capital Region has adopted a new plan to improve structurally the air quality and to combat climate change (Air Climate Plan of the Brussels-Capital Region). This plan groups the strategy, the priorities and the actions to be implemented by the region to fulfil the European and international obligations concerning air quality. Moreover, the region has adopted in 2013 the Brussels Code for Air, Climate and Energy (Code Bruxellois de l'Air, du Climat et de la maitrise de l'Energie, COBRACE), which integrates all the necessary measures concerning air quality, climate and management of the energy consumption. Through the COBRACE, the Brussels-Capital Region engages itself to reduce the emissions of atmospheric pollutants such as the precursors of tropospheric ozone, acidifying and eutrophying substances, greenhouse gases, persistent organic pollutants, etc.

#### Fragmentation

The concept of green and blue network was introduced in 1996 in the Regional Development Plan and partly implemented in the 2001 Regional Designated Land Use Plan (PRAS). The green and blue network aims to rebalance regional disparities in the distribution of green spaces and improve connectivity between these spaces to allow for the dispersal and migration of wildlife. The green network translates the concept of green continuity by proposing the delimitation of a series of landscaped, social and / or environmental relay sites. It is based on the creation of new parks and gardens in deficit inner city green spaces, restoration and development of the quality of existing green spaces ("relay sites") and the establishment of physical connections between them ("green continuities"). Its implementation should help mitigate the effects of the assignment in building areas of certain fallow land previously in land reserve areas. (Source: Nature Report of the Brussels-Capital Region, 2012)

In order to enable the public to discover urban nature, Brussels Environment has created a trail over 60 km in length. It consists of vegetation-lined tracks linking the different green spaces. The Green Trail travels all round the Region. (Source: Brussels Environment, 2012, and ICLEI Africa Secretariat, 2013. Challenges for nature in Brussels. Summary of the nature report).

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measure: reduce the fragmentation of biodiversity by finding ways to allow the fauna to move across transport infrastructure (ecoducts and ecotunnels for example).

#### Federal level

##### Pollution

The Pesticide Reduction Programme was adopted by the Federal Government (PRPB) in 2005 aims to reduce the adverse impact of pesticides. The PRPB has been running until the end of 2012.

From 2013, the NAPAN (Nationaal Actie - Plan d' Action National) has been established as the Belgian national action plan for pesticide reduction as requested by the EU directive 2009/128. It includes the federal plan (FRPP: Federal Reduction Plan for Pesticides) replacing the PRPB, and the plans from the three regions. Each of these plans comprises both specific actions and actions carried out jointly with the other members of the NAPAN Task Force. It aims at reaching the objectives of reducing risks linked to pesticides as defined in the EU Directive 2009/128/CE establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides.

Throughout the 2005-2012 programme, federal authorities managed to develop and ensure major stakeholders' participation e.g. by establishing a Council and organising direct consultation of specialists who use pesticides. This high level of participation is kept in the 2013-2017 programme and extended to all national competences.

The 2005-2012 programme was an opportunity for federal authorities to deliver reliable and balanced information on the risks relating to the use of pesticides, e. g. through the websites and by publishing thematic booklets. Putting neutral information at disposal in an active way is also a major issue of the 2013-2017 programme, in which it is notably scheduled that such information shall be provided compulsorily in all places where products for amateur use are on sale. Such a balanced information should help raising awareness of non-professional users of pesticides to the consequences of this use on biological diversity and ecosystem services.

Federal authorities delivered key strategic information for public risk management, such as the amounts of pesticide products sold. This aspect, which had not been fully achieved at the end of the 2005-2012 programme, will be amplified in the 2013-2017 programme through the development of a key index scorecard for the issue of pesticide use. Those indexes will tackle the problem according to the DPSIR system (Driven forces, Pressure, State, Impact, Response). Another feature of the 2013-2017 programme is the development of specific follow-up tools for public health purposes, such as health monitoring of professional users of plant protection products.

Programme coordination is provided by the federal services in charge of product standards, making it possible to achieve many structural changes in the issue of pesticide use through legislation modifications. This major asset has resulted in significant progress, such as the 'Phytoliceance' (compulsory knowledge certificate for users, sellers and professional advisors of plant protection products), or the splitting of the plant protection product market into a market for professional users and a market for non-professional users.

Finally, throughout the period 2005-2012, the federal programme has contributed to enhance dialogue at several levels (citizens, professional/civilian associations, government, etc.) on numerous issues relating to pesticides. This dialogue capacity will certainly prove useful in the future, notably for tackling delicate issues about pesticides and for which scientific evidence is insufficient, such as for instance the issue of bee population decline, the emergence of certain chronic diseases among farmers, the 'cocktail effect' of pesticide residues in food.

Some of the measures foreseen to be implemented at the national level are the following:

- By 2017, harmonization of methods, standards and reports on water (surface & underground) contamination by pesticides at regional, national and European level.
- Ensure that non-professional users of products receive balanced information at the point of sale regarding the right conditions of use, the risks to public health and the environment.

North Sea

- The objective of the OSPAR strategy 'Hazardous substances' is to reduce the concentration of hazardous substances to background levels by 2020.

- In 2012, the “Good Environmental Status” and associated objectives for the descriptors “Eutrophication” and “pollution were defined and agreed (Belgische Staat 2012. Omschrijving van Goede Milieutoestand en vaststelling van Milieudoelen voor de Belgische mariene wateren. Kaderrichtlijn Mariene Strategie – Art 9 & 10. BMM, Federale Overheidsdienst Volksgezondheid, Veiligheid van de Voedselketen en Leefmilieu, Brussel, België, 34 pp.).

Climate change

A federal plan to adapt to climate change will be finalised in 2014.

Others

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences develops through the Management Unit of the North Sea Mathematical Models and the Scheldt estuary a mathematical model to better understand fragile ecosystems such as coastal areas and mangroves in Asia and Latin America in order to be better able at developing integrated management plans taking into account the protection of sensitive areas.

WWF-Belgium launches projects around sustainable agriculture, wood import: partnerships, financing, governance, awareness.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Take measures to minimise the impact of the identified processes and activities threatening biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des stratégies régionales et le Plan national d’adaptation aux changements climatiques sont en cours d’élaboration ; il s’agira de veiller à ce que les mesures d’adaptation aux changements climatiques (et dans la mesure du possible ces mesures devraient utiliser la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques) n’affectent pas la biodiversité et que l’adaptation de la biodiversité à ces changements soient bien prise en compte.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.6>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country’s national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.7

Related to objective 3.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Several joint initiatives have been undertaken to tackle the issue of invasive alien species:

- Development of black grey and alert lists of invasive alien species based on a standardised impact assessment protocol (ISEIA) (see: <http://ias.biodiversity.be>), and Risk assessment protocols (Harmonia+ <http://ias.biodiversity.be/harmoniaplus>).
- Consultation of plant and breeding sectors to increase awareness and understanding of the issue and identification of the most appropriate measures.
- Research projects relating to IAS are funded by the Belgian Science Policy Office: Alien Alert, Invaxen, Diars, INPLANBEL, Alien Impact, Ensis and TrIAS. The TrIAS project is aimed at dynamically, from year to year, track the progression of alien species, identify emerging species, assess their current and future risk and timely inform policy in a seamless data- driven workflow. One that is built on open science and open data infrastructures. By using international biodiversity standards and facilities, TrIAS ensures interoperability, repeatability and sustainability. This makes the process adaptable to future requirements in an evolving IAS policy landscape both locally and internationally.

Awareness raising on invasive alien plants in the horticultural sector at national level (federal + Regions): Life+ project "AlterIAS" (ALTERnatives to Invasive Alien Species, [www.alterias.be](http://www.alterias.be)): development of public awareness tools (brochure on alternative plants to IAS, DVD, development of a code of conduct on invasive alien plants in Belgium ...).

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform works on IAS by facilitating science-policy processes on invasive alien species: 1) Facilitating a Belgian Community of Practice on invasive alien species; 2) Actively participating in the implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS in Belgium; 3) Being a partner in Belgian initiatives related to invasive alien species; 4) Contributing to publications on invasive alien species. The Belgian Biodiversity Platform is a member of the EU Scientific Forum on IAS, a member of the Belgian Scientific Council on IAS, and an observer in the National Committee on IAS. It works in close collaboration with the National Scientific Secretariat on IAS. Furthermore, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform is an active member of international networks (INVASIVESNET, Alien Challenge Cost-Action, Alien CSI Cost Action).

A new LIFE project has been introduced by the 3 regions (LIFE RIPARIAS) and, if successful, will be coordinated by Brussels Environment. Main objectives of the project are to provide *ad hoc* monitoring and decision tools for managers + field pilot project.

#### Flemish Region

The Agency for Nature and Forests developed a first strategy including a special instrument for invasive alien species; to conduct an invasive species policy focussed on awareness and prevention, as well as combating IAS when necessary, taking also into account control actions and horizontal needs (such as policy framework, communication and knowledge / research).  
<https://www.natuurenbos.be/beleid-wetgeving/overlast-schade/invasieve-exoten>

Assessments end of 2017 indicated that there are min. 89 exotic species in Flanders identified as 'signal/problematic species': Min. 41 will become invasive, most being plants (16 species), fish (5 species), mammals (4 species), crayfish type (4 species) and birds (4 species). Besides there are already 38 species identified as being invasive.: <https://www.inbo.be/nl/natuurindicator/aantal-uitheemse-en-invasieve-uitheemse-soorten-op-een-signaallijst>.

Experience and knowledge have been gathered through participation in the INTERREG project INVEXO with the Netherlands (<http://www.invexo.be/>), the INTERREG-project Rinse (<http://www.rinse-europe.eu/>) and the LIFE project ALTERIAS (<http://www.alterias.be>). In cooperation with the Research Institute for Nature and Forests and the NGO Natuurpunt the

development of an early warning system is ongoing and collected information over the last 6 years. [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Soortenbeleid/Overlast\\_schade/door\\_uith\\_soorten.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Soortenbeleid/Overlast_schade/door_uith_soorten.aspx).

Identification tools for the species and procedure for submitting observations are available at <https://www.natuurpunt.be/pagina/waarschuwingssysteem-invasieve-exoten>. Observations on species including IAS can be entered by anyone on <https://waarnemingen.be/>.

On the IAS webpage of Ecopedia, an interactive knowledge web system developed by the Supporting agency for Nature & Forests, information is provided on the species and on the main measures that can be taken: <https://www.ecopedia.be/pagina/exoten>.

This cooperation between ANB-INBO-Natuurpunt (organising the volunteer groups) established a large citizen-science programme for mobilising volunteers for monitoring IAS, to provide information and raise awareness amongst field workers and the public and to streamline the process from reporting to management intervention. The current system is already being used for various response projects in Flanders, including control of invasive aquatic plants, ruddy duck, Pallas squirrel, quarantine insects, American bullfrog, giant hogweed and Chinese muntjac. Introduction pathways for the appearance of IAS in Flanders have been investigated, indicating that 'escaping' from botanical garden, zoos, aquaria and garbage from gardens are a main pathway: <https://www.inbo.be/nl/natuurindicator/introductiewegen-van-uitheemse-soorten-vlaanderen>.

It is prohibited to introduce animals and plants without a permit (Forest Decree) in both public forests and forest reserves. The introduction of alien animal species is prohibited, and there is a legal base for measures to control and eradicate alien animal species. Measures can also be taken to control or prohibit the transport of animal species and their carcasses (Decree on nature conservation). A decision describes what species of fish can be used as fish bait (only native fish species are allowed). See also chapter I, number of alien species.

The Decision of the Flemish Government of 21.04.1993 already prohibits the introduction into the wild of non-native animal species, unless a special permit is being granted. An integrated and updated executive law for species protection is submitted for approval. This law includes the basis for the prevention and control of invasive species. In the new act on species protection and species management this prohibition has been confirmed: in article 17, Besluit van de Vlaamse Regering van 15 mei 2009 met betrekking tot soortenbescherming en soortenbeheer (BS: 13/08/2009), in short 'Soortenbesluit'). Some exceptions to this rule apply: specimens of plant species that are cultivated in the frame of Legal forestry, agriculture or horticultural activities or in the frame of garden or park management; specimens of fish reared in closed waters that guarantee that specimens can not move to open waters.

To allow reducing negative impact on native biodiversity of IAS in the wild, to mitigate or to restore, the Flemish minister responsible for the Environment can take measures (articles 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the 'Soortenbesluit'). The following actions are possible: \* actions for increasing awareness including facilitating codes of conduct; \* doing, letting do, or enforcing of specific management and control; \* making agreements with local governments and/or organisations aiming at local actions; and \* limiting or prohibiting transport, trade and possession. Information is published on the website: <http://www.natuurenbos.be/Exoten> (incl. species fact sheets).

Several research programmes include monitoring, assessment of impacts and development of control, mitigation and/or eradication programmes:



- . assessment of the risks posed by the muskrat (*Ondatra zibethicus*) and coypu (*Myocastor coypus*) not only to dikes, crops and vegetation but also to local fish, amphibians, breeding bird species,
- . monitoring and eradication of exotic plant species in nature and forest areas under management,
- . project for removal of floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) from watercourses,
- . monitoring and inventory of fish occurring in inland waters including alien fish species.

There is a program in which rare, colonial and introduced breeding bird species are being monitored in Flanders on longer term. Among them, alien breeding bird species as the lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*), the Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), the barnacle goose (*Branta leucopsis*), the Nile (Egyptian) goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*), the mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*), the ring-necked parakeet (*Psittacula krameria*) and the monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) are being monitored. This program is called the 'Bijzondere Broedvogels Vlaanderen Project' (Flemish Special Breeding Bird Project). Meanwhile, some alien bird species are also monitored within the framework of the common breeding birds monitoring scheme, notably Canada and Egyptian goose.

### Walloon Region

In the Walloon Region, 375 exotic species of ornamental plants and 21 exotic species of vertebrates were considered as naturalised in 2011. Of these, 29 species of plants and 11 species of vertebrates are known to cause considerable environmental damage and are mentioned on the black list. Several exotic species of mammals have established themselves in the Walloon Region in recent years. The number of naturalised species seems to increase over time, although the observed changes (compared with the previous estimations) could also be the reflection of more rigorous field observation efforts or the evolution of scientific knowledge.

Preventive and control actions against invasive alien species are coordinated through a dedicated interdepartmental unit (CiEi) that has been established in 2009 within the strategic plan of the Administration. This unit is in charge of the following tasks:

- Identify priority pathways and develop preventive and regulatory measures accordingly, including guidelines for plantations, soil movement, green waste management, etc.
- Prepare a coherent legislative framework to regulate preventive and control actions against invasive alien species in Wallonia.
- Set up an early warning system in cooperation with the other regions in the country and nature conservation NGOs.
- Identify and disseminate best practices for the management of invasive alien plants and animals.
- Coordinate control action plans against priority species like giant hogweed, Japanese mosquito, Canada goose or muskrat.
- Conduct studies to assess non-native species invasiveness in the field and compile information for risk analyses of priority species.
- Communicate and develop capacity building actions towards field managers and the general public.

Nature Parks, many River Contracts and cities which have either a Municipality Plan for Nature Conservation or a 'Roadside management plan' actively manage invasive alien species at a local scale.

The introduction of non-indigenous species or indigenous species of non-indigenous origin in nature is forbidden except for species used for agriculture and forestry.

### Brussels-Capital Region

The reintroduction and the intentional release in nature of invasive animal and plant species listed in annex IV of the ordinance of the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 in relation to nature conservation is forbidden (art. 77, 1<sup>st</sup> §). The sale, the transfer for free or against payment, the exchange and the purchase of one of these species are also forbidden (art. 77, 2<sup>nd</sup> §).

Article 78 of this ordinance allows the Brussels Government to take measures against these species.

The intentional release in nature of non-indigenous strains of indigenous animal and plant species and the intentional release in nature of non-indigenous animal and plant species are both subject to permission (art. 75, 2<sup>nd</sup> §).

Several research programmes already include monitoring and assessment of impacts e.g. on parakeets, naturalised water birds and plants. Some management actions are already in use (e.g. Egyptian goose in parks).

In addition, the Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measure: to optimize the management of invasive alien species

Priority is given to prevention and sensibilisation of the public and the professionals. In a second phase follows the screening and first intervention actions followed, when needed, by actions to control and reduce the populations.

#### Federal level

At the national level, resulting of a collaboration between the federal and regional authorities, a code of conduct in relation to invasive plants has been elaborated in the framework of the AlterIAS-project (Alternatives for invasive plants).

Action 18 of the second Federal Plan for Sustainable Development is devoted to biodiversity and focuses on sectoral integration of biodiversity in key federal sectors (transport, economy, development cooperation and scientific policy). The Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors addresses IAS.

Actions foreseen in this action plan include:

- Economy: the consultation of key sectors in order to increase awareness and understanding of the issue and the identification of the most appropriated measures (such as e.g. labelling, substitution, information, etc.) and the review, actualization and extension of existing legislations at federal level to prohibit the import / export / transit and detention of some IAS in Belgium.
- Science: the establishment of an early warning system on IAS and the development of a system based on molecular barcoding to identify organisms of policy concern (including IAS) for use by Transport.
- Transport: the control and management of ballast water.

The Belgian Law of 20.01.1999 (MMM law) forbids the intentional introduction of non-indigenous species in the marine environment without special license (Art. 11, §1).

A royal decree will be adopted in the second part of 2009 to implement the Council Regulation dealing specifically with alien species in aquaculture (708/2007/CE) with regard to marine species.

The Royal Decree of 9 April 2003 foresees measures related to the commercialisation of species listed in annex A (excepted for specimens bred in captivity, with CITES certificate).

In 2012, the “Good Environmental Status” and associated objectives for the descriptor “invasive species” was defined and agreed (Belgische Staat 2012. Omschrijving van Goede Milieutoestand en vaststelling van Milieudoelen voor de Belgische mariene wateren. Kaderrichtlijn Mariene

Strategie – Art 9 & 10. BMM, Federale Overheidsdienst Volksgezondheid, Veiligheid van de Voedselketen en Leefmilieu, Brussel, België, 34 pp.).

#### Species introduction in marine areas

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector transport: The risk of species introduction in marine areas was considered during the development of the federal maritime policy, including through appropriate application of appropriate instruments.

#### Federal law on nature conservation

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector economy: a legal framework aiming at preventing the introduction of IAS in Belgium is in preparation: The Federal law on nature conservation of 12 July 2012 (modifying the law of 12 July 1973) foresees a number of provisions on IAS. In implementation of this law, Pest Risk Assessments have been prepared in 2013 for 21 species. This legal framework aims to regulate import, transit and detention of non-indigenous invasive species that are assumed to be detrimental to native species in Belgium (based on a simplified environmental impact assessment protocol) and that are not yet established in Belgium (or isolated). It will be in line with the new EU regulation related to invasive alien species. Other examples of implementation include: the education of key sectors to invasive species; awareness raising on invasive alien plants in the horticultural sector at national level (federal and regional) – Life+ project “AlterIAS” : Development of public awareness tools such as the update of the brochure “SOS invasions”, a new brochure on alternative plants to IAS, a DVD, the development of a code of conduct on invasive alien plants in Belgium, etc.

#### List of invasive alien species in Belgium and Alien Alter project

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector Science policy: as a contribution to the set-up of an early warning system, an alert list of invasive alien species in Belgium has been elaborated based on a standardised impact assessment protocol (ISEIA). It was carried out as a collective effort by the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species, which is maintained by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform. It is not exhaustive and will be progressively completed. Species profiles including description, habitat preferences and detrimental impact are currently in development. See: <http://ias.biodiversity.be>. The Alien Alter project is in progress: this scientific project aims to develop an integrated risk assessment on biodiversity, public health and crop protection protocol.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Si des actions communes positives ont été développées depuis 2007 pour mieux contrôler les risques posés par les espèces exotiques envahissantes, une stratégie cohérente nationale doit encore être finalisée et mise en place au niveau belge.

Pathways of unintentional introduction and spread for species of Union Concern have been identified and prioritized. Based on the results of the prioritization, a policy decision was made in 2018 to proceed with developing the following action plans:

- 1) action plan on introductions of pets, garden and pond plants, aquarium plants and animals, and terrarium plants and animals from private ownership,
- 2) action plan on introductions through recreational use of freshwater, and
- 3) action plan for contamination of sediment transports.

Action plans and all the measures to be taken have not been officially endorsed yet but they will be before the end of 2020.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.7>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 3.8

Related to objective 3.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Define the framework and the conditions to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Flemish Region

The regulation as stated in art. 6 of the 'Habitats Directive' has been taken over in the Nature Decree art 36 - stating that any plan or project likely to compromise, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, achieving the conservation objectives of a protected site, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications. In case of significant expected impact on a Natura 2000 site despite potential mitigation measures, the plan or project can be authorized only with the prior grant of an exemption granted by the Government under the following cumulative conditions:

- there is no other alternative solution less damaging to the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;
- the realization of the plan or project is justified for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature;
- compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected or enhanced are prescribed.

An on-line scoping system has been developed for preliminary screening to assess possible impacts of a project or plan in a specific site:

<https://www.natura2000.vlaanderen.be/passendebeoordeling>.

For forests a general regulation exists concerning procedural steps for permits for felling trees depending on surface of forest and age of the trees, and the required compensation by re-forestation or monetary compensation: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/bomenkappen>.

Walloon Region

Environment impact assessment and the principle of compensation are included in the Law on Nature conservation: LCN art 29§2. The Environment code includes environment impact assessments articles. The Code for territorial development (CoDT art. D.II.45§3) also includes the principle of compensation.

In order to achieve a "no net land take" by 2050, Wallonia would need to adopt binding numerical targets relating to land take, at the risk of seeing the sustainable use of the territory relegated to secondary importance compared to other concerns. The 1999 Regional Spatial Development Plan (SDER), currently in force, recommends combating housing dispersion, making areas intended for urbanisation more dense, recycling land which is currently abandoned, and protecting the natural resources of the soil and subsoil. This document is currently under review.

### Brussels-Capital Region

Framework of the compensatory measures in the case of projects or plans affecting the integrity of a protected site

The 'Habitats Directive' states that any plan or project likely to compromise, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, achieving the conservation objectives of a protected site, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications (art. 6). In case of significant expected impact on a Natura 2000 site despite potential mitigation measures, the plan or project can be authorized only with the prior grant of an exemption granted by the Government under the following cumulative conditions:

- there is no other alternative solution less damaging to the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;
- the realization of the plan or project is justified for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature;
- compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected or enhanced are prescribed.

The European requirement for an appropriate assessment was implemented as follows by the new ordinance on nature conservation: "Any plan or project requiring a permit, authorization or approval, not directly connected with or necessary to the ecological management of the [protected] site but likely to affect significantly, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to [...] an appropriate assessment of its implications on the site in view of the [protected] site's conservation objectives." (Art. 57, § 1). In the Brussels-Capital Region, this concept will now apply both for Natura 2000 sites (art. 57 to 64) and for natural and forest reserves (art. 65). The appropriate assessment shall include at least the information and factors referred to in Annex VIII of the ordinance on nature conservation (Art. 57, §2).

(Source: Nature Report of the Brussels-Capital Region, 2012)

### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 3.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Define the framework and the conditions to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective

X Unknown

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/3#3.8>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.1.1

Related to objective 4.1.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify and promote good practices involving the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Flemish region

- forest FSC certification: more than 22.000 ha of forests, and controlled marketing of timber: <https://www.houtverkopen.be/fsc-boscertificering>
- agri-environment schemes – in the period 2017-2018 covering more than 20.000 ha for the different types of measures such as flower rich grasslands, grasslands for birds, cultures for support of species, protecting nesting and breeding sites of grassland birds, natural borders to prevent erosion, measures to prevent water pollution, ...
- introduction of certification of Wildlife Estate label: promoting conservation and sustainable use of wildlife on private estates - [http://www.wildlife-estates.eu/current\\_labels.php](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu/current_labels.php)
- pilot projects to use biomass remains from site management into various production processes such as paper or cardboard products, chips for heating, materials for isolation of buildings, ...

Walloon Region

Examples of implementation:

- In 2012, a charter has been signed between the Quarries sector and the Walloon Nature Minister; This charter aims to promote biodiversity development in quarries in Wallonia. Best practices guide for quarries after their exploitation. <http://www.fediex.be/charte-carrieres-et-biodiversite>
- Forest certification In the Walloon Region, PEFC certified forests cover nearly about 54% of the Region's forest areas. The owners engage themselves voluntarily to diversify their forest, to maintain dead wood, to maintain patches where trees can grow old, etc. This means that 17.7% of the Walloon territory is developed sustainably, even though the primary objective is not the conservation of biodiversity. Nearly 91% of certified forest land belongs to public landowners.
- The agri-environmental programmes consist of agri-environmental measures (AEM) which are part of the second pillar of the CAP "Rural Development". They aim to encourage the voluntary implementation of conservation and environmental improvement actions (surface water and groundwater, soil, landscape, biodiversity, climate, etc.) in agricultural areas.
- Late mowing of road embankments.
- The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC requires integrated water management for each river basin district in order to enable all water bodies to achieve good status (or good potential) by 2015, with a possible extension to 2021 or 2027. Achieving this objective mainly depends on the implementation of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). These include a catalogue of measures to be applied to improve water quality.

Federal level

The federal and regional administration are working to the development of a web platform (BiodiversiTree) setting together existing websites which recommend sustainable purchases (ex: “guides des achats durables”) including sustainable use of biodiversity (see further on BiodiversiTree and the #BeBiodiversity strategy).

Another example of implementation is the adoption of a sectoral agreement in the wood sector to stimulate the production and sell of sustainable wood products.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.1.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify and promote good practices involving the sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.1.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country’s national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.2

Related to objective 4.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Sustainable products, consumption and production policies.

Flemish region:

- establishment of general knowledge and advisory centre for sustainable consumption:

<https://www.mvovlaanderen.be/thema/duurzame-consumptie>

- FSC forest certificates – see above

- sustainability criteria for external contracts

- criteria for sustainable food production in agricultural sector (bio-agriculture)

Walloon Region

Sustainable production and consumption is included in several tools in Wallonia:

- PEFC certification
- “Circulaire relative aux aménagements dans les forêts soumises au régime forestier” est également un outil visant la gestion des forêts publiques.
- The Forest Code of which one of the objectives is to safeguard biodiversity.
- In forests, the use of the « fichier écologique des essences » : l’adaptation du traitement à l’essence permet d’optimiser la gestion sylvicole, mais également d’améliorer le

fonctionnement de l'écosystème et notamment les cycles des éléments minéraux et de l'eau, et la diversité biologique du sous-bois.

A pre-condition for sustainable forest management is that, in the long term, timber harvesting does not exceed increase. In Wallonia, over the period 2001-2011, the harvested volumes represented 110% of the increase, which is higher than the equilibrium threshold. For deciduous species as a whole, 66% of the increase was harvested, corresponding to a capitalisation. However for coniferous trees, the exploitation exceeded the growth volumes due to the intensive exploitation of spruce, for which the harvest rate reached 150%. The high proportion of spruce in the current harvest is a consequence of massive plantations made by private owners between the 1950s and 1970s.

- The Water Code: one of its objectives is to prevent any additional degradation to preserve and enhance ecological conditions of wetlands... ( « prévenir toute dégradation supplémentaire, de préserver et d'améliorer l'état des écosystèmes aquatiques ainsi que, en ce qui concerne leurs besoins en eau, des écosystèmes terrestres et des zones humides qui en dépendent directement »).
- Agri-environmental schemes:  
[https://www.natagriwal.be/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/Autres\\_doc/Tableau-MAEC-2014-2020-FR-180219-DEF.pdf](https://www.natagriwal.be/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/Autres_doc/Tableau-MAEC-2014-2020-FR-180219-DEF.pdf)
- Organic farming: Between 1990 and 2015, the number of farms converted to organic farming increased 29-fold to 1,347 in 2015, or 10.5% of the total number of farms in Wallonia.
- The cross-compliance principle in agriculture
- Maya plan for pollinators.
- Guideline for biodiversity in quarries.
- Public procurement measures related to paper purchase, invasive alien species, etc.
- asbl ECOCONSO aims to encourage environmental-friendly consumption habits (<http://www.achatsverts.be/>).

In 2015, the Walloon Government adopted a Plan to reduce food waste by 30% by 2025 called «REGAL», <http://www.wallonie.be/fr/actualites/plan-regal-la-lutte-contre-le-gaspillage-alimentaire-sorganise-en-wallonie>.

A sustainable development plan will be developed for the administration of the Walloon Region. It will contain 7 axes (among others: consumption, public tenders, ...) and 16 objectives. The Sustainable development department (SDD) was set up in July 2012 by the Walloon Government. It is under the General Secretariat of the Walloon Administration. The SDD undertakes several tasks in order to move towards a more sustainable region:

- It contributes to the regional policy on sustainable development and to the integration of the SDGs in the activities and actions of the Walloon government and the public services of Wallonia;
- It works to improve the sustainability of public services (through the development and implementation of the 2nd Plan of sustainable development) ;
- It contributes to the international commitments for sustainable development;
- It acts as the National Focal Point of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

The department mainly works through the following macro-policies:

- Walloon SDS;
- Public purchase;
- Alliance Work Environment
- Internal action plan



- Advisory unit

In Wallonia, the Walloon Pesticide Reduction Programme 2013-2017 was adopted by the Walloon Government in 2013. It includes 37 measures of strictly regional competence. The main measures relate to:

- certification of the knowledge of professional users of plant protection products (PPPs);
- raising awareness among non-professional users of good gardening practices<sup>1</sup>;
- public information;
- monitoring of poisonings and exposures;
- protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water;
- protection of specific areas;
- handling and storage of PPPs for professional use;
- integrated pest/weed management.

The degree of implementation of the 37 measures in the PWRP 2013-2017 varies. The objectives have been achieved, or are close to being achieved, for 54% of the measures and are ongoing for 38% of them, while for 8% of them the objectives have not been achieved at all. The prohibition on the use of PPPs in public spaces ("zero phyto"), one of the flagship measures of the PWRP 2013 - 2017, has been in force since 01/06/2014. However, PPPs can still be used by way of derogation for a period of 5 years, i.e. until 31/05/2019, under certain conditions. The Walloon municipalities are obliged to keep a register of the use of PPPs and to transmit this annually to the SPW. On the basis of these data, in 2015, 25% of Walloon municipalities were "zero phyto", compared to 14% in 2014.

Of the 100 pesticides examined in groundwater between 2011-2014, 9 were responsible for most of the pollution. These 9 molecules were all herbicides. Of these, 4 were banned (atrazine, diuron, bromacil and simazine) and 2 were from banned molecules (desethylatrazine and BAM). Due to the regular placing on the market of new active substances and the transfer time (soil-groundwater) of certain pesticides within groundwater bodies, prevention and monitoring cannot be abated.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

Much efforts are made in the field of sustainable food and supply chain:

<http://www.sustainablecity.be/themas/sustainable-consumption>.

The Good food strategy and the regional plan for circular economy adopted by the government will also promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

#### Federal level

- #BeBiodiversity strategy and its communication campaign (see further)

- development of the BiodiversiTTree (in collaboration with the 3 regions) (see further)

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Sustainable products, consumption and production policies.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

X Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Le Groupe Directeur « Modes de production et de consommation durables » du CCPIE est le lieu privilégié pour une concertation étroite entre le fédéral, compétent pour que les produits mis sur le marché soient de plus en plus respectueux de l'environnement et de la santé publique, et les Régions, compétentes pour l'utilisation de ces produits une fois sur le marché (sauf en ce qui concerne la protection du consommateur et les pratiques du marché). L'impact sur l'environnement est pris en compte, ici, dans toutes les étapes de vie du produit: de sa conception et fabrication, à sa distribution, son utilisation et son élimination. Il s'agit donc d'un processus sur le long terme. Le « Plan produits 2009/2013: vers une politique de produits intégrée » a été adopté en 2009.

En Belgique, les achats publics portent sur plus de 10% du Produit Intérieur Brut. Pour favoriser les achats verts auprès des administrations publiques, les autorités publiques fédérales et Régionales ont mis en place depuis 2005 des politiques pour que les marchés publics soient durables. Les spécifications à respecter concernent notamment les achats de bois, fournitures papier, produits de nettoyage, peintures, vernis, véhicules, espèces exotiques, service traiteur lors d'événements). Des guides méthodologiques<sup>31</sup> ont été mis en ligne pour conseiller les « acheteurs publics ». L'idée de « marchés publics verts », gagne en popularité et des critères de biodiversité sont repris de manière croissante.

Toutefois, les achats écologiques ne représentent encore qu'une petite partie des achats des administrations. Par ailleurs, de nombreuses administrations montrent l'exemple et ont déjà obtenu le label EMAS ou le Label Ecodynamique en Région Bruxelles-Capitale. Des accords de branche ont aussi été négociés avec certains secteurs (bois, carrier, distributeur d'électricité). Par une politique « d'achats verts » et des accords de branche, les autorités publiques apportent un soutien aux entreprises privées qui promeuvent l'éco-innovation et mettent sur le marché des produits écologiques.

Les bonnes pratiques en Belgique concernant les modes de production et de consommation durables sont compilées dans le quatrième rapport national à la Convention sur la diversité biologique (2009) et le rapport européens « Biodiversity Knowledge Base – Country profile Belgium (2010) ».

Bien que non repris comme objectif stratégique ou opérationnel, la question des Ressources naturelles (input) et des Biens et services écosystémiques (output) s'est imposée à l'agenda de la mise en oeuvre de la SNB, suite notamment au rapport TEEB et aux activités de la Présidence belge du conseil de l'Union européenne.

Faisant suite au plan fédéral pour l'intégration de la biodiversité dans 4 secteurs clés et aux études prospectives ci-dessus menées à la fois sur le volet consommateurs et sur le volet entreprise et reconnaissant donc que la conservation de la biodiversité et surtout l'utilisation durable de ses composantes n'est possible que si citoyens, entreprises et autorités publiques allient leurs efforts et agissent chacun à son niveau,, le fédéral a lancé, en 2017, une stratégie #BeBiodiversity dans une optique de coresponsabilité (autorités/citoyens-consommateurs/entreprises).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.2>

## **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

### Action 4.2.1

Related to objective 4.2.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Avoid or minimise the risk to biodiversity posed by production and consumption, products and services.

#### Flemish Region

Many different projects focussing on sustainable food production and consumption, i.a. direct selling and CSA-farming (Flemish Strategic Plan), organic farming (Flemish Strategic Plan), prevent food waste...

Projects to stimulate a circular economy: reuse and recycling of food and other organic waste, mainly in the agrofood business complex, often combined with renewable energy production.

#### Walloon Region

The non-profit organisation ECOCONSO promotes environment-friendly and healthy consumption patterns, among others in relation to water, gardening, pesticides, ...

#### Brussels Region

The Good food strategy and the regional plan for circular economy adopted by the government will promote sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

#### Federal level

La stratégie #BeBiodiversity vise à déplacer les marchés vers des produits plus respectueux de la biodiversité en faisant jouer l'offre et la demande. Cette stratégie vise donc à mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises pour promouvoir un approvisionnement en matières premières durables, compatibles avec la protection de la biodiversité dans les pays d'origine.

Une campagne de communication a vu le jour en 2017 pour sensibiliser, éduquer et mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises tout en leur donnant les moyens de choisir des produits et producteurs plus respectueux de la biodiversité de manière informée. Divers outils de communications et activations des réseaux sociaux sont utilisés :

- Un site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be>) a été développé qui regorge d'information mais également de gestes pour préserver la biodiversité. Quatre vidéos d'accroche ont été lancées en 2017 pour l'inauguration de la stratégie et de la campagne.
- Cinq vidéos d'animation qui expliquent, entre autres, le lien entre la consommation ordinaire et les menaces pesant sur la biodiversité et les écosystèmes ont été créées. Ces vidéos d'animation, disponibles en anglais, français et néerlandais sur la chaîne YouTube #BeBiodiversity, ont été un franc succès: elles ont été visionnées plus de 500 000 fois sur Facebook et plus de 130 000 fois sur YouTube. La vidéo « Quel est le lien entre le sushi et une tortue » a remporté le Golden Green Award au 7ème festival des Deauville Green Awards, en juin 2018.
- Pour mieux connaître les habitudes de consommation des citoyens-consommateurs et leur impact sur la nature, un quizz été lancé fin 2018 avec pour objectifs de :
  - o continuer à sensibiliser ;
  - o commencer la phase de mobilisation notamment avec en 2019 avec une Fête des Voisins Biodiversité ;

- dégager des tendances de consommation
- mieux cibler les prochaines communications « consommateur » ;
- étayer la communication, influencer et mobiliser les entreprises.

Cinq animaux totem ont été choisis pour définir le profil de consommation et des petits conseils faciles à mettre en place au quotidien sont proposés.

- Après le succès de la campagne de communication auprès des citoyens, une campagne visant spécifiquement les entreprises sera lancée au début de l'année 2019. Cette campagne coïncidera avec le lancement d'un outil web aidant les entreprises à choisir et mettre en œuvre des actions en faveur de la biodiversité (BiodiversiTree – voir ci-dessous)). Quatre entreprises pionnières (Belvas, Amanprana, Ecosem et Tilman) ainsi que la Régie des bâtiments (service publique) sont partenaires dans ce projet et aide au développement des outils :
  - Une page spéciale 'entreprises' a été développée sur notre site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>)
  - Des vidéos de promotions des entreprises pionnières sont lancées pour inciter d'autres entreprises à s'engager dans la préservation de la biodiversité. Elle sont disponibles sur le site web (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>)

En parallèle, cette stratégie vise à agir au niveau de l'offre pour sensibiliser et aider les entreprises à entreprendre une démarche volontaire de préservation de la biodiversité et des services écosystémiques :

- Les entreprises et organisations qui désirent contribuer à la préservation de la biodiversité pourront compter sur le BiodiversiTree pour les guider dans la détermination des actions : du choix des partenaires/experts qui pourront les accompagner à la valorisation des investissements réalisés pour adapter leurs terrains, infrastructures, achats et processus. Les entités fédérale et régionales ont ainsi développé pour la Belgique cette plateforme web (BiodiversiTree) qui permet aussi l'échange d'informations mettant en avant les actions concrètes car pour mobiliser les entreprises rien de tel que des exemples réalisés par d'autres entreprises ! Cette plateforme est également un outil de sensibilisation afin de permettre à chacun de se poser des questions sur sa marge de manœuvre au sein de son organisation ([www.biodiversitree.be](http://www.biodiversitree.be)).
- Des réflexions sur un outil pour évaluer l'impact de des entreprises sur la biodiversité sont actuellement en cours avec comme défi d'élaborer une approche scientifiquement validée pour aider les entreprises et les organisations publiques à évaluer rapidement l'impact de diverses matières premières sur la biodiversité. A cette fin, différentes études prospectives ont été menées.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.2.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Avoid or minimise the risk to biodiversity posed by production and consumption, products and services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

See above.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.2.1>

<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>

<https://biodiversitree.be>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.2.2

Related to objective 4.2.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: adopt biodiversity criteria in public procurement policies to prevent biodiversity loss.

For example, Federal and Regional authorities encourage the use of certified wood in public works (<http://www.guidedesachatsdurables.be>). The idea of "green procurement" is gaining popularity and biodiversity criteria are taken increasingly into account.

Flemish Region

Specific regulations and criteria are set for procurements and external contracts:

<https://overheid.vlaanderen.be/duurzaamheid>.

Walloon Region

The campaign 'Achats verts' is directed towards municipalities and public communities. It aims to implement a more ecological way of consumption within local policies and to improve purchasing practices.

The non-profit organisation ECOCONSO promotes environment-friendly and healthy consumption patterns, among others in relation to water, gardening, pesticides, ...

Federal level

Development of a federal public procurement policy to promote SFM (circular letter in 2005); a methodological guide supports federal purchasing authorities; promotion and follow-up of forest certification.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.2.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: adopt biodiversity criteria in public procurement policies to prevent biodiversity loss.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Les marchés publics verts gagnent en popularité. En plus d'être bénéfique pour l'environnement, ceci offre également un effet de levier sur l'économie. Toutefois, les achats écologiques ne représentent encore qu'une petite partie des achats des administrations.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.2.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.1

Related to objective 4.3.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote measures favourable to biodiversity under the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Flemish region

Agri-environment schemes (in cooperation with the administrations for land use management and agriculture)

In the framework of the Flemish programmes for rural development (2014-2020), farmers get the opportunity to sign up for agri-environmental schemes, in which they commit themselves to do more for the environment, nature and the landscape than is legally required, such as as: organic agriculture, planting and maintenance of orchards with tall fruit trees, preservation of local breeds, mechanical weed control, confusion technique in fruit cultivation, cultivation of Leguminosae, agroforestry. Schemes for field margin management and for the management of small landscape elements (pools, hedges, wooded banks), aimed at strengthening the ecological infrastructure in farmland areas, have been widely adopted by farmers. In 2011, 1,455 ha of field margins or nearly 6 times the target, have been installed and schemes for 101 ha of wooded banks and 200 km of hedges were in place. The agri-environmental schemes aimed at the development, conservation and restoration of specific farmland species and communities show varying success. The scheme for botanical management (294 ha) is, together with the scheme for nature management, one of the least popular and resulted in only 9% of the targeted 6.000 ha. On the other hand, schemes for farmland birds now occupy 964 ha. Measures for birds of arable land, new since since 2010, are very popular and amount to 130 ha in 2010 and 331 ha in 2011. Schemes for the Common Hamster were stopped. Globally, 64% of the potential 1.500 ha intended for the protection of species was realised. Quantitative data on the results of these schemes are missing. Agri-environmental measures were adopted within the European Rural Development Program 2007-

2013 to stimulate the on-farm conservation of 9 local sheepbreeds and 3 local cattlebreeds and fruit tree varieties.

Area under organic farming (actions supported by the administrations for agriculture and land use management)

The area under organic farming – bio agriculture – raised since 2010 with 7,300 ha. This area corresponds to about 1.2% of the total farmland area in Flanders and is getting more success as consumption attitudes are requiring increasingly more bio-based food.

Nitrogen residue in agricultural soils

The 2010 target in the Flemish Environmental Policy Plan (2003-2010) is 70 kg N/ha. The nitrogen residue decreased by 58% between 1990 and 2007 due to reduced livestock numbers, reduced chemical fertiliser use, increased processing of animal manure, increased feeding efficiency and an increased nitrogen uptake and removal associated with yield increases. In 2007 the total N residue in Flanders amounted 80 kg N/ha, excluding ammonia emissions. This is 10 kg N/ha short of the target. If the measures are continued in the next years, the target should be achieved. The nitrogen residues in Flemish agricultural soils, as well as the ammonia emissions from agricultural land use, are among the highest in Europe (EEA, 2005).

Area of high nature value farmland

About 2% (1,350 ha) of the 68,400 ha habitats of European importance in Flanders is in agricultural use. The majority are grassland habitats (1,125 ha). Besides these habitats there are also 820 ha of habitats of regional importance in agricultural use. Most of these regional important grassland biotopes are half natural permanent grasslands which are little fertilised and only used extensively. For Flanders the high nature value farmland is estimated to be 7%.

Other examples of implementation

- The Flemish Decree on integrated water management contains concrete requirements with respect to riparian zones along water bodies with specific requirements on soil cultivation, use of pesticides and manure use.
- The Manure Decree transposes the European Nitrate Directive action program (for the period 2015-2018) into Flemish legislation and contains the required regulations on distance rules for manure use, timing of manure use and other requirements (sleep slopes, snow cover, green cover, residual nitrate in soil (soil and crop specific values), mandatory advise on manure use in horticulture).
- Biodiversity conservation measures e.g. on high nature value pastures prevent degradation of biodiversity rich grasslands.
- Integrated pest management in the fruit sector.
- Actions carried out are initiated to provide for a better remuneration of collective environmental goods through direct payments and cross compliance in the framework of the EU Common Agricultural Policy on the one hand.
- Agri-environment measures support to restore the connectivity between sites by nature oriented management of broadened borders and small landscape elements, to enhance habitat quality of species dependent on agricultural landscapes by botanical grassland management and provision of fauna food cultures, to prevent erosion problems. End of 2018 the total surface of implemented agri-environment measures comes to 9.690 ha.

Walloon Region

Intensive agricultural production patterns are responsible for various pressures on the environment: soil erosion and compaction, water pollution, emissions of air pollutants, erosion of biodiversity, landscape impacts, etc. Various measures have been put in place to reduce these pressures: regulatory measures such as the cross-compliance of agricultural aids, but also voluntary measures, such as agri-environmental and climate measures (AECM) and organic farming. Some of these have recently been modified by the Walloon Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (Programme wallon de développement rural 2014-2020) in order to further develop extensive production patterns. As between 1980 and 2015, the area under permanent grassland declined by an average of 2,576 ha/year, a decrease of 23%, mandatory measures include maintaining areas of ecological interest, sensitive grasslands (in some Natura 2000 management units) and permanent grasslands.

Nitrogen<sup>5</sup> (mineral and organic) and phosphorus fertiliser use decreased by 16.8% and 64.5% over the period 1995-2014; Over the period 1995 - 2014, the agricultural sector recorded a decrease in emissions of air pollutants (-12.5% for GHGs and -12.4% for acidifying substances) leading to a decoupling with regard to the plant production index and the UAA.

Between 1990 and 2015, the number of farms converted to organic farming increased 29-fold to 1,347 in 2015, or 10.5% of the total number of farms in Wallonia.

Wallonia has adopted a Walloon Pesticide Reduction Programme 2013-2017: it includes the "zero phyto" (zero PPPs) for public space managers on 01/06/2019, the mandatory application of integrated pest management principles, etc. It is still too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures.

#### Agri-environmental measures

The agri-environmental programmes consist of agri-environmental measures (AEM) which are part of the second pillar of the CAP "Rural Development". They aim to encourage the voluntary implementation of conservation and environmental improvement actions (surface water and groundwater, soil, landscape, biodiversity, climate, etc.) in agricultural areas. In 2013, 53.7% of Walloon farmers were engaged in at least 1 AEM. The 3 most successful AEMs were the following: "hedgerows and forested strips" (30.6%), "winter soil cover" (21.5%) and "trees, bushes and isolated copses" (14.3%). Moreover, the objectives of the PwDR by AEM were achieved for 3 of them: "winter soil cover" (49,800 ha), "grasslands of high biological value" (6,690 ha, 900 breeders) and "managed field strips" (1,275 km). They were almost achieved for 6 AEM: "hedgerows and forested strips" (12,000 km), "trees, bushes and isolated copses" (124,000 elements), "natural grasslands" (13,000 ha), "extensive cereal crops" (2,865 ha), "Keeping animals belonging to threatened local breeds" (7,900 animals) and "keeping low levels of livestock" (34,100 ha). More mixed results were observed for the following AEM: "ponds" (4,040, 67% of target achieved), "grassy strips" (2,555 km, 64% of target achieved) and "strips of extensive grasslands" (737 km, 37% of target achieved). Participation in an agri-environmental action plan concerned 140 farms (1% of farms, 100% target achieved). The impact of these AEMs on water, soil and biodiversity is assessed by the reflection group on agri-environment in Wallonia.

Supervision in the field is entrusted to the Natagriwal structure. The new 2014 - 2020 PwDR ensures continuity of access to the AEMs that are now agri-environmental and climate measures (AECM). It encourages greater use of targeted AECM. Access conditions and specifications have been revised in order to simplify administration and improve efficiency on the ground, and certain amounts of aids have been reduced or increased.

#### Organic farms

Between 1990 and 2015, the number of farms converted to organic farming increased 29-fold to 1,347 in 2015, or 10.5% of the total number of farms in Wallonia.

#### Cross compliance



The aids given to farmer under the CAP are conditional on compliance with a common level of requirements. This is the principle of cross-compliance. Cross-compliance applies to the following 3 areas: (i) environment, climate change and good agricultural land conditions<sup>3</sup>, (ii) public health<sup>4</sup>, animal health<sup>5</sup> and plant health and (iii) respect for animal welfare. In 2015, 14,254 farms were subject to administrative controls, of which 947 were also subject to on-the-spot controls. A total of 1,043 farmers were sanctioned. This resulted in a reduction in financial aids for (i) 644 farmers receiving aids under the first pillar of the CAP for a total of €566.497, (ii) 9 farmers under the second pillar of the CAP for a total of €3.017, and (iii) 390 farmers receiving aids under first and second pillar of the CAP for a total of €313.772. In addition, 27 farmers were excluded from the agricultural aid system.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote measures favourable to biodiversity under the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Dans les trois Régions, des politiques sont mises en place pour obliger ou inciter des pratiques agricoles favorables à la biodiversité; celles-ci font l'objet d'un contrôle. Cependant, l'agriculture et la pêche continuent d'exercer une pression majeure sur la biodiversité. Des stratégies de conservation des ressources génétiques doivent encore voir le jour en Belgique.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.2

Related to objective 4.3.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Enhance and encourage the role of farmers as biodiversity actors.

Flemish region

Farmers' stimulation and awareness raising

Awareness raising initiatives were carried out such as a code of good agricultural practices nature and biodiversity to stimulate farmers to take into account biodiversity in their operations. Research and projects were conducted to test, demonstrate and stimulate sustainable use of biodiversity in farming context, with local projects as i.a. green farm sites, create pools, prune

trees and hedges, ... The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries also financed demonstration projects with direct positive effects on the (agro-)biodiversity, such as the projects on sustainable manure use or on genetic diversity in vegetables (<http://www.zelfzadentelen.be>), where information is gathered and shared to stimulate farmers in growing their own seed of their own local varieties. Many different projects focussing on sustainable food production and consumption were carried out, i.a. direct selling and CSA-farming (Flemish Strategic Plan), organic farming (Flemish Strategic Plan), prevent food waste...

Code of good practices have been developed and are being applied or are under development:

- for nature with guidelines for the management of protected vegetation types,
- for agricultural uses based upon integration of environmental issues.

#### Beekeeping

Specifically focussing on the bees, the Flemish government worked on:

- a guide for good beekeeping practices for every beekeeper,
- a guide with plants for pollinators has been distributed to every community service,
- a roundtable conference on the problems of bee and beekeeping was held. Actions are followed up,
- increasing the bee-friendly area by introducing plant for pollinators as eligible green manures,
- projects on beekeeping e.g. artificial insemination to reduce Varroa-contamination.

#### Walloon Region

Agri-environmental schemes (see section 4.3.1).

#### Brussels Capital Region

The Brussels Capital Region is currently analysing the feasibility to apply agri-environment measures to promote sustainable practices towards professional farmers. Also, Article 66 of the Nature regulation of 2012 allow the Brussels Region to implement a financial mechanism to preserve natural elements (like hedge, etc.). This mechanism is currently under study through sub-contractors. Final results are expected for 2020.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Enhance and encourage the role of farmers as biodiversity actors.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

#### **Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Sur les exploitations agricoles, l'utilisation durable de la biodiversité est encouragée par des paiements directes accordés au titre du premier pilier de la Politique Agricole Commune qui sont conditionnés au respects de différentes normes sur l'environnement ainsi que par le biais des Mesures Agro-Environnementales (MAE) volontaires intégrées dans le deuxième pilier de la PAC

par le biais des Plans de Développement Ruraux (PDR) et pour lesquels des contrats sont conclus avec les agriculteurs en Belgique. Les mesures générales sont accessibles directement tandis que d'autres plus ciblées sont accessibles aux agriculteurs après l'avis technique d'un conseiller.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.4

Related to objective 4.3.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the integration of biodiversity into rural development.

Flemish region

Agri-environment schemes (in cooperation with the administrations for land use management and agriculture).

In the framework of the Flemish programmes for rural development (2007-2013 and 2014-2020), farmers get the opportunity to sign up for agri-environmental schemes, in which they commit themselves to do more for the environment, nature and the landscape than is legally required, such as as: organic agriculture, planting and maintenance of orchards with tall fruit trees, preservation of local breeds, mechanical weed control, confusion technique in fruit cultivation, cultivation of Leguminosae, agroforestry. Schemes for field margin management and for the management of small landscape elements (pools, hedges, wooded banks), aimed at strengthening the ecological infrastructure in farmland areas, have been widely adopted by farmers. Specific new schemes for farmland birds and for hamster have been introduced. A total surface of agri-environment schemes for nature objectives and for improving environmental quality aspects reached 18.464 ha for the period 2015-2017 (VLM report 2018).

Other examples of implementation:

- Reorientate the rural development policy towards the preservation of biodiversity (AGNABIO project: structural consultation between agricultural policy structures and nature policy structures, structural consultations with the agricultural sector, (<http://lv.vlaanderen.be/nlapps/docs/default.asp?id=3004>)).

- Actions carried out are initiated to provide for the integration of the preservation of biodiversity through management agreements and (contributions for by the Rural Development Programme and through management agreements on the other hand).

Walloon Region

Agri-environmental schemes (see section 4.3.1).

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the integration of biodiversity into rural development.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Sur les exploitations agricoles, l'utilisation durable de la biodiversité est encouragée par des paiements directs accordés au titre du premier pilier de la Politique Agricole Commune qui sont conditionnés au respects de différentes normes sur l'environnement ainsi que par le biais des Mesures Agro-Environnementales (MAE) volontaires intégrées dans le deuxième pilier de la PAC par le biais des Plans de Développement Ruraux (PDR) et pour lesquels des contrats sont conclus avec les agriculteurs en Belgique. Les mesures générales sont accessibles directement tandis que d'autres plus ciblées sont accessibles aux agriculteurs après l'avis technique d'un conseiller.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.4>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.5

Related to objective 4.3.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the sustainable use of genetic resources for food, and agriculture.

For plant genetic resources, a 'National Committee on Plant Genetic Resources' has been created in January 2011. The Committee is a working group that coordinates at the national level all actions and initiatives related to Plant Genetic Resources and cultivated plant biodiversity (policy coordination, management of the Belgian National Inventory of Plant Genetic Resources collections, preparation of participation in international meetings and working groups regards PGR, ad hoc items, ...) and works under the supervision of the 'Permanent Working Group Inter-Ministerial Conference on Agricultural Policy', the official forum where items on agriculture are structurally discussed and decided between the relevant regional (Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Capital region) and federal authorities, working in the agricultural domain.

In June 2012, Belgium officially notified its public collections to join the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (see <http://www.planttreaty.org/inclusions>) and signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS, see [http://aegis.cgiar.org/about\\_aegis.html](http://aegis.cgiar.org/about_aegis.html)).

In 2005, Belgium prepared its first national report to FAO on animal genetic resources: 'Les ressources génétiques des animaux d'élevage en Belgique. Rapport national à la FAO. Contribution de la Belgique au Premier Rapport sur l'État des Ressources Zoogénétiques dans le Monde'.

[http://agriculture.wallonie.be/apps/spip\\_wolwin/IMG/pdf/RapportNationalFAO.pdf](http://agriculture.wallonie.be/apps/spip_wolwin/IMG/pdf/RapportNationalFAO.pdf)

#### Flemish Region

Agri-environmental measures were adopted within the European Rural Development Program 2014-2020 to stimulate the on-farm conservation of 9 local sheepbreeds and 3 local cattlebreeds and fruit tree varieties (see also Flemish contribution on target 3).

Several organisations (non-profit associations) receive a structural subsidy to promote and preserve genetic resources (Steunpunt Levend Erfgoed vzw, Nationale Boomgaardenstichting vzw).

Herdbooks of farm animals are supported, specific attention is paid to activities aimed at controlling the degree of inbreeding within the population.

The population structure of local breeds of farm animals is systematically monitored.

Demonstration project for stimulating farmers and informing them about farm saved vegetable seeds.

A collection of Rhododendron varieties is maintained in vivo and partly by cryopreservation at ILVO (Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research, <http://www.ilvo.vlaanderen.be>).

#### Walloon Region

An agri-environmental measure aims to protect threatened local livestock species.

A collection of ancient fruit tree varieties is managed by the Walloon Agricultural Research Centre.

Other actions undertaken to preserve or develop genetic resources: the cultivation of spelt and a barley variety, the conservation and valorisation of the genetic patrimony of the mixed type of the Belgian Blue and of the 'poule ardennaise'.

The mission of the 'Comptoir Forestier' is to collect seeds among all the major and secondary tree species and to commercialize these seeds through an annual catalogue. Priority is given to species of great economical value for the Walloon Region and to obtain a high genetic diversity.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

In application of the ordinance of the 1st March 2012 related to the conservation of nature, the intentional introduction in nature of non-indigenous strains of indigenous animal and plant species is subject to permission (art. 75, §2).

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the sustainable use of genetic resources for food, and agriculture.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La Belgique est aussi fournisseur de ressources génétiques, et des stratégies nationales sur les ressources génétiques animales et végétales seront préparées au sein des 'Commissions Nationales des Ressources Phyto-génétiques' et 'Zoogénétiques' mises sur pied récemment.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.5>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.6

Related to objective 4.3.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Reduce the impacts of pesticides on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

From 2013, the NAPAN (Nationaal Actie Plan d'Action National) has been established as the Belgian national action plan for pesticide reduction as requested by the EU directive 2009/128. It includes the Federal Reduction Plan for Pesticides 2013-2017 (FRPP), and the plans from the three Regions. Each of these plans comprises both specific actions and actions carried out jointly with the other members of the NAPAN Task Force. It aims to reach the objectives of reducing risks linked to pesticides as defined in EU Directive 2009/128/CE establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides.

The FRPP is coordinated by the federal agencies in charge of the standardization of products, which allows taking many structural changes related to pesticides issues through legislative changes. Examples of the measures foreseen in the federal and regional plans to be implemented at the national level are (i) the harmonization of methods, standards and reports on water contamination by pesticides, (ii) ensuring balanced information for non-professional users of products at the point of sale regarding the right conditions of use, the risks to public health and the environment, including biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Flemish Region

- The Decree on integrated water management contains concrete requirements with respect to riparian zones along water bodies with specific requirements on soil cultivation, use of pesticides and manure use. Water quality in general terms improved, although the required levels are not yet reached for all chemicals in all water ways: <http://www.vmm.be/water/kwaliteit-oppervlaktewater>.

- The use of pesticides and herbicides by local authorities in public domains or parks is forbidden since January 2004. Pesticide reduction programmes in agricultural practices are promoted through stimulating measures under the Rural Development Programme and codes of good practices.

- Impact of use of herbicides and other plant protection chemicals decreased during the last 10 years – due to restricted use of some products, better techniques for applying chemicals in agricultural practices and raising of awareness on the impacts of such products on the environment and in the food chain.

<http://www.milieurapport.be/nl/feitencijfers/milieuthemas/verspreiding-van-pesticiden/druk-op-oppervlaktewater-door-pesticiden/druk-op-het-waterleven-door-gewasbescherming-seq-en-seq/>

Area under organic farming (actions supported by the administrations for agriculture and land use management).

The area under organic farming increased to 7,300 ha. This area corresponds to about 1.2% of the total farmland area in Flanders.

### Walloon Region

Organic farms: see above.

List of other Walloon tools and measures in place for this sub-objective:

- The Forestry Code forbids the utilisation of pesticides. The only exceptions are defined by the Walloon government to combat certain diseases or invasive alien species that threaten the indigenous fauna and flora.
- The use of herbicides is forbidden in some public areas such as parks, waterways, ponds and lakes, road verges and ditches.
- 159 municipalities have signed the ‘Plan Maya’ thereby committing themselves 1) to put in place a plan to reduce the use of pesticides and 2) to manage green spaces more ecologically.

In Wallonia, the Walloon Pesticide Reduction Programme 2013-2017 was adopted by the Walloon Government in 2013. It includes 37 measures of strictly regional competence. The main measures relate to:

- certification of the knowledge of professional users of plant protection products (PPPs);
- raising awareness among non-professional users of good gardening practices 1;
- public information;
- monitoring of poisonings and exposures;
- protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water;
- protection of specific areas;
- handling and storage of PPPs for professional use;
- integrated pest/weed management.

Of the 100 pesticides examined in groundwater between 2011-2014, 9 were responsible for most of the pollution. These 9 molecules were all herbicides. Of these, 4 were banned (atrazine, diuron, bromacil and simazine) and 2 were from banned molecules (desethylatrazine and BAM). Due to the regular placing on the market of new active substances and the transfer time (soil-groundwater) of certain pesticides within groundwater bodies, prevention and monitoring cannot be abated.

See also ‘Etat de l’environnement wallon’ (<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be>).

### Brussels-Capital Region

- A very strict legislation is in place concerning the use of pesticides in public green spaces. In public regional green spaces: no use of pesticides or very restricted. A regional program has been approved for the period 2018-2022.

- Water pollution is gradually removed thanks to the actions taken in the framework of the water plan.

#### Ordinance "pesticides"

The Ordinance "pesticides" of 20 June 2013 prohibits the use of plant protection products (PPP) in public places by public managers and reinforces the provisions of the ordinance of 1 April 2004. Public managers must therefore use alternative techniques for maintenance of the spaces they manage, namely: the surroundings of public buildings; the edge of roads and roads (embankments, berms, roundabouts, pavements, car parks, street trees, etc.); squares, public gardens and parks; woods and forests; the banks of rivers, ponds and lakes; all contribute to the regional green and blue network. This prohibition has come into full force on 1 January 2019.

The same ordinance prohibits the use of PPPs in protected areas with a view to nature conservation, such as nature reserves, forest reserves and Natura 2000 areas, in close collaboration with the ordinance "nature" of 1 March 2012. The ordinance pesticides also bans, for all public, the use of PPPs in the areas of protection of water catchments for human consumption, and, in line with the federal legislation, requires strict compliance to "buffer zones" (along watercourses and some impermeable or subject to trickling grounds) where the use of PPPs is prohibited in order to protect surface water and the organisms that live there.

Besides buffer zones, however, strict exemption conditions are foreseen to allow the use of some PPPs, as a last resort, to fight against invasive species defined by the ordinance nature, or to protect plant heritage of certain specifically identified pests.

#### Regional Programme for pesticide reduction

The Region has set up a regional pesticide reduction program (RPRP) for 2013-2017. This program defines 35 actions contributing to the reduction of pesticide use by many publics. The RPRP largely involves awareness raising, training, information and supervision of public and professional green space managers (for the establishment of a regional center for differentiated management); it also calls for the citizen participation.

The program foresees the annual organization of the Week Without Pesticides, during which many awareness events take place for the general public to reduce PPP, for ecological gardening and for preserving ordinary biodiversity.

Along the same line, the program specifies that the development of private gardens requiring no pesticides will be promoted, including through the distribution of brochures or through the call for exemplary management. These objectives appear to be particularly relevant to the regional area occupied by private gardens: nearly 32% (in 1999).

Awareness raising for the reduction of PPPs also requires adequate training of numerous relays supported by the Region, like the "Maîtres-Composteurs" or the "Maîtres-Maraîchers". Ecological management charters of all collective vegetable gardens areas supported by the Region will also be implemented.

Monitoring programs for water quality and to detect causes of pollution have been put in place, in line with the Programme of measures of the 2009-2015 Water Management Plan.



**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Reduce the impacts of pesticides on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Le Programme de réduction des pesticides et des biocides 2005-2010 est d'application en agriculture et également pour la gestion des espaces privés, et des effets positifs sur l'environnement devraient être observés dans les prochaines études.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.6>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.3.8

Related to objective 4.3.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that the production of plants, *inter alia* non-indigenous plants, for renewable energy does not negatively impact on biodiversity.

Federal level

Study on the biodiversity impact of the development of agro-fuels in Belgium

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5): a study evaluating the biodiversity impact of the development of agro-fuels, including genetically modified plants, in Belgium has been finalised (under funding by the federal environmental administration). This study comprises three main parts: study of the environmental (biodiversity) impacts; analysis of the socio-economic impacts; and policy recommendations.

Sustainability criteria for the use of biofuels

The development of biofuel production pathways/chains is conditioned by the application of a system of sustainability criteria (European directives on Renewable Energy and Fuel Quality 2009/28/CE published in June 2009). Those criteria represent the main measures to allow reasonable use of biofuels while limiting negative impacts on biodiversity. According to the law of 10 June 2006, which promotes biofuels in Belgium, the approval of biofuel production units is based on certain criteria, such as: (1) a short distance between biomass cultivation site and biofuel production unit; (2) the most favourable CO<sub>2</sub> balance; (3) the energetic efficiency of the

production unit; and (4) reduced use of fertilizers and/or pesticides. Decision rules with respect to the approval of production units also take into account the global CO<sub>2</sub> balance, in order to assure that biofuel production leads to a significant reduction of greenhouse gases. However, apart from the use of fertilizers and/or pesticides, no biodiversity-related criteria are included in the attribution criteria.

Some permanent grasslands have been converted to biofuel crops.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.3.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that the production of plants, *inter alia* non-indigenous plants, for renewable energy does not negatively impact on biodiversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Lors de la transposition de la directive concernant la production de biocarburant, la Belgique n'a repris que les critères environnementaux minimum préconisés, ceci devra être révisé dans les prochaines années. Les critères appliqués pour la production des biocarburants tiennent compte de critères spécifiques de biodiversité mais ces derniers n'ont pas encore été opérationnalisés par la Commission européenne.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.3.8>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.4.1

Related to objective 4.4.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the implementation of good fishing practices in the North Sea, favourable to fish protection and their habitats, including the implementation of the Common Fishery Policy.

Flemish Region

The recently reformed Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union's most important goal is laying down rules to ensure a sustainable European fishery without damaging the marine environment. An example of one of the decisions taken, is that the fish stocks will have to reach their maximal sustainable yield (MSY) where possible in 2015, but in 2020 at the latest. Now the Flemish government will have to implement or guide this implementation for the Flemish fisheries sector.

In relation to the marine fishery: continued structural and ad hoc consultations with the Department for Agriculture and Fisheries as well as with the Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research on the improvement of the management of fish stocks, and the elimination of the negative effects on fish stocks, species, habitats and ecosystems.

Codes of good practices have been developed and are being applied or are under review.

Federal level

In 2012, the “Good Environmental Status” and associated objectives for the descriptor “commercial fish species” (MSY by 20120) was defined and agreed (Belgische Staat 2012. Omschrijving van Goede Milieutoestand en vaststelling van Milieudoelen voor de Belgische mariene wateren. Kaderrichtlijn Mariene Strategie – Art 9 & 10. BMM, Federale Overheidsdienst Volksgezondheid, Veiligheid van de Voedselketen en Leefmilieu, Brussel, België, 34 pp.).

Sand and gravel extraction, dredging and dumping of dredge spoil are subject to licences. Zero tolerance policy in relation to oil pollution.

Development of a cleaning policy of the North Sea through the ‘fishing for litter programme’.

Measures regulating coastal fisheries in protection of marine mammals.

Ongoing actions in order to reduce import of nutrients and hazardous substances into the North Sea.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.4.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the implementation of good fishing practices in the North Sea, favourable to fish protection and their habitats, including the implementation of the Common Fishery Policy.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des mesures sont en place afin de réguler la pêche récréative avec filets maillants en mer et protéger les mammifères marins. Il n’y a pas encore de mesures concernant les effets de la pêche professionnelles sur les espèces et habitats protégés. L’extraction de sable et de gravier, le dragage et le déchargement des déchets sont sujet à une licence. Les mesures de gestion et de réduction des pollutions sont reprises sous l’objectif 3. Notamment, la Belgique applique une politique de tolérance zéro concernant la pollution par les hydrocarbures en mer du Nord.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.4.1>

## **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

### Action 4.4.2

Related to objective 4.4.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that recreational and sport fishing practices at sea and inland waters respond to ecological management objectives to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity.

#### Flemish Region

The recently reformed Common Fisheries Policy of the European Union's most important goal is laying down rules to ensure a sustainable European fishery without damaging the marine environment. An example of one of the decisions taken, is that the fish stocks will have to reach their maximal sustainable yield (MSY) where possible in 2015, but in 2020 at the latest. Now the Flemish government will have to implement or guide this implementation for the Flemish fisheries sector.

In relation to the marine fishery: continued structural and ad hoc consultations with the Department for Agriculture and Fisheries as well as with the Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research on the improvement of the management of fish stocks, and the elimination of the negative effects on fish stocks, species, habitats and ecosystems.

Codes of good practices have been developed and are being applied or are under review.

#### Walloon Region

Several measures are implemented:

- . the decree on fishing activities
- . the project 'Saumon 2000'
- . restocking projects with local varieties (trout, grayling, ...)
- . the decree on nature conservation, including Natura 2000
- . the Water Code
- . the application of the aquaculture regulation
- . awareness actions by the 'Maison de la pêche', fishing courses, ...
- . restoration of aquatic environments
- . the River contracts: their aim is to gather around the table all the concerned actors (of the valley) in order to define together an action programme for the restoration of the water courses, the adjacent areas and the water resources of the bassin
- . the working groups on water installed within some 'Plans Communaux de Développement de la Nature'

#### Brussels-Capital Region

The new nature ordinance regulates fishing practices with a sustainable aim (art 79-81). Article 82 regulates the subtraction of specimens out of nature.

#### Federal level

In 2012, the "Good Environmental Status" and associated objectives for the descriptor "commercial fish species" (MSY by 20120) was defined and agreed (Belgische Staat 2012. Omschrijving van Goede Milieutoestand en vaststelling van Milieudoelen voor de Belgische

mariene wateren. Kaderrichtlijn Mariene Strategie – Art 9 & 10. BMM, Federale Overheidsdienst Volksgezondheid, Veiligheid van de Voedselketen en Leefmilieu, Brussel, België, 34 pp.).

North Sea

Sand and gravel extraction, dredging and dumping of dredge spoil are subject to licences. Zero tolerance policy in relation to oil pollution.

Development of a cleaning policy of the North Sea through the ‘fishing for litter programme’.

Ongoing actions in order to reduce import of nutrients and hazardous substances into the North Sea.

Measures regulating coastal fisheries in protection of marine mammals.

As part of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, an environmental objective has been defined for the harbour porpoise in the Belgian part of the North Sea. This objective aims to reduce by 2020 the annual bycatch levels of this species to levels below 1.7% of its population size (which is also the OSPAR Ecological Quality Objective EcoQO).

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.4.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that recreational and sport fishing practices at sea and inland waters respond to ecological management objectives to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

L’utilisation durable des eaux intérieures découle essentiellement de la mise en oeuvre de la directive cadre Eau, du réseau Natura 2000 et des Plans de gestions qui en découlent. Un Plan de gestion eau est en phase de finalisation dans la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale. Concernant la pêche, dans deux des trois régions, l’élevage et le repoissonnement se font avec des souches locales (différentes espèces de poisson concernées, dont truites, ombres). La Belgique a dressé un inventaire des obstacles à la migration des poissons et des mesures pour la restauration des passages de migration sont repris dans les plans de gestion des bassins hydrographiques. La connectivité des réseaux hydrographiques est en nette amélioration, notamment suite à l’amélioration de la qualité des eaux de surface.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.4.2>

## **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

### Action 4.5.1

Related to objective 4.5.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Apply Ramsar Convention guidelines on wise use of wetlands concept as far as relevant.

#### Flemish Region

Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Nitrates directive to protect aquatic environment and to reach good ecological status.

The Government of Flanders is striving to improve water quality and quantity in protected areas by way of an integrated approach of the water policy. The main objective of the Flemish water policy is to obtain a good state of the water systems, an objective which it shares with the European Water Framework Directive. Biodiversity indicators used to monitor progress towards water objectives are the following:

Defragmentation of rivers (carried out in cooperation with the administration of waterways and local authorities).

The fragmentation of watercourses by weirs and sluices, together with the degradation of water and habitat quality, is an important problem for the conservation of aquatic species, in particular fish. In 1996, Benelux countries announced their intention of achieving free fish migration in all water catchments by 2010. This target was incorporated in the Flemish Decree on Integrated Water Policy and the Flemish Environmental Policy Plan (2003-2010). An evaluation of the Benelux situation shows that restoration is in progress, but far too slow to achieve the 2010 target. The target is postponed and synchronised with the European Water Framework Directive. In recent years the restoration was focused on a priority network of rivers of about 3.000 km. By the end of 2009, 171 of the 789 barriers (22%) along this network had been dealt with. Review and additional inventories of the barriers also made a classification: 45 barriers in 1st priority, of which 14 or 31% has been solved; and 682 registered barriers in 2nd priority of which 109 or 16% has been solved. If this trend shown from the data of 2012 continues the removal of fish barriers will not reach the present target. Obstacles to a swifter achievement are lack of budget and work force and social complications. Meanwhile, migratory fish species are recovering slightly, probably as a result of improving water quality. [http://indicatoren.milieuinfo.be/indicatorenportal.cgi?lang=en&detail=567&id\\_structuur=54](http://indicatoren.milieuinfo.be/indicatorenportal.cgi?lang=en&detail=567&id_structuur=54)

Trend of ecological status in watercourses: the fish index

According to the Water Framework Directive the objective of good and high ecological quality should be defined for each water type in terms of biotic scores for phytobenthos, macrophytes, invertebrates and fish. At this moment the dataset for Flanders is limited to invertebrates and fish. The score system used for fish is the IBI (Index of Biotic Integrity). This index evaluates different metrics of the type specific fish community. Results are available for two periods: 1995-1999 and 2000-2004. No sampling point reached the minimum standard of good ecological status in 1994-1999, while only one sampling point out of the 250 reached this standard after 2000. In the period 2003-2008 not one measurement point was encountered with an excellent score of the fish index and the proportion of measurement points with a good fishing community is very small (5 %). Following the same trend in the future, the goal of 2015 will not be reached. [http://www.natuurindicatoren.be/indicatorenportal.cgi?lang=en&detail=678&id\\_structuur=60](http://www.natuurindicatoren.be/indicatorenportal.cgi?lang=en&detail=678&id_structuur=60)

#### Biological quality

In the assessment of the biological quality of water is an index that is based on the presence or absence of aquatic macroinvertebrates and other biological quality elements are monitored. During the measuring

campaign of 2011, the BBI was determined at 361 measuring points. Almost 34 % were assessed as with good or very good biological quality. Both the European and Flemish legislation set to be the good ecological status or good ecological potential achieved basically by 2015. The progress to the target for macro-invertebrates is determined by another (sub)index, namely the MMIF (Multi Metric Macro Invertebrates index Flanders). In the period 2007-2011 only 19 % of water bodies scored good or better, 29 % scored moderate, 33 % inadequate and 18 % bad. For other biological quality elements is the target distance is still large. Only 6 % of water bodies sampled for macrophytes scored good and above. For phytobenthos is 7 %. For phytoplankton meets 38 % of water bodies with the standard for chlorophyll -a. Over the past two decades, the biological quality (BBI) of the Flemish surface improved slowly but steadily. The percentage of measurement locations with extremely or very poor quality decreased significantly and the percentage with moderate or good quality rose sharply. These positive developments are the result of the expansion and improvement of public water treatment and the efforts of businesses and agriculture. Substantial efforts are needed to reach the final goal.

[http://www.milieurapport.be/Upload/main/0\\_ENG\\_Indicatorrapport%202012/323351\\_mira2012E\\_Surface%20water%20quality\\_accessible.pdf](http://www.milieurapport.be/Upload/main/0_ENG_Indicatorrapport%202012/323351_mira2012E_Surface%20water%20quality_accessible.pdf)

### Phosphorous concentration in rivers

According to the European Water Framework Directive a "good ecological status" should be achieved in all natural surface waters by 2015. Sufficiently low phosphorus concentrations are an important precondition for obtaining this status. In accordance with the Water Framework Directive, two target values for phosphorus have been set for each Flemish river type: one to obtain very good ecological conditions, and another to obtain good ecological conditions. These targets are a prerequisite for the recovery of aquatic communities. The indicator reports on the share of survey points where these standards are achieved. An increase in water purification capacity and the introduction of low phosphate detergents at the beginning of the 1990s resulted in improvements. Since 1998 the indicator has shown yearly fluctuations, but there is no clear increase of the number of survey points with a good or very good ecological status. Phosphorous concentrations in nutrient-poor brooks and rivers are often too high to attain a favourable conservation status for aquatic habitats and species.

### Walloon Region

The Walloon Region has adopted the Water Code (Code de l'Eau) on 27 May 2004 to implement the Water Framework Directive. One of its objectives is to prevent additional degradations and to preserve and improve the state of the aquatic ecosystems as well as of the terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands depending on them. For more information on water in Wallonia, see: [eau.wallonie.be](http://eau.wallonie.be).

Several measures are implemented:

- the decree on fishing activities
- the project 'Saumon 2000'
- restocking projects with local varieties (trout, grayling ...)
- the application of the aquaculture regulation
- awareness actions by the 'Maison de la pêche', fishing courses, ...
- restoration of aquatic environments
- the decree on nature conservation, including Natura 2000
- the River contracts: their aim is to gather around the table all the concerned actors (of the valley) in order to define together an action programme for the restoration of the water courses, the adjacent areas and the water resources of the bassin (see below)
- the working groups on water installed within some 'Plans Communaux de Développement de la Nature'
- the river action programs by sectoral approach (PARIS) try to follow an integrated approach by planning the different interventions (for Natura 2000, the Flood Decree, etc.) in the short and the longer term

The Walloon Region has adopted the Water Code (Code de l'Eau) on 27 May 2004 to implement the Water Framework Directive. One of its objectives is to prevent additional degradations and to preserve and improve the state of the aquatic ecosystems as well as of the terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands depending on them. Some resulting plans and programs:

- the 'Plans d'Assainissement par Sous-bassin Hydrographiques' define the decontamination and clean up regime for the relevant areas
- the programme for the sustainable management of nitrogen is the application of the Nitrate Directive (part of the Water Framework Directive)

#### River contracts

River contracts are participative management structures whose aim is to bring together everyone working in the same water catchment basin, whether they come from a political, administrative, financial, associative or scientific background, in order to define a programme for restoring watercourses and their surrounding areas in a consensual way. Early 2017, 14 river contracts were active. Furthermore, 236 Walloon municipalities over 262 have become part-ners in a river contract. The river contracts currently incorporate more than 5,000 actions, the majority of which are in-tended to practically preserve and improve the quali-tative (physical, chemical and biological), quantitative, historical and aesthetic aspects of watercourses.

[http://environnement.wallonie.be/contrat\\_riviere/](http://environnement.wallonie.be/contrat_riviere/)

Some indicators (<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home.html> will soon be in English):

The ecological status of the Walloon water bodies is assessed on the basis of biological indicators (macroinvertebrates, diatoms, fish and macrophytes), physico-chemical indicators (oxygen balance, pH, nitrogenous and phosphorus matter, specific pollutants, etc.) and hydromorphological indicators (continuity of the water course, nature of the banks, etc.). Since 2014, the chemical status of surface WBs has been assessed in Wallonia by taking into account the environmental quality standards for 45 priority substances from Directive 2013/39/EU. The chemical status of groundwater bodies is assessed on the basis of the quality standards and threshold values (25 substances) listed in Annex XIV of the Water Code (see Water 1 of SER 2017).

#### Biological quality of water courses (see Water 3 of SER 2017)

In 2015, 47% of the water bodies inspected had good or high overall biological quality. This finding was similar to the assessment carried out in 2011. The poorer quality water bodies were located mainly north of the Sambre-et- Meuse line where the vast majority of them had moderate to bad quality water due to greater land take, the presence of industry and intensive cropgrowing. In addition, many water courses are largely channelled or modified, resulting in a degradation of habitats and loss of biodiversity. Despite the reduction of some pollution, the increase in the rate of waste water treatment<sup>6</sup> and the ecological restoration of certain water courses, ecosystems are slowly recovering.

#### Morphological quality of water courses (see water 6 of SER 2017)

Of the 354 surface water bodies (WBs) in Wallonia, almost 77% are classified as natural, 18% are considered to be highly modified (HMWB) (i.e. penalised by major obstacles to the movement of fish, the artificialisation of banks, excessive reservoirs or catchments, etc.) and 5% are artificial WBs (channels). These HMWBs are mainly located in the subbasins of the Scheldt-Lys, the Dendre, the Haine, the Sambre and the Meuse downstream. All WBs combined, hydromorphological quality was considered good to high for 55% of WBs and bad to moderate for 40%. This work led to the identification of priority WBs for hydromorphological restoration work. The main measures envisaged in the second River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs)<sup>3</sup> aim at restoring river functionality by concentrating efforts on the removal of major and impassable obstacles to the free movement of fish, putting in place appropriate management measures to achieve good or high ecological status in the WBs in question, via Natura 2000 habitats and species (e.g.



pearl mussels, graylings, barbels, etc.), and initiating actions to redirect water courses, and manage and restore riparian forest areas.

Other information on eutrophication, pollutants, etc. in water courses are available. See <http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home.html>.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

The Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) adopted in 2012 a first plan for water management and a program of measures to improve water management on its territory. It includes a strategic theme “Quantitatively restore the hydrographic network” in order to achieve the quality objectives required by the EU Directive, including environmental objectives. An operational objective aims at the recovery by surface waters of their role of supporting ecosystems. A register of protected areas was proposed, as foreseen in the “Water Framework Order” (2006) ([http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/mopdf/2006/11/03\\_1.pdf](http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/mopdf/2006/11/03_1.pdf)) establishing a framework for water policy in BCR. This plan has been updated in 2016 for 6 years (2016-2021). It includes designated zones requiring special protection under specific legislation on the protection of surface water and groundwater and the conservation of habitats and species directly dependent on water areas.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.5.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Apply Ramsar Convention guidelines on wise use of wetlands concept as far as relevant.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

#### **Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Les milieux ouverts et humides sont les plus fragiles et bénéficient de mesure de conservation (17% des tourbières se trouvent dans un état de conservation favorable).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.5.1>

#### **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country’s national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

##### Action 4.6.1

Related to objective 4.6.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the conservation of forest biodiversity through independent credible forest certification systems that provide a guarantee for sustainable forest management.

#### Flemish Region

The Flemish forest policy

The Flemish forest policy is based upon multifunctional and sustainable forestry and applied through development of a management vision (<https://www.natuureenbos.be/bosbeheerplanning>) consisting of:

- specific and concrete guidelines for a close-to-nature forest management,
- a framework to assess the forest functions,
- a method for quality control,
- promotion and granting of FSC-label to forest (in 2018 about 22,177 ha were granted the FSC certificate): <https://www.houtverkopen.be/fsc-boscertificering>,
- publication of criteria for sustainable forest management and technical/financial support for the implementation of these criteria by private forest owners (see Action 4.6.2).

#### Walloon region

In the Walloon Region, PEFC certified forests cover nearly about 54% of the Region's forest areas. The owners engage themselves voluntarily to diversify their forest, to maintain dead wood, to maintain patches where trees can grow old, etc. This means that 17.7% of the Walloon territory is developed sustainably, even though the primary objective is not the conservation of biodiversity. Nearly 90% of certified forest land belongs to public landowners.

The external audit carried out in June 2016 as part of the PEFC forest certification process placed the DNF in non-compliance as regards the production of management plans. The DNF has been asked to take the necessary measures, under penalty of losing the PEFC forest certification for all public forests. An action plan was recently submitted and approved by the external auditor. The Forestry Code now requires that each management plan must be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment, which makes the procedure for adopting plans more complex.

#### Brussels-Capital region

Forest exploitation in the Brussels Capital Region is in line with the FSC and PEFC certification criteria: <http://www.foret-de-soignes.be/de-la-foret/partenaires/partenaires-economiques/>.  
Federal level

#### Examples of implementation:

- Development of a federal public procurement policy to promote SFM (circular letter in 2005); a methodological guide supports federal purchasing authorities; promotion and follow-up of forest certification.
- An information campaign was set up to inform the public on SFM and related certification (2006 and 2007).

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.6.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the conservation of forest biodiversity through independent credible forest certification systems that provide a guarantee for sustainable forest management.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

Measure taken has been partially effective

- Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Toutes les forêts régionales et de nombreuses forêts privées bénéficient d'un label de certification de gestion durable (FSC ou PEFC).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.6.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.6.2

Related to objective 4.6.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote nature-oriented forestry that provides a guarantee for sustainable forest management, including forest conservation.

Flemish Region

The Flemish forest policy

The Flemish forest policy is based upon multifunctional and sustainable forestry and applied through development of a management vision (<https://www.natuurenbos.be/bosbeheerplanning>) consisting of:

- specific and concrete guidelines for a close-to-nature forest management,
- a framework to assess the forest functions,
- a method for quality control,
- promotion and granting of FSC-label to forest,
- publication of criteria for sustainable forest management and technical/financial support for the implementation of these criteria by private forest owners (see below).
- incentives are provided for the use of criteria for sustainable forest management in the management planning and implementation.

Area with management according to the criteria for sustainable forest management (in cooperation with the private forest owners supported financially and technically by the Agency for Nature & Forest).

Up to 2017 the Flemish Forest Decree allows two types of management plan: limited and extensive. Limited management plans need to comply with only minimum standards, while extensive management plans need to comply with the criteria for sustainable forest management. These approximately follow the guidelines of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), whose certificate can then be easily obtained – end of 2018 about 23,894 ha were granted the FSC certificate. Forest management plans were by decree compulsory for all forests larger than 5 ha. Private owners are offered the choice between limited and extensive management plans, whereas extensive management plans are compulsory for public forests. They are also compulsory for private forests located within certain nature-oriented land use planning areas. The other private owners are encouraged to develop extensive management plans through grants and forest owner groups.

End of 2018 a private forests area of 29,401 ha has an extensive forest management plan and more than 30000 ha limited. A new nature management plan system has been introduced end of 2017 with a unique format for nature management plan for natural areas, forest areas and park areas. Together with this new regulation a subsidy system has been introduced also giving opportunity to any land owner to develop a management plan indicating the level of ambition to contribute to the nature objectives allocated to their respective site – the subsidy level depends on the level of ambition indicated in the plan going from stand-still (level 1) to attaining the ‘reserve’ status of protection of natural values (level 4). All existing management plans are being revised to comply with this new system: <https://www.natuurenbos.be/bosbeheerplanning>.

Other example of implementation:

- Stimulate forest owners to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the forests (recognition and guidance of forest groups, structural consultations with the forestry sector).

### Walloon Region

Some recent legal measures (new Forest Code, measures to protect the Natura 2000 network) go in the direction of improving the carrying capacity for biodiversity of the Walloon forests. The ambition of these measures remains weak to drive significant positive changes in the conservation status of forest habitats. Many tools are available to improve forest biodiversity and sustainable forest management:

#### PEFC certifications

In the Walloon Region, PEFC certified forests cover nearly about 54% of the Region’s forest areas (see action 4.6.1).

#### Circulaire relative aux aménagements dans les forêts soumises au régime forestier

The ‘Circulaire relative aux aménagements dans les forêts soumises au régime forestier’ is a normative tool for the management planning in public forests (270,000 ha in Wallonia, including regional nature reserves); at this stage, about 65% of the forest area is covered by new management plans following this circular; the remaining area should be covered at an annual rate of 12,500 ha for the public forests and 1,300 ha for nature reserves. The ‘Circulaire Biodiversité en Forêts’ recommends integrating measures with a more biodiversity-friendly dimension within the objectives of forest management.

#### The Forestry Code

A new Forestry Code entered in force in Wallonia end 2008. The aim of the new code is to safeguard the regeneration and sustainability of forests, as well as an optimum dynamic balance between its economic, ecological and social roles. Certain objectives are imposed on both public and private land owners (choice of species appropriate to local conditions, diversification, measures favouring biodiversity, restricting clear cutting, drainage and input, reasonable opening up to the public, etc.). This code applies to around 540 000 hectares of forests. One of the objectives of the Forestry Code is to combat climate change and to preserve biodiversity. It stipulates that the sustainable development of wood(land)s and forests implies the application of certain principles such as:

- the preservation and improvement of forestry resources and their contribution to the carbon cycle
- the preservation of the health and vitality of forest ecosystems
- the preservation, conservation and improvement of biodiversity in forest ecosystems

- the preservation and improvement of the protective functions of forest among others related to the water and the soil
- the preservation and improvement of other socio-economic benefits and conditions (preservation of an equilibrium between resinous and broad-leaved trees and promotion of a mixed forest type with a diversified age composition, adapted to climate change and able to mitigate some of its effects; restriction of areas where trees are cleared; for public owners: preservation of dead, damaged or biologically interesting trees, preservation of at least 1 tree of special biological interest per 2 ha, the preservation of shrubby hedges, ban on the planting of resinous trees next to water courses; the planning tool for public forests within the Forestry Code takes measures for the promotion of biodiversity into account; the Forestry Code imposes that 3% of the broad-leaved forests with a surface of more than 100 ha are to be delimited as integral reserves)
- the use of pesticides as well as the burning of branches is forbidden in all forests.

### Walloon Observatory for forest health

Opened in 2011, the Walloon Observatory for forest health (OWSF) is a powerful tool for the evaluation and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Walloon forests in the short and long terms. In the particular context of global warming and the preservation of biodiversity, OWSF proposes prompt solutions to health problems, calamities, extension pest or disease or other problems that affect Walloon forests. Health monitoring is the basic principle of the plant forest monitoring because it allows saving a problem when it is observed. Forest health is obviously considered on the whole territory as well for public forest as for private forests.

### Natura 2000

About 150,000 ha of forests are included in Natura 2000; management contracts will be concluded between the authorities and the owners, to implement the objectives of each site.

### Ecological tree varieties registry

The application of the 'ecological tree varieties registry' allows to optimise silvicultural practices as well as to improve ecosystem functioning, the mineral and water cycles, and the biodiversity of the undergrowth.

### Pro Silva

Pro Silva: research about and promotion of a close-to-nature silviculture based on natural processes. Currently, the Walloon forest area managed through forestry Pro Silva is about 25,000 ha or 5% of the Walloon forest. This mode of forestry meets a lot of enthusiasm and it is hoped that by 2018, 6% of the Walloon forest (at least 80% in government forest) will be managed in this way. This is one of the objectives of the actions of the Wallonia Nature Network – catalogue of actions.

Les plans d'aménagement forestier constituent un guide pour le travail du forestier. Ils l'aident notamment à éviter la surexploitation et à assurer la multifonctionnalité des forêts. Imposés par le Code forestier à partir de 2008 pour tous les bois soumis d'une superficie supérieure à 20 ha d'un seul tenant, leur réalisation constitue en outre un des axes du Plan de progrès pour la gestion forestière(a) visant une gestion durable des forêts wallonnes.

### Brussels-Capital Region

Important efforts are done to integrate biodiversity considerations in the forestry policy. The Brussels Sonian Forest covers 1,654 ha, i.e. about 10% of the regional territory

(<http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/Templates/Particuliers/Niveau2.aspx?id=4720>). 112 ha are protected as forest reserves, including 36 ha as integral reserves. It belongs to the Natura 2000 network as it contains nine habitat types protected under the Habitats Directive, and benefits of a specific management plan which largely takes nature into account. The goals of the management plan are: enhance forest biodiversity, maintain or restore some of particular ecosystems, partially maintain the cathedral beech grove, secure a diversity of quality landscapes, enhance the historic and cultural patrimony, maintain the forest clean, welcome the public, satisfy public demands for recreation and provide a good cohabitation between multiples activities, limit activities that could damage the soils, inform and heighten public awareness on nature and sustainable management, protect water resources of the site, tend towards natural regeneration of forest stands. The designation of new protected areas is an offshoot of the current management plan for the Sonian Forest. Buffer zones around protected sites, weakened areas or wildlife refuges, they were designated in 2007 to fight against forest degradations. Their status is less restrictive than the reserves. However, it imposes to limit the traffic to the paths and force masters to keep their dog on a leash. 34% of the territory of the Sonian forest, some 564 hectares are affected by this status. In addition, the management of the Sonian forest respects the criteria of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) who gave their first attestation (IMO-FM/COC-23023) on 25 November 2003.

More recently, a multi-functional plan for the Sonian Forest has been written and will be shortly approved by the regional government. It will promote sustainable use of the forest and multifunctionality of activities. The new Brussels multi-functional management plans for the coming 24 years will allow the Sonian Forest to fully deliver the ecosystem services while reconnecting people to Nature. This multi-functional plan also promote the concept of “equipped and connected entry doors”, “contact zone” and “diffusion zones” for analysing access of people to Natura 2000 site while preserving central zone with low access to people.

Federal level

Adoption of a sectoral agreement in the wood sector to stimulate the production and sell of sustainable wood products.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.6.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote nature-oriented forestry that provides a guarantee for sustainable forest management, including forest conservation.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Une politique de marchés publics durable qui utilise du bois issu de forêts gérées durablement est appliquée dans les régions et a été mise en place au niveau fédéral en 2006<sup>37</sup>. Celle-ci comprend depuis 2005 une Circulaire basée sur certain nombre de critères de durabilité pour les systèmes de certification. Elle est en cours de révision, inachevée sous le Gouvernement précédent pour cause d'affaires courantes. Un guide méthodologique pour le développement de marchés publics à base de bois durable existe depuis 2006 et des formations ont été organisées en 2010 pour soutenir les

autorités fédérales dans leurs achats. Le fédéral promeut et suit les débats concernant la certification des forêts. Depuis 2006, la Belgique participe aux débats européens concernant les marchés publics verts pour les aspects qui concernent le bois et les produits à base de bois. Le public belge a également été sensibilisé à la gestion durable des forêts et aux certifications lors de campagnes d'information menées en 2006 et en 2007. En 2010 - 2011, un accord sectoriel au sens de la Loi Normes de Produits a été conclu avec le secteur du bois en Belgique afin d'augmenter l'offre de bois et de produits à base de bois issus de forêts gérées durablement. Cet accord est mis en oeuvre suivant une baseline, des cibles et des objectifs quantitatifs convenus ensemble entre le secteur et les Pouvoirs publics.

Les forêts régionales et autres forêts publiques, ainsi qu'un nombre croissant de forêts privées bénéficient à l'heure actuelle d'un label de certification de gestion durable (FSC ou PEFC, les deux programmes de certification étant internationalement reconnus). Des mesures ont été prises pour renforcer la promotion de la certification forestière étant donné que 56 % des forêts belges appartiennent à des propriétaires privés.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.6.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.6.3

Related to objective 4.6.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: protection of forest genetic diversity.

Walloon Region

The Forestry Code stipulates that the sustainable development of wood(land)s and forests implies the application of certain principles among which: all artificial regeneration actions using tree varieties which are not optimal or tolerated following the 'ecological tree varieties registry' are forbidden.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.6.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: protection of forest genetic diversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La diversité génétique forestière est maintenue par des coupes sélectives, éclaircies de régénération naturelle, préservation d'arbres remarquable, la préservation de peuplements forestiers remarquable sur pied en vue d'en récolter les graines, etc. Les peuplements à grains forestiers permettent de maintenir la diversité génétique des espèces vivantes.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.6.3>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.7.1

Related to objective 4.7.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote integrated management of hunting grounds in cooperation with farmers, foresters and environmental NGOs and the application of good hunting practices.

Flemish Region

Controlled hunting for wildlife management

Organised and controlled hunting in Wildlife Management Units (WMU) is promoted so that hunters can act as joint managers of the open space. Principles, criteria and indicators are being developed to evaluate the sustainability of the implementation and hunting plans and to review policies.

[www.vlaanderen.be/nl/natuur-en-milieu/natuurbeheer/erkenning-van-een-wildbeheereenheid](http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/natuur-en-milieu/natuurbeheer/erkenning-van-een-wildbeheereenheid)

Walloon Region

En application de l'Article 1 de la loi sur la chasse, 50 conseils cynégétiques, couvrant l'ensemble du territoire wallon, sont reconnus par les Autorités et ont pour mission d'assurer, pour les différents types de gibier, la coordination de la gestion cynégétique sur les territoires de chasse qu'ils regroupent et qui représentent généralement plusieurs dizaines de milliers d'ha. L'objectif est d'améliorer cette gestion cynégétique en veillant à ce que les actions des différents titulaires de droit de chasse soient plus cohérentes.

Selon l'Article 1er de la loi sur la chasse fixe pour chaque catégorie, espèce, type ou sexe de gibier et pour chaque mode et procédé de chasse, les dates de l'ouverture, de la clôture ou de la suspension de la chasse. Sur les 39 espèces de mammifères et d'oiseaux classées comme gibier, donc potentiellement chassables, la chasse n'est actuellement ouverte qu'à 16 d'entre elles. 2



espèces supplémentaires peuvent faire l'objet d'actes de destruction, moyennant une autorisation accordées aux conditions prévues par l'Article 7 de la loi sur la chasse et son arrêté d'exécution.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.7.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote integrated management of hunting grounds in cooperation with farmers, foresters and environmental NGOs and the application of good hunting practices.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La chasse est totalement interdite en Région Bruxelles-Capitale ainsi que dans la partie belge de la mer du Nord. Au sud du pays, l'augmentation des populations d'ongulés (cerfs, chevreuils et sangliers) provoquent des dégâts qui préoccupent les forestiers, agriculteurs, particuliers et scientifiques tandis que la situation semble plutôt satisfaire les chasseurs, collectionneurs de mues et promeneurs, même si les positions sont nuancées selon les situations locales. Malgré le nombre croissant d'animaux abattus, la chasse, qui constitue actuellement le premier élément de régulation des populations de cervidés et sangliers, ne parvient pas à inverser la tendance à la hausse. Ceci malgré les mesures mises en place, telles que les plans de tir pour le cerf (depuis 1989), allongement de la période de tir pour les chevreuils et les sangliers (depuis 2004), interdiction du nourrissage dans les nouveaux baux de chasse des forêts domaniales (depuis 2006). Il est toutefois malaisé de distinguer leurs effets de ceux des autres facteurs influençant la dynamique des populations (notamment l'existence de périodes hivernales clémentes). Les chasseurs sont aussi des partenaires importants pour la gestion du petit gibier et leur recensement.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.7.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 4.7.2

Related to objective 4.7.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the involvement of hunters as biodiversity actors.

Flemish Region

Controlled hunting for wildlife management

Organised and controlled hunting in Wildlife Management Units (WMU) is promoted so that hunters can act as joint managers of the open space. Principles, criteria and indicators are being

developed to evaluate the sustainability of the implementation and hunting plans and to review policies.

[www.vlaanderen.be/nl/natuur-en-milieu/natuurbeheer/erkenning-van-een-wildbeheereenheid](http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/natuur-en-milieu/natuurbeheer/erkenning-van-een-wildbeheereenheid)

Walloon Region: see 4.7.1.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 4.7.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the involvement of hunters as biodiversity actors.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La chasse est totalement interdite en Région Bruxelles-Capitale ainsi que dans la partie belge de la mer du Nord. Au sud du pays, l'augmentation des populations d'ongulés (cerfs, chevreuils et sangliers) provoquent des dégâts qui préoccupent les forestiers, agriculteurs, particuliers et scientifiques tandis que la situation semble plutôt satisfaire les chasseurs, collectionneurs de mues et promeneurs, même si les positions sont nuancées selon les situations locales. Malgré le nombre croissant d'animaux abattus, la chasse, qui constitue actuellement le premier élément de régulation des populations de cervidés et sangliers, ne parvient pas à inverser la tendance à la hausse. Ceci malgré les mesures mises en place, telles que les plans de tir pour le cerf (depuis 1989), allongement de la période de tir pour les chevreuils et les sangliers (depuis 2004), interdiction du nourrissage dans les nouveaux baux de chasse des forêts domaniales (depuis 2006). Il est toutefois malaisé de distinguer leurs effets de ceux des autres facteurs influençant la dynamique des populations (notamment l'existence de périodes hivernales clémentes). Les chasseurs sont aussi des partenaires importants pour la gestion du petit gibier et leur recensement.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/4#4.7.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5

Related to objective 5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant sectoral policies.

Federal level

A federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors was adopted by the federal government in 2009. This plan is a response to the 'Second Federal Plan for Sustainable

Development 2004-2008' (FPSD2) adopted by the Federal Council of Ministers on 24 September 2004. This plan is still valid until the adoption of the next plan.

The federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity was elaborated by four multi-stakeholder committees representing respectively the major actors in the field of transport, economy, development cooperation and science, as well as environment. The committees were chaired by the ministerial departments in charge of the sectoral activity concerned, while the secretariat was carried out by the federal ministry of environment.

The plan identifies, for each sector, a number of concrete actions (with identification of the responsible for the implementation, timing, etc.). The plan highlights links between actions and the relevant objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy.

For each sector, different key areas with several concrete actions each have been identified:

Transport: maritime transport (limitation of introduction of invasive alien species), construction, use and the dismantling of ships, Belgian Railways Company.

Economy: the question of bio-energy, economic and financial (federal) instruments, access and benefit sharing, private sector involvement, sustainable use of biodiversity.

Development cooperation: traditional knowledge; capacity building; communication, education, awareness raising; environmental assessment of development cooperation activities, integration of biodiversity in policies of partner countries; ex situ conservation; climate and biodiversity.

Science policy: biodiversity integration in all research sectors, tools to improve access to data and information, mobilize scientific competences in support of sustainable development policies.

The management plans for the Natura 2000 areas in the Belgian Part of the North Sea includes a number of actions, some of them targetting specific sectors, in particular the fishery sector and the sand extraction sector.

Life project ELIA: Elia (and formerly Electrabel) have signed conventions with the Nature and Forest administration for the ecological management of areas under high-voltage electrical lines.

#### Flemish Region

Establishment in 2018 of Green Deal with business private sector - business@Biodiversity: <https://www.lne.be/green-deal-bedrijven-en-biodiversiteit> - including already more than 140 participating companies

Interreg project 2BConnect promoting nature development on domains of private companies: <https://www.2b-connect.eu/>

#### Walloon Region

Charter with the quarries sector for biodiversity protection and restoration purposes.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant sectoral policies.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

X Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des actions ont été menées pour intégrer la biodiversité dans les politiques sociales et économiques sectorielles; cela ne se fait toutefois pas de manière systématique, avec peu de résultats sur le terrain (voir nombre d'espèces et types d'habitats encore en « rouge » = non-favorable), et des lignes directrices mériteraient d'être élaborées.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.1

Related to objective 5.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote and support stakeholders involvement *inter alia* through partnerships at all levels of decision-making relating to biodiversity.

Flemish Region

Private-public partnerships and stakeholder involvement

In the short term, the Government of Flanders is increasing the number of partnerships with the private sector, organisations and citizens to strengthen the integration of nature conservation, nature restoration and the development of measures in their project management. To achieve the biodiversity ambitions of the Flemish authorities, the Agency for Nature and Forests focusses on the collaboration with partners and the integration into the policy of other entities (project examples: Bosland (<http://www.bosland.be/>), L&R-over Antwerpen, Nationaal Park Hoge Kempen, Zwin, Sigma plan, ...). One objective of the Nature & Forest policy is encouraging integrated nature management by NGOs, other private owners and local authorities. The Agency for Nature and Forests supports and facilitates partners, as well as makes them aware of their responsibility in relation to the accessibility and the sustainable use of nature, forests and green spaces. Some examples of Private-public partnerships and stakeholder involvement are given below:

- The private-public cooperation project that was established for the protection of natural and cultural heritage of the Herkenrode abbey and its surrounding areas provides a framework for the restoration of the Herkenrode classified monument as well as for the restoration and development of the natural values of the abbey garden, agricultural land and orchards. The project includes partners from the environment administration, tourism department, provincial authority and private sector.
- Private forest owners are organised in forest groups which receive technical and financial support for the development and implementation of forest management plans that take into account forest biodiversity aspects.

- Commissions have been established with the provincial river fisheries representatives and anglers groups for an integrated planning and follow up of management measures of fish populations and river systems.
- Hunters are organised in Wildlife Management Units that receive technical and financial support for the planning and implementation of hunting activities and wildlife management measures.
- With the Youth Organisation a charter was signed in 2005 describing ways and means for the use of nature sites and forest areas for their out-door activities while ensuring protection of natural values.
- The National Park Hoge Kempen integrates objectives for socio-economic activities, recreation networks and measures for biodiversity conservation and awareness raising.
- The NGO Natuurpunt sets up partnerships with private companies for nature development and species protection measures on the areas around their buildings, and developed fact sheets to enhance such practices by others.
- In consultation with the users of the Scheldt region, the Sigma projects sought suitable locations for establishing a flood control area along the Scheldt and its tributaries and combine it with new opportunities for nature. Safety and nature are the most important functions supporting the Sigma Plan. A new batch of Sigma project starts every five years. The Plan will create no less than 4000 hectares of nature (<http://www.sigmoplan.be/en/>).

#### Consultation process for conservation objectives (IHD)

An extensive consultation and participation process was set up with all relevant actors, both the socio-economic groups that are active in the open space in the 'IHD-discussion group' (agriculture, nature management, hunting, land owners, economic sectors and forest managers) and the relevant authorities in the 'IHD-project group'. To enable the socio-economic actors to participate in the consultation process in a professional manner, resources were also provided for capacity-building within each participating organization. The framework for the consultation process in the IHD-discussion group was set out in a letter of intent that was signed in 2009 by all organizations involved. For the implementation of the nature objectives site-specific consultation fora have been established.

<http://www.natura-2000.be/overlegproces>

[http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur/Natura\\_2000/In\\_samenwerking.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur/Natura_2000/In_samenwerking.aspx)

Cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Defence for the management of the nature areas on military domains.

The agreement includes nature areas on the various military domains covering in total about 15.000 ha in Belgium for which management plans are being developed, implementation of measures for restoration and management, and monitoring is being carried out. Part of the costs is covered by the income of wood sale. A large part of this surface is also designated as Natura 2000 for which an important LIFE-Nature project supports large scale restoration actions, mapping of habitats and species distribution, dialogue for integrated management planning that takes into account nature functions and military use. The Flemish Agency for Nature and Forest manages now about 9,500 ha of military grounds. Specific focus is given to the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 as specified in the management plans.

#### Business and biodiversity

The objectives of the Agency for Nature & Forests include other specific actions to enhance the integration of biodiversity concern and measures for conservation with socio-economic objectives:

- Aspects that are being explored include the development of incentive measures such as green taxes, support for land rehabilitation and restoration of nature and landscape values, support for private – public partnerships for biodiversity conservation actions
- New ways are being explored for effective integration of biodiversity into sectoral economic activities, such as improving the biodiversity content of environmental impact assessments, site management and conservation of biodiversity on domains of private companies, sustainable provision of raw materials, sustainable harvests and resource management, certification schemes...
- Consultation groups are set up between the Agency for Nature & Forests and: Drinking Water Companies, Waste Water Management (Aquafin), Waste Handling Companies (Remo), the Department Vlaamse Waterweg (Waterways) and De Scheepvaart (Shipping), Port Authorities to discuss environmental impact assessments and other approaches, finding best solutions for limited impacts and for mitigation and/or compensation measures and identify voluntary practices to enhance natural carrying capacity and ecosystem functions. For example, there is a cooperation agreement between the Agency for Nature & Forests and REMO for the implementation of an ‘Action plan for restoration and development of habitats’ on the sites of the waste management company. There is also a strategic planning process for harbour development located in Natura 2000 sites that includes actions for restoration and conservation of habitats and species.
- Consultation group between Agency Nature & Forests, the Department Natural Resources and the Quarry Companies for sand and gravel exploitation to explore relation with biodiversity values and the proposed locations for the quarries, and discuss options for finding best solutions for limited impacts in the framework of EIAs, and for compensations and rehabilitation of natural values after their exploitation. For example with the sand mining company SIBELCO a cooperation agreement was developed to restore the natural values after the sand winning.
- With the private sector in energy production from biomass ways are explored for effective production and retail of biomass from the Agency’s nature and forest areas.
- Consultation and advisory committees have been set up with several sector groups to enhance integration of biodiversity issues into their policies: agriculture, river fisheries, foresters, hunters.

#### Cooperation

For the realisation of Natura 2000 the establishment of cooperation with other Governments and stakeholders is crucial. In the framework of the IHD-process the establishment of engagements with the various actors was initiated. Existing cooperation programmes provide the example of good practices, such as:

- with the Ministry of Defense: with the management of Natura 2000 on military domains the investment of the project Danah is continued on a long term: <http://www.DANAH.be>
- with the authority of the port of Antwerp and the NGO Natuurpunt a site specific species protection programme for the Antwerp port area was established in 2011: <http://www.portofantwerp.com/nl/natuur>.

The objective is to preserve and manage up to 5% of the port area, about 600 ha, as suitable habitat for the species of European importance.

- in collaboration with the public administrations competent for the management of waterways, roads and railways attention is given to solve bottlenecks in connectivity so that measures that contribute to connection between Natura 2000 and other nature and forest areas are integrated in the projects or management programmes of infrastructure.

- Life-Nature projects under theme 'Nature' are submitted for the realization the sustainable recovery of habitats and species of European importance and improvement of the landscape and the public access of Natura 2000 sites. In addition, these projects are also important for the development of cooperation with partners in the region and in neighbouring countries (Governments, NGOs, municipalities, provinces, local associations, private owners) and for awareness raising and communication regarding Natura 2000 and biodiversity conservation. Thanks to this co-financing projects specialized equipment could also be purchased and expertise built up in restoring and managing Natura 2000 habitats that are often very vulnerable or that need large-scale overdue management.

<https://www.natuurenbos.be/projecten/algemeen>

## Walloon Region

### Business and biodiversity

Agreements exist with the private sector (quarries, electricity companies, railroad companies ...). Some examples of public-private partnerships:

- Elia (and formerly Electrabel) have signed conventions with the Nature and Forest administration for the ecological management of areas under high-voltage electrical lines.
- Electrabel (electricity provider) sponsors several projects including the 'Aquascope de Virelles', an interpretation centre on wetland areas
- Electrabel, Triodos, Vivara are partners of the nature protection organisation Natagora
- Interbrew (In-Bev, a brewery multinational) sponsors a prize for nature conservation initiatives
- Valvert (mineral water company) finances a Nature Film Festival.
- GlaxoSmithKline has a programme for the rehabilitation of wetlands around one of its site and has a public awareness programme for its staff members.
- Natagora has established partnerships with private companies for the greening of spaces around their buildings and infrastructure (nature-friendly development of sites).
- There are conventions with quarry companies for the preservation of swallow populations.
- There are rehabilitation plans set up with cement quarry companies so that sites that are not exploited anymore can be returned to natural areas.
- ECOSEM is a private company (university spin-off) specialised in the production of indigenous seeds and plants of local provenance.
- The Wallonia Nature Network - catalogue of actions foresees that by 2018, 10 sectorial charters will be established and implemented with interested partners. Sectorial charters aim to develop biodiversity-friendly practices and also to allow the concerned industries to communicate about these actions. For example, the federation of quarry (FEDIEX) signed in April 2012 and began to implement a sectoral charter on biodiversity (See: <http://www.fediex.be/uploads/File/FEDIEX%20RA%202012%20BD%20FINAL.pdf>, page 20). The Direction Nature is currently in contact with other sectoral federations: Aquaviva, Infrabel, SPAQuE and Agoria. These four charters could be signed in 2013.

### Initiatives on the basis of the participatory approach

Several initiatives on the basis of the participatory approach contribute to biodiversity protection in Wallonia (see FFH17 of SER 2017) (see Action 14): In addition to river contracts, there are 9 types of Programmes As of 01/05/2016, 61% of municipalities had implemented between 4 to 6 programmes, and 10% combined 7 or 8 programmes (only two municipalities coordinated 8 programmes, none had yet coordinated all 9 programmes). The tree week, the late mowing of roadsides and the Maya Plan (Plan Maya) were at the top of the list with respectively nearly 99%, 86% and 80% participation.

Through the charter that they sign for 6 years, the Maya municipalities commit themselves to carry out improvements which benefit pollinating insects as well as awareness-raising actions. The late mowing of roadsides (16,000 km for about 3,600 ha), which had already been launched but was strengthened as part of the Maya operation, allows the flora of these areas to reach full maturity.

As regards tree week, municipalities can apply for aid for the distribution of seedlings, the creation of a green space and the planting of trees and hedges.

Among the oldest programmes, the arrangement of church lofts and bell towers for bats and birds has almost reached its 50% participation target and has been suspended.

The most recent programme promotes the gradual and continuous reintegration of biodiversity into municipal cemeteries: 53 cemeteries in 13 municipalities were awarded the Nature Cemetery label (label Cimetiere Nature) in 2015.

The AlterIAS programme aims to reduce the introduction of invasive alien plants and encourages municipalities to use indigenous species.

Finally, 56 municipalities are associated with one of the 10 natural parks in Wallonia and as such are committed to protecting, managing and sustainably developing their territory through a management plan.

A municipality may draw up, in consultation with all local stakeholders, a Municipal Nature Development Plan (Plan communal de developpement de la nature - PCDN) for which an annual subsidy may be requested.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

Numerous initiatives to increase comprehension of issues of nature and the city, and to encourage adoption of practices that facilitate their coexistence are already existing in the Brussels Capital Region. The nature plan provides for developing further informative initiatives to promote the image of Brussels - green city, nature city - and to strengthen partnerships with the numerous associations active in protection and raising awareness of nature. Participatory management of local green spaces will also be supported to encourage public adoption and involvement. In addition, conclusion of contracts of objectives between Brussels Environment, the AATL (Administration de l'Aménagement du Territoire et du Logement, Urban Planning and Housing Administration), Brussels Mobility, the municipalities, the STIB (Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles, Brussels Intercommunal Transport Company) and the other public parties in charge of management of public areas will be encouraged to strengthen and formalise the existing collaborations on development and management of green spaces.

(Source: Project of Regional Nature Plan in the Brussels-Capital Region, Brussels Environment, 2013)

#### Federal level

##### Business and biodiversity

See above for strategy #BeBiodiversity and BiodiversiTree.

Lancement de la plateforme belge "Business and Biodiversity" (see further).

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote and support stakeholders involvement *inter alia* through partnerships at all levels of decision-making relating to biodiversity.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**



- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des partenariats avec les parties prenantes sont mis en place à différents niveaux de la prise de décision et pour la mise en oeuvre sur le terrain.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.2

Related to objective 5.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Encourage the involvement of the private sector in the protection of biodiversity, as an integral part of business planning and operations.

Flemish Region

Private-public partnerships and stakeholder involvement

In the short term, the Government of Flanders is increasing the number of partnerships with the private sector, organisations and citizens to strengthen the integration of nature conservation, nature restoration and the development of measures in their project management. To achieve the biodiversity ambitions of the Flemish authorities, the Agency for Nature and Forests focusses on the collaboration with partners and the integration into the policy of other entities (project examples: Bosland (<http://www.bosland.be/>), L&R-over Antwerpen, Nationaal Park Hoge Kempen, Zwin, Sigma plan, ...). One objective of the Nature & Forest policy is encouraging integrated nature management by NGOs, other private owners and local authorities. The Agency for Nature and Forests supports and facilitates partners, as well as makes them aware of their responsibility in relation to the accessibility and the sustainable use of nature, forests and green spaces. Some examples of Private-public partnerships and stakeholder involvement are given below:

- The private-public cooperation project that was established for the protection of natural and cultural heritage of the Herkenrode abbey and its surrounding areas provides a framework for the restoration of the Herkenrode classified monument as well as for the restoration and development of the natural values of the abbey garden, agricultural land and orchards. The project includes partners from the environment administration, tourism department, provincial authority and private sector.
- Private forest owners are organised in forest groups which receive technical and financial support for the development and implementation of forest management plans that take into account forest biodiversity aspects.
- Commissions have been established with the provincial river fisheries representatives and anglers groups for an integrated planning and follow up of management measures of fish populations and river systems.

- Hunters are organised in Wildlife Management Units that receive technical and financial support for the planning and implementation of hunting activities and wildlife management measures.
- With the Youth Organisation a charter was signed in 2005 describing ways and means for the use of nature sites and forest areas for their out-door activities while ensuring protection of natural values.
- The National Park Hoge Kempen integrates objectives for socio-economic activities, recreation networks and measures for biodiversity conservation and awareness raising.
- The NGO Natuurpunt sets up partnerships with private companies for nature development and species protection measures on the areas around their buildings, and developed fact sheets to enhance such practices by others.
- In consultation with the users of the Scheldt region, the Sigma projects sought suitable locations for establishing a flood control area along the Scheldt and its tributaries, and combine it with new opportunities for nature. Safety and nature are the most important functions supporting the Sigma Plan. A new batch of Sigma project starts every five years. The Plan will create no less than 4000 hectares of nature (<http://www.sigmaplan.be/en/>).

Business and biodiversity – see above: Green Deal B@B established in 2018

The objectives of the Agency for Nature & Forests include other specific actions to enhance the integration of biodiversity concern and measures for conservation with socio-economic objectives:

- Aspects that are being explored include the development of incentive measures such as green taxes, support for land rehabilitation and restoration of nature and landscape values, support for private – public partnerships for biodiversity conservation actions
- New ways are being explored for effective integration of biodiversity into sectoral economic activities, such as improving the biodiversity content of environmental impact assessments, site management and conservation of biodiversity on domains of private companies, sustainable provision of raw materials, sustainable harvests and resource management, certification schemes...
- Consultation groups are set up between the Agency for Nature & Forests and: Drinking Water Companies, Waste Water Management (Aquafin), Waste Handling Companies (Remo), the Department Vlaamse Waterweg (Waterways) and De Scheepvaart (Shipping), Port Authorities to discuss environmental impact assessments and other approaches, finding best solutions for limited impacts and for mitigation and/or compensation measures and identify voluntary practices to enhance natural carrying capacity and ecosystem functions. For example, there is a cooperation agreement between the Agency for Nature & Forests and REMO for the implementation of an ‘Action plan for restoration and development of habitats’ on the sites of the waste management company. There is also a strategic planning process for harbour development located in Natura 2000 sites that includes actions for restoration and conservation of habitats and species.
- Consultation group between Agency Nature & Forests, the Department Natural Resources and the Quarry Companies for sand and gravel exploitation to explore relation with biodiversity values and the proposed locations for the quarries, and discuss options for finding best solutions for limited impacts in the framework of EIAs, and for compensations and rehabilitation of natural values after their exploitation. For example with the sand mining company SIBELCO a cooperation agreement was developed to restore the natural values after the sand winning.
- With the private sector in energy production from biomass ways are explored for effective production and retail of biomass from the Agency’s nature and forest areas.

- Consultation and advisory committees have been set up with several sector groups to enhance integration of biodiversity issues into their policies: agriculture, river fisheries, foresters, hunters.

#### Other examples of implementation

NGO Natuurpunt developed guidance sheets for various actions for nature development and conservation on domains of private companies: <https://www.natuurpunt.be/pagina/biodiversiteit-en-bedrijven>.

#### Walloon Region

##### Business and biodiversity

Agreements exist with the private sector (quarries, electricity companies, railroad companies ...). Some examples of public-private partnerships:

- Elia (and formerly Electrabel) have signed conventions with the Nature and Forest administration for the ecological management of areas under high-voltage electrical lines.
- Electrabel (electricity provider) sponsors several projects including the 'Aquascope de Virelles', an interpretation centre on wetland areas
- Electrabel, Triodos, Vivara are partners of the nature protection organisation Natagora
- Interbrew (In-Bev, a brewery multinational) sponsors a prize for nature conservation initiatives
- Valvert (mineral water company) finances a Nature Film Festival.
- GlaxoSmithKline has a programme for the rehabilitation of wetlands around one of its site and has a public awareness programme for its staff members.
- Natagora has established partnerships with private companies for the greening of spaces around their buildings and infrastructure (nature-friendly development of sites).
- There are conventions with quarry companies for the preservation of swallow populations.
- There are rehabilitation plans set up with cement quarry companies so that sites that are not exploited anymore can be returned to natural areas.
- ECOSEM is a private company (university spin-off) specialised in the production of indigenous seeds and plants of local provenance.
- Charter with the quarries sector for biodiversity protection and restoration purposes.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

The Brussels-Capital Region participates actively in the Business & Biodiversity initiative led by the federal government. Some specific agreements with CITYDEV (previous SDRB) have been made in order to promote biodiversity into businesses by making pilot project for boosting ecological business parks.

#### Federal level

##### Business and biodiversity

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5): Two studies were carried out in 2012-2013 in order to better integrate biodiversity in key market players (business, consumer, civil society ...).

"Consumers and biodiversity" study: This study shows how the federal government can encourage biodiversity, ecosystems and ecosystem services, adopting measures to alter the demand for goods and services to consumers and citizens. This study is line with the 'Biodiversity barometer' of the UEFT.

"Business and biodiversity" study: The key objective of this study is to move to sustainable consumption and production patterns by encouraging important market players to integrate biodiversity (and ecosystem services) and therefore fully explore the potential of preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resources for a triple win: an economic, a social and an environmental one. In this study, biodiversity is promoted through a broader environmental approach in the context of sustainable development.

The following sectors/filières were selected (this doesn't exclude other sectors from being approached by the federal government for negotiating on appropriate measures):

- Food business value chain, i.e. the Food processing sector together with the preceding sector in the supply chain (Agriculture/Fisheries) and the subsequent sector in the supply chain (Retail)
- Chemical business value chain, i.e. the Chemical and Life Sciences sector, together with the preceding sector in the supply chain (i.a. Agriculture/Minerals extraction) and the subsequent sector in the supply chain (Retail)
- The Finance and Insurance sector and the subsequent sector in the supply chain (Retail).

The structured analysis of BES (biodiversity and ecosystem services) impacts and dependencies of the selected sample of business value chains ('filières') clearly demonstrates that:

- Each business sector has a range of BES impacts and dependencies, some more significant than others
- BES impacts and dependencies should be identified and assessed along the whole value chain
- Insight in these BES impacts and dependencies and where in the business value chain they are generated is necessary in order to identify instruments that might be most effective.

This study resulted in an open-list of suitable instruments, categorized as regulatory, co-regulatory and voluntary instruments which might be applied or supported by the federal government in the short and mid term. These instruments within the competence of the federal government are complementary to those within the competence of other institutional levels such as the regional or the EU/global -level. The final chapter identifies concrete recommendations to this end.

The outcomes of the study will serve to prepare concrete actions with the relevant stakeholders in order to promote market opportunities favourable to biodiversity (and ecosystem services).

The output of those studies was presented during a workshop in December 2013 which initiated also some positive debate with the stakeholders.

Faisant suite au plan fédéral pour l'intégration de la biodiversité dans 4 secteurs clés et aux études prospectives ci-dessus menées à la fois sur le volet consommateurs et sur le volet entreprise et reconnaissant donc que la conservation de la biodiversité et surtout l'utilisation durable de ses composantes n'est possible que si citoyens, entreprises et autorités publiques allient leurs efforts et agissent chacun à son niveau, le fédéral a lancé, en 2017, une stratégie #BeBiodiversity dans une optique de coresponsabilité (autorités/citoyens-consommateurs/entreprises).

En mars 2019, les 4 administrations de l'environnement (fédérale et régionales), des fédérations d'entreprises, les syndicats et les principales ONG du pays ont lancé la Plateforme belge « Business and Biodiversity » dont l'objectif premier est de rassembler les stakeholders et d'échanger des informations relatives aux actions/développements pris ou souhaitables par ou pour tous les acteurs du monde de l'entreprise pour préserver la biodiversité et les services écosystémiques dans leurs activités en mutualisant les ressources à disposition.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Encourage the involvement of the private sector in the protection of biodiversity, as an integral part of business planning and operations.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

L'intérêt du secteur privé pour la biodiversité augmente clairement.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.3

Related to objective 5.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that this strategy is taken into account in decision-making and policy discussions and encourage the development and use of guidelines for the integration of biodiversity into all relevant sectoral policies.

Flemish Region

Through the establishment of the regional consultation forum on Natura 2000 the integration of the nature conservation objectives is further promoted to enhance taking up of responsibilities by the respective sectors represented for taking into account and supporting nature conservation into their own working procedures.

Brussels-Capital Region

In an urban context, where space is necessarily restricted and real estate pressure is significant, the plan also proposes approaches and tools for improving urban projects, both public and private.

A "Nature Facilitator" has been established to support designers of plans and projects and advise them on planning favourable to nature and biodiversity in the city.

An overall indicator (biotope area factor) has been developed to quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate incorporation of nature into plans and projects. This tool will be made available to the authorities responsible for granting environmental and town-planning permits.

(Source: Project of Regional Nature Plan in the Brussels-Capital Region, Brussels Environment, 2013)

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that this strategy is taken into account in decision-making and policy discussions and encourage the development and use of guidelines for the integration of biodiversity into all relevant sectoral policies.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des actions ont été menées pour intégrer la biodiversité dans les politiques sociales et économiques sectorielles; cela ne se fait toutefois pas de manière systématique, avec peu de résultats sur le terrain (voir nombre d'espèces et types d'habitats encore en « rouge » = non-favorable), et des lignes directrices mériteraient d'être élaborées.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.3>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.4

Related to objective 5.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify in strategic planning the negative and positive effects of the different sectoral policies (land-use planning, transport, energy) on priority elements of biodiversity, and take measures to correct or strengthen these effects.

Flemish Region

Examples of implementation

EIA-procedures imposed for development projects, licenses needed for alteration of bottom relief, vegetation and hydrological system; stricter protection regimes in FEN and Natura 2000.

Protection provisions

For the screening of projects/plans with potential impact on Natura 2000 an overall approach was developed to make ' the appropriate assessment ' more tailored and more accessible. For this purpose, the development of an on-line pre-screening system was initiated.

Walloon Region

The Walloon decree on environmental permits classifies establishments according to their impact on humans and the environment: class 1 and 2 activities, potentially the most polluting, require a permit, while class 3 activities, which are less polluting, only require a declaration to the

municipality. In addition, class 1 projects are automatically subject to an environmental impact assessment (EIA). This is a scientific study carried out by an approved office that highlights the effects of a project on the environment and health. For other projects, an EIA is required if the project is likely to have significant environmental impacts. The permits issued by the competent authorities are subject to general, sectoral, specific or full operating conditions depending on the type of activity and/or type of equipment. More over, appropriate impact assessment studies are applicable according to art. 6.3. of the habitat directive when there is a significant risk of a plan or a program on a Natura 2000 sites.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

Framework of the compensatory measures in the case of projects or plans affecting the integrity of a protected site

The 'Habitats Directive' states that any plan or project likely to compromise, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, achieving the conservation objectives of a protected site, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications (art. 6). In case of significant expected impact on a Natura 2000 site despite potential mitigation measures, the plan or project can be authorized only with the prior grant of an exemption granted by the Government under the following cumulative conditions:

- . there is no other alternative solution less damaging to the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;
- . the realization of the plan or project is justified for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature;
- . compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected or enhanced are prescribed.

The European requirement for an appropriate assessment was implemented as follows by the new ordinance on nature conservation: "Any plan or project requiring a permit, authorization or approval, not directly connected with or necessary to the ecological management of the [protected] site but likely to affect significantly, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to [...] an appropriate assessment of its implications on the site in view of the [protected] site's conservation objectives." (Art. 57, § 1). In the Brussels-Capital Region, this concept will now apply both for Natura 2000 sites (art. 57 to 64) and for natural and forest reserves (art. 65). The appropriate assessment shall include at least the information and factors referred to in Annex VIII of the ordinance on nature conservation (Art. 57, §2). (Source: Nature Report of the Brussels-Capital Region, 2012)

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measure: develop an indicator to evaluate the taking into account of nature into projects.

#### Federal level

SEA procedures include biodiversity criteria and refer to relevant national policy documents such as the Belgian Biodiversity Strategy, the CBD and biodiversity-related conventions and agreements.

Examples of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5):

Measures in fishing areas: Regarding transport, taking specific measures in fishing areas and reserves in favour of marine fauna and flora was implemented through the management plans for the Natura 2000 areas in the Belgian Part of the North Sea.

Environmental strategic assessments: Development of a SEA handbook to guide the managers of plans and programs and/or the persons in charge of the environmental assessments. The handbook includes criteria relating to the biodiversity, based on CBD guidelines. Inclusion of biodiversity components and expert consultation in implementing SEA for various plans and programs.

Inclusion of biodiversity in the directive 2001/42/CE on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as well as in the law of 13 February 2006 transposing it.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Identify in strategic planning the negative and positive effects of the different sectoral policies (land-use planning, transport, energy) on priority elements of biodiversity, and take measures to correct or strengthen these effects.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

Measure taken has been effective

Measure taken has been partially effective

Measure taken has been ineffective

Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Politiques pour les Études d'Incidences Environnementales des Projets (EIE-Projets), les Evaluations Environnementales Stratégique des Plans et Programmes (EES-PP), et la responsabilité environnementale sont en place.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.4>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.5

Related to objective 5.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and encourage the development and application of incentives favourable to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including economic, fiscal and financial instruments.

Flemish Region

CAP direct payments under cross compliance to ensure compliance with i.a. biodiversity legislation and some supplementary rules (for example measures to counter erosion, obligation to maintain amount of permanent grasslands on farm level).

Code of good agricultural practices nature and biodiversity to stimulate farmers to take into account biodiversity in their operations.



Research and projects to test, demonstrate and stimulate sustainable use of biodiversity in farming context.

Local projects to i.a. green farm sites, create pools, prune trees and hedges...

The Flemish rural development program consists of support for some agro-environmental measures having direct effect on biodiversity:

- organic agriculture,
- planting and maintenance of orchards with tall fruit trees,
- preservation of local breeds,
- mechanical weed control,
- confusion technique in fruit cultivation,
- cultivation of Leguminosae,
- agroforestry.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries also financed some demonstration projects with a direct positive effect on the (agro-)biodiversity, such as the project on genetic diversity in vegetables (<http://www.zelfzadentelen.be>), where information is gathered and shared to stimulate farmers in growing their own seed of their own local varieties.

The Agency for Nature and Forests provides subsidies to:

- NGO's for acquisition of land, management of reserve areas and for infrastructure for public access to the areas
- private land owners for development and implementation of nature management plans
- local authorities for afforestation projects, development of green infrastructure in urban areas, management of nature areas.

Budget for nature

The Flemish environment authority wants to evaluate and reform potentially environmentally harmful subsidies. For this purpose, it is working on alternative funding and on enabling other Flemish policy areas (e.g. ecology funding) to have a greater influence on the use of resources for environmental objectives. Collaboration with other policy areas and levels of government is an important point of attention in several domains, including the various tracks to evolve towards a green economy.

Incentive measures

The objectives of the Agency for Nature & Forests include specific actions to enhance the integration of biodiversity concern and measures for conservation with socio-economic objectives. Aspects that are being explored include the development of incentive measures such as green taxes, support for land rehabilitation and restoration of nature and landscape values, support for private – public partnerships for biodiversity conservation actions.

Walloon Region

Financing of several measures of the Walloon rural development program has a direct positive effect on biodiversity:

- measures in relation to agri-environmental subsidies
- Natura 2000 remunerations for the farmers
- Natura 2000 remunerations for the forestry sector
- conservation and valorisation of the rural patrimony

Subsidies for biological agriculture.

Supplementary subsidies for agri-environmental measures in Natura 2000 sites and in the main ecological structure areas (SEP).

Subsidies for the planting of hedges, tree rows and orchards.

Subsidies attributed through the 'Plan Communal de Développement de la Nature', for delayed mowing, for the program 'combles et clochers', within river contracts, for the Maya Plan, for natural parks, for the action 'Semaine de l'Arbre', etc.

Subsidies for the regeneration of broadleaved and conifer species.

Subsidies for the acquisition of land that will be designated as nature reserve.

Dispensation of property tax and of succession and donation rights within Natura 2000.

Forestry Code: dispensation of succession and donation rights to improve the profitability of forestry production. This disposition also stimulates private owners to develop forest stands with a diversified age composition.

Moreover, the Walloon Region gives subsidies to nature associations for management or for communication and awareness purposes.

Cross compliance mechanism under the CAP.

Natura 2000:

- agricultural compensations are available to farmers; they can be cumulated with agri-environmental measures
- compensations are also available to forest owners
- restoration and acquisition subsidies are available for all Natura 2000 sites and SEP sites, for all owners and farmers
- subsidies for the management of open spaces are also available

Non-financial incentives:

- PEFC label
- BIO label

Brussels-Capital Region

The new nature ordinance foresees several cases where positive incentives may be accorded by the Government: public awareness and information (art. 4), scientific research (art. 5), protected areas management and ground purchases (art. 35, 55), management and development of urban biotopes and other key elements of the ecological network (art. 66), actions in favour of protected species (art. 72).

The Regional Nature Plan foresees among others the following measure: to co-ordinate and to guide nature support mechanisms.

Federal level

Following the adoption of the European Maritime and Fishery Fund (EMFF, 2014-2020) the Flemish administration in charge of the Fishery Policy prepared the Operational Programme. The federal administration gave input so as to facilitate the use of EMFF for the restoration of the marine Natura 2000 areas and to support the implementation of measures of the EU-Marine Strategy Directive.

The reflexion is under discussion to see how to consider this issue in particular in the preparation of the next FPSD and in a future roadmap on resources efficiency at the federal level.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.5 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts on biodiversity and encourage the development and application of incentives favourable to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, including economic, fiscal and financial instruments.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Un Plan fédéral d'intégration de la biodiversité dans quatre secteurs fédéraux clés 2009-2013 a été adopté fin 2009. Celui-ci identifie plus de 70 actions concrètes pour intégrer la diversité biologique au sein des secteurs de l'économie, de la coopération au développement, de la politique scientifique et des transports. Parmi les ambitions du Plan, on notera aussi celle d'encourager le développement d'instruments économiques, fiscaux et financiers pour la biodiversité (y compris pour le secteur privé).

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.5>

Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan

Action 5.7

Related to objective 5.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Consider the potential impact on biodiversity, and in particular the invasiveness of species, in making import and export decisions.

Federal level

Reviewing/update of existing legislation to prevent introduction of IAS in Belgium (which will lead to an import/export ban of some IAS at federal level, ban of introduction of IAS into the environment in Brussels (art. 77 and 75 Ord. nature), etc.),

The Federal law on nature conservation of 12 July 2012 (modifying the law of 12 July 1973) foresees a number of provisions on IAS (regulate, suspend or prohibit the import, export and transit of non-indigenous plant and animal species and their remains). In implementation of this law, Pest Risk Assessments have been prepared in 2013 for 21 species.

Species introduction in marine areas

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5): The risk of species introduction in marine areas was considered during the development of the federal maritime policy, including through appropriate application of appropriate instruments.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Consider the potential impact on biodiversity, and in particular the invasiveness of species, in making import and export decisions.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Un Plan fédéral d'intégration de la biodiversité dans quatre secteurs fédéraux clés 2009-2013 a été adopté fin 2009. Celui-ci identifie plus de 70 actions concrètes pour intégrer la diversité biologique au sein des secteurs de l'économie, de la coopération au développement, de la politique scientifique et des transports. Ce plan est actuellement en cours d'évaluation. Plusieurs actions concernent la réglementation en matière d'espèces exotiques envahissantes.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.7>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Objective 5.9 - Encourage the implementation of CITES with the aim of supporting conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

At the federal level a dedicated website and online application system was developed ([www.citesinbelgium.be](http://www.citesinbelgium.be)). Via this online portal, clients can apply to obtain their CITES documents, which are necessary to trade legally in CITES-listed species of animals, plants or derived products. The CITES Management Authority is enabled to analyse the applications done via the online system, thus digitalizing the whole process except for the actual issuance of the documents, which is still needed on paper, because it needs to accompany the specimen in trade. The signature on the documents is also done electronically. In order to avoid fraudulent use of the documents, a QR code is embedded on the back of the documents, providing enforcement officers as well as traders the possibility to check the veracity of the documents at hand. Nevertheless, due to the listing of the African Grey parrot at CoP17 which caused almost a doubling in the number of certificates to be issued in 2017-2018, resulted in a significant delay in the issuance of certificates. This in turn triggered some illegal sales of these animals because breeders did not want to wait for the necessary certificate.

Furthermore, for the implementation of CITES in Belgium, negotiations are ongoing to sign a formal agreement for cooperation between the federal and the regional level.

Several training actions were undertaken by the CITES MA, both for traders and breeders (mostly in parrots and birds of prey) but also for the refuge centers as well as the local and federal police. Furthermore a team of federal inspectors was set up to undertake investigations of the breeding

and trading on the Belgian territory. The same team is also competent for the controls on Invasive Alien Species as well as the European Timber Regulation (EUTR).

At the international level, Belgium is a candidate to become a permanent member of the CITES Standing Committee, after having been the alternate for Portugal for two mandates. This will be decided at CoP18. Belgium has also worked together with the European commission to submit a proposal to tighten the rules with regards to the trade in a tropical timber species for which Belgium is a big importer, which will be decided upon at CoP18.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

The effective implementation of CITES contributes towards the achievement of Aichi Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 5.11

Related to objective 5.11 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Integrate biodiversity values into national (federal and regional) policies, programmes, planning processes and reporting systems, and develop an approach to support incorporation into national accounting if needed.

Flemish Region

Decision-making in spatial planning, land use changes and development projects have to take into account the values of biodiversity; to support the procedures guidances for impact assessment have been developed, for Natura 2000 an on-line screening system of projects is being developed based on new scientific knowledge on impacts by various threat factors and on maps of habitats and distribution of species that form the basis for the management planning of nature areas.

The Agency for Nature and Forests further enhances the valuation of nature, forests and green spaces: with ecological, economic and monetary valuations additional arguments are developed to ensure appropriate assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services values in evaluation studies of development projects, and to enhance integration of the costs and benefits of forests, nature and green spaces in the decisional process.

In the framework of the economic function of nature and forest reserves, the Agency for Nature and Forests tries to better understand the market principles in order to be able to give the sector a better insight in the consequences of the different policy options.

Some project examples: cost-benefit analyses of the conservation objectives in the framework of Natura 2000, capacity-building and case studies on ecosystem services, eco-hydrological studies, valuation of green structures in cities, ...

Study report (in Dutch) 'Raming van de baten geleverd door het Vlaamse Natura 2000-netwerk' and English summary.

Study reports on ecosystems and values of the Research Institute:

<https://www.inbo.be/nl/nieuws/natuurrapport-ecosysteemdiensten-verschenen>.

Development of online tool: The Nature Value explorer focuses on pragmatic methods that value these ecosystem services and helps planners, land managers and policy makers to map nature's socio-economic importance: <https://www.natuurwaardeverkenner.be/#/>

## Walloon Region

The Environment Code ('Code de l'Environnement') integrates dispositions in relation to biodiversity. Following the first principle of the Environment Code, the environment encompasses all natural spaces, landscapes, resources and environments as well as the air, the soil, the water, the diversity and the biological balances. It stipulates that the environmental policy of the Walloon Region relies on preventive action. Its second principle states that the Region and the other public authorities are in charge of the environment and that they have to guarantee its preservation or, if necessary, its restoration. These principles are also to be followed when the other policies of the Region are developed and implemented.

The Environment Code stipulates which projects are subject to an environmental impact assessment.

The Nature and Forest Division is consulted for the environmental and related permits.

### CoDT: Code for territorial development

The article D.II.23 of CoDT list all the different zones in land planning such as the ones which are not subject to urbanization (nature area, green space area, forests areas, agriculture area, park areas).

Le CoDT prévoit la possibilité d'inscrire en surimpression au plan de secteur des « périmètres de liaison écologique » (art. D.II.21 et R.II.21.6 du CoDT): ce périmètre « vise à garantir aux espèces animales et végétales les espaces de transition entre leurs biotopes. Les actes et travaux soumis à permis peuvent y être soit interdits, soit subordonnés à des conditions particulières de protection,

This is only applied in a very few cases.

Le Code du Patrimoine réglemente le classement de sites faisant l'objet de mesures de protection. Certains sites de grand intérêt biologique figurent à l'inventaire des sites classés.

One of the objectives of the Water Code ('Code de l'Eau') is to prevent supplementary degradation as well as to preserve and enhance the state of the aquatic ecosystems as well as the wetlands depending on them.

The river action programs by sectoral approach (PARIS) intend to follow an integrated approach by planning the different interventions (for Natura 2000, the Flood Decree, etc.) in the short and the longer term.

The Walloon strategy to adapt to climatic changes will encompass a section on biodiversity. It will take biodiversity into account when designing and applying the numerous adaptation measures.

Several measures of the Air-Climate Plan take biodiversity into account:

- determine the critical loads of nitrogen, heavy metals, persistent organic substances, etc. and take action when levels are exceeded
- facilitate the migration through an adequate ecological network
- preserve the role of forests and natural spaces
- take measures to prevent erosion, for example by planting hedges

One of the five objectives of the Forestry Code is to combat climate change and preserve biodiversity.

Biodiversity is one of the issues analysed in the reports on the state of the Walloon environment.

A Nature Code is foreseen by the 'Direction Générale Agriculture, Ressources naturelles et Environnement'.

Discussions are currently ongoing to include new measures related to Nature (in particular Natura 2000) in the 'Code Wallon de l'Aménagement du Territoire, de l'Urbanisme, du Patrimoine et de l'Énergie' and in the 'Walloon Rural Development Program'.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

Vision expressed in the Regional Nature Plan: 'the ambition of the Brussels-Capital Region at the horizon 2050 is that of a region where all the forms of nature have their place, from the most spontaneous to the most managed ones, and where the inhabitants are aware of the value of and show respect for the natural patrimony, while investors and the public authorities considers it as an asset for the attractivity and the sustainable development of the city.'

Objective 7 of the Regional Nature Plan states: 'the Brussels-Capital Region intends to continue its actions in the framework of the stimulation of and the support to the scientific research related to nature in the city, and will focus more particularly:

- on the evaluation of the state of conservation of the natural habitats and the species present on the regional territory;
- on the development of the ecological network within the region;
- on the integration of biodiversity in the urban context and on the evaluation of the ecosystem services.'

#### Federal level

Some measures of the federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors are focussed on this issue, in particular in the economy and science policy sectors (see action 5).

The reflexion is under discussion to see how to better integrate biodiversity values in particular in the preparation of the next federal plan for sustainable development. The Second Federal Plan for Sustainable Development 2004-2008 (FPSD2) was adopted by the Federal Council of Ministers on 24 September 2004. Action 18 is devoted to the preservation and maintenance of biodiversity and actions 19 and 20 deal with forests and marine waters. It was extended until the adoption of the next plan. A new Federal Plan for Sustainable Development for 5 years is being prepared, which will include the federal long term vision for sustainable development adopted in 2013 by the government, and will be based on the outcomes of the federal reports on sustainable development. Some specific measures and actions related to biodiversity and ecosystem services should be included. A pre-project is in preparation and must be further discussed in May 2014.

#### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 5.11 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Integrate biodiversity values into national (federal and regional) policies, programmes, planning processes and reporting systems, and develop an approach to support incorporation into national accounting if needed.

#### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La valeur socio-économique de la biodiversité commence seulement à être reconnue. Si un certain nombre d'actions sont prises, cela ne se fait toutefois pas de manière systématique et des lignes directrices mériteraient d'être élaborées. Un certain nombre d'acteurs clés, notamment privés, ne se sentent pas encore concernés par la biodiversité.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/5#5.11>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 6.2

Related to objective 6.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2014, ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

In order to prepare the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol (NP) in Belgium, a study was issued by the four competent authorities, and to identify and evaluate the possible consequences for the Belgian national legislation and regulation, as well as for Belgian stakeholders, resulting from this implementation. Two stakeholders' dialogues were organised in May 2012 and April 2013 in view of Belgian ratification by summer 2014. This study is publicly available and can be found on the Belgian CBD CHM:

<http://www.biodiv.be/implementation/cross-cutting-issues/abs/20130321-final-report-np-abs-be.pdf>. Preliminary results of that study were also presented by Belgium during ICNP2.

Based on the results of the study, a phased approach was adopted by the relevant Belgian regional and federal authorities for the national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. Its purpose was to maintain the necessary flexibility in order to allow integration of future developments that will result from ongoing European and global discussions, while still allowing a timely ratification.

Belgium ratified the Protocol on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016.

Simultaneous to and after the ratification process, the competent authorities discussed and prepared the needed legal measures to implement the provisions of the Protocol. Several additional actions were taken to consult stakeholders (workshops, interviews, questionnaire).

A political agreement on the shared competences of the competent authorities was achieved in November 2016. According to this agreement, the three regions and the federal authority were to develop separate sets of legal measures implementing provisions of the Protocol covered by their competences.

The different pieces of legislation are at distinct levels of development and adoption.

CEBioS/RBINS has undertaken several information workshops to scientists at RBINS, the Africa Museum and Meisei to inform them about the Nagoya Protocol, the EU regulation implication towards how to handle the acquisition and use of genetic material in the collections.



**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 6.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2014, ratify and implement the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Belgium ratified the Nagoya Protocol on 09.08.2016. Its implementation in Belgium is coordinated within a contact group.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/6#6.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 6.4

Related to objective 6.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2020, create operational mechanisms to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Belgium participates in relevant international discussions and has subscribed to several processes concerning traditional knowledge. Traditional knowledge, innovations and practices should be recognised in access and benefit-sharing arrangements. The participation of representatives of indigenous and local communities in appropriate forums should be supported. Furthermore, the preservation and sharing of traditional knowledge will be integrated into those Belgian development cooperation or scientific cooperation projects that target indigenous and local communities as primary stakeholders.

Flemish Region

The Flemish Fund for Tropical Forests is particularly emphasising this aspect.

Walloon Region

Example of a measure applied in the Walloon Region: promote the use of the Ardennais horse for several actions within vulnerable environments.

Federal level

The federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5) addresses traditional knowledge. Actions foreseen in this action plan with regard to traditional knowledge are the following:

- collect ethno-botanic data for central Congo,
- cultivate useful plants in the botanical garden of Kisantu,
- valorisation of useful mushrooms in Eastern Congo,
- valorisation of the 'Prélude' database of medicinal plants.

Belgian Development Cooperation projects that aim to support indigenous communities in partner developing countries.

Actions by CEBioS at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences for example included:

1. the valorisation of orally transmitted knowledge and the identification, mapping and vulgarisation of the most common local plants, their vernacular names and habitats in DR Congo through the publication of a vulgarization lexicon in order to provide a resource to local rangers and other users for habitat monitoring and protection. Since 2014 2 lexicons have been published in this series:
  - Houenahou, T.; Assede, E.; Habiyaemye Muhashy, F.; Sogbohossou, E.; Kouton, M.; Ondjè Agbani, P.; Houinato, M Yaoitcha, A. Gbeffe, A. 2017 - La Réserve de Biosphère de la Pendjari (Bénin). Guide & lexique pour le suivi des parcours naturels : Habitats, Faune et Feux. IRSNB. 142pp.
  - Habiyaemye Muhashy, F. et Nzigidahera B., 2016 – Habitats du Parc National de la Kibira (Burundi) Lexique des plantes pour connaître et suivre l'évolution des forêts du secteur Rwegura. IRSNB. 144pp.
2. Projects on medicinal and edible mushrooms based on information from the local population have been undertaken in Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo. This has resulted in the establishment of a network for mycologists for scientists and practitioners in the three countries, funded by ARES (<https://mycorgl2016.jimdo.com/r%C3%A9seau/>)
3. In Burundi, Niger and Bénin projects were promoted to include the traditional healers in the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. This resulted in Burundi in the establishment of a MoU between traditional healers and the researchers at the University of Burundi.

Within the existing legal framework, conceiving the 'bundle of rights' as an innovative mechanism of allotment of tangible and intangible rights on biological resources and related data (see MOSAICS project and 'bundle of rights' concept).

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 6.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2020, create operational mechanisms to protect the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La Belgique participe à la création de mécanismes opérationnels pour protéger les connaissances, les innovations et les pratiques des communautés autochtones et locales incarnant des styles de vie traditionnels pertinents pour la conservation et l'utilisation durable de la biodiversité.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/6#6.4>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.1

Related to objective 7.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Compile and synthesise existing data and information and disseminate this knowledge to a wider audience.

Invasive alien species

Invasive alien species: the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (moderated by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform) is participating in the Daisie project (Delivering Alien Invasive Species Inventories for Europe (<http://www.europe-aliens.org/>)) and is actively contributing to the development of IAS information systems for national and international use.

Taxonomy (including access to natural history collections)

Three Belgian scientific institutions participate in the EDIT and SYNTHESYS projects financed by the European Union. Belgium was founding member of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and its federal and federated scientific institutions are involved in several relevant international projects.

Flemish Region

Reports of research studies can be consulted on:  
<http://informatiecentrum.inbo.be/imis.php?page=start>  
<http://www.vmm.be/pub>  
<http://www.inverde.be/kennis-en-publicaties>

For status and trends on main species groups: <http://www.biodiversityindicators.be>.

Communication on Natura 2000

For the general communication on Natura 2000 and about the process for establishing the conservation objectives an online newsletter was developed – [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur/Natura\\_2000/Nieuwsbrief.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur/Natura_2000/Nieuwsbrief.aspx).

The preparation of an umbrella website Natura 2000 was initiated in collaboration with the INBO.

Walloon Region

'Etat de l'environnement wallon'

The elaboration of an annual report on the status of the Walloon environment is an obligation by decree since 12.02.1987. The reports on the status of the Walloon environment lead to the annual publication of the 'Tableau de Bord de l'Environnement' which gives, based on about sixty indicators, an evolving vision on the environmental situation. Each 5 years the 'Tableau de Bord de l'Environnement' is complemented by a more complete and analytical report. Aim of this report is to follow up the evolution of the environmental situation, to analyse it in relation to the pressures and executed actions, and to compare it with the fixed objectives. Biodiversity is one of the elements analysed by these reports (<http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be>).

#### Portal on biodiversity in the Walloon Region

700 species, 500 biotopes and 2,000 sites of high biological value. For every habitat and species, a description, the legislation, the ecology and the status are provided for (<http://biodiversite.wallonie.be>).

#### Brussels-Capital Region

The Report on the state of the natural environment in the Brussels-Capital Region is intended to provide an objective basis for directing policy and defining the regional strategy for natural development.

Using indicators and situational inventories, it provides an update on the state of the natural environment and of biodiversity in Brussels (conservation state of habitats and species, main threats assessment). It also evaluates the impact of current nature and biodiversity policies. It is intended for political and administrative decision-makers and the other actors – who are numerous – whose activities affect nature conservation.

(Source: Brussels Environment, 2012, and ICLEI Africa Secretariat, 2013. Challenges for nature in Brussels. Summary of the nature report)

Information on species-based data for the Brussels-Capital Region can be found at:

[http://documentation.bruxellesenvironnement.be/documents/NARABRU\\_20120910\\_FR\\_150dpi.pdf](http://documentation.bruxellesenvironnement.be/documents/NARABRU_20120910_FR_150dpi.pdf)  
(French)

[http://documentatie.leefmilieubrussel.be/documents/NARABRU\\_20121004\\_NL\\_150dpi.PDF](http://documentatie.leefmilieubrussel.be/documents/NARABRU_20121004_NL_150dpi.PDF)  
(Dutch).

#### Federal level

##### Species register

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector Science policy: a centralized, hierarchically structured and annotated catalogue of eukaryotic species was developed, which includes all eukaryotic species of Belgium.

##### Clearing-house mechanism

The Belgian CHM has continued to support the exchange of relevant information for this target through the national CHM website (<http://www.biodiv.be>). In collaboration with the Swiss CHM, InforMEA and UNEP a tool (DART) is under development to facilitate the reporting obligations on the implementations of national and the EU biodiversity strategies by Parties, as well as to the CBD and related Conventions. It will focus on using indicators for the Aichi Targets and the SDGs. The Belgian CHM is an active member of the EC CHM network. The work of the Belgian CHM,

coordinated by the CEBioS programme, was recognised during the first CHM award at COP13 of the CBD where it received the third price for the existing CHMs.

Others

Development of a Living Planet Report for Belgium: synthesise existing data and information and disseminate this knowledge to a wider audience.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Compile and synthesise existing data and information and disseminate this knowledge to a wider audience.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des efforts ont été consacrés à la compilation des données et informations existantes et à leur diffusion vers un public cible constitué principalement des preneurs de décision.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.2

Related to objective 7.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote and encourage research that contributes to the knowledge and understanding of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services and their values.

Financing of scientific research contributing to the best knowledge on, and understanding of biodiversity, ecosystems services and functions, their value and their socio-economic benefits.

The first phase (2012-2017) of the recurrent framework programme for research, BRAIN-be (Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks, see: <http://www.belspo.be/BRAIN-be/>) has been approved in 2012. It allows, through the funding of research projects based on scientific excellence and European and international anchorage, to meet the needs for scientific knowledge of the federal departments and to support the scientific potential of the Federal Scientific Institutes. One of the 6 thematic areas of this framework programme is "Ecosystems, biodiversity, evolution"; the integration of biodiversity issues is also taking into account in some of the other axes.

Biodiversity research

Belgian universities and scientific institutions are involved in many European-funded research projects on biodiversity in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems. See the CORDIS database (<http://cordis.europa.eu>) as well as in many projects funded by the Belgian science policy office (see biodivERsA database). Belgium is a founding member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and has organized national stakeholders in this process through Communities of Practice on Ecosystem Services (BEES network: <http://www.BEEScommunity.be>) and the Belgian Community of Practice on Biodiversity and Health (COPBH).

#### Science policy and research (policy)

The Belgian science policy office is a member of the BiodivERsA project (2009-2014). BiodivERsA is a European network involving 21 major research funding agencies (belonging to 15 European countries) with significant research funding in the field of terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity. Most members are represented on other fora which discuss and recommend requirements for European biodiversity research: including the CBD (SBSTTA), Diversitas, the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) and the European Science Foundation (ESF). Recommendations from these fora are often made without a formal mechanism to ensure connection with the strategies, priorities and budgets of national research funding agencies. BiodivERsA contributes to setting up such a mechanism, to achieve an efficient trans-national research co-operation in the field of biodiversity research funding. With the aim of contributing to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, BiodivERsA allows the funding agencies to collate existing activities, compare future strategies and recommendations of consultative bodies, and systematically explore opportunities for future collaboration. BiodivERsA also contributes to better coherence and increased synergies between the national programmes of cooperation with developing countries in the field of biodiversity research funding. Furthermore, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform participates in the EPBRS network (European Platform for Biodiversity Research and Strategy).

#### Flemish Region

To streamline and support coordination of monitoring of species by volunteer groups of NGOs monitoring blue prints and methodologies and common data bank systems have been developed: <https://www.natuurpunt.be/pagina/waarnemingnbe>.

#### Importance of biodiversity for ecosystem services

The Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest published a report focussing on biodiversity as a basis for ecosystem services in Flanders. For each ecosystem service they addressed, the authors gave a definition, underlined the contribution of biodiversity, illustrated the interaction between functional biodiversity and the ecosystem service, gave the actual trend, and proposed measures to strengthen the ecosystem service and the underlying biodiversity. The report (in Dutch) is available at: <http://www.inbo.be/files/bibliotheek/90/240790.pdf>.

#### Enhancing knowledge on habitats and species of European interest and the conservation objectives

In the scientific research priority attention was given to enhancing knowledge on habitats and species of European interest and the conservation objectives: scientific basis for the determination and evaluation of regional objectives G-IHD and site objectives S-IHD; methodology for a calibration model to optimize the distribution of the objectives over the various Natura 2000 sites and to evaluate effects of the implementation of the objectives on socio-economic processes;

development of an on-line system for the pre-screening of the appropriate assessment; scientific basis for the determination of reference values for main effects groups; basis to use population-genetic principles for the analysis of bottlenecks on connectivity between areas and to determine favourable reference values; cost-benefit analysis of Natura 2000; development of plans and methodology for the monitoring of habitats and species.

A new GIS-related database system has been developed to enhance exchange of knowledge and progress of work on the implementation of the nature objectives in the framework of Natura 2000. An interactive tool on knowledge about habitats, species, management practices,... has been developed as a tool for exchange of knowledge and capacity building: <https://www.ecopedia.be/>.

Walloon region

Research in relation to biodiversity is integrated in other framework programmes like the one on forestry research as well as other research projects linked to different elements of the environment (forests, hunting and fishing, biodiversity and nature, water, ...).

Brussels-Capital Region

Objective 7 of the Regional Nature Plan (in development) states: 'the Brussels-Capital Region intends to continue its actions in the framework of the stimulation of and the support to the scientific research related to nature in the city, and will focus more particularly:

- on the evaluation of the state of conservation of the natural habitats and the species present on the regional territory;
- on the development of the ecological network within the region;
- on the integration of biodiversity in the urban context and on the evaluation of the ecosystem services'.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote and encourage research that contributes to the knowledge and understanding of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services and their values.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des efforts ont été consacrés à la promotion de la recherche de base contribuant à la connaissance et compréhension des concepts de biodiversité et à la recherche relative aux avantages socio-économiques de la biodiversité.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.3

Related to objective 7.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: develop adequate monitoring methodologies and biodiversity indicators.

Flemish Region

An extensive monitoring programme has been developed to monitor habitats and species of European interest and the effects of management measures in nature and forest reserves and government domains. Cooperation in monitoring of species has been established with NGO's through the system of waarnemingen.be.

Monitoring and reporting

"Nature report 2007: State of nature in Flanders: data for policy" gives a comprehensive reporting of the conservation status and the trends of habitats and species. For the following reporting in 2019 a more focused monitoring is being developed, priorities and inventory networks are determined and methodologies are worked out. The reports are being finalised for submission mid-2019.

Brussels-Capital Region

Since its creation in 1989, Brussels Environment - IBGE is responsible for the monitoring of biodiversity in the Brussels-Capital Region. The studies and projects undertaken to this end fall within one of the following programs:

- the information and monitoring network for assessing the state of the environment by using bio-indicators (ISEEBru)
- monitoring Natura 2000
- the management assessment
- the permanent forest inventory

To meet the need to better coordinate the existing initiatives for monitoring and tracking between them, and to develop them, Brussels Environment – IBGE has developed with INBO (Research Institute for Nature and Forest) a monitoring strategy for biodiversity monitoring in the Brussels-Capital Region. The result, presented in the form of a comprehensive report (Van Calster & Bauwens 2010), deals in particular with:

- priorities in the information needs
  - development of data collection
  - planning for data processing, analysis and reporting
- (Source: Nature Report of the Brussels-Capital Region, 2012)

Based on that, this quinquennial monitoring plan has been adopted by the regional government. Including monitoring of management of the regional green spaces this monitoring plan will allow the efficacy of the actions implemented to be evaluated.

(Source: Project of Regional Nature Plan in the Brussels-Capital Region, Brussels Environment, 2013)

Walloon Region



The "State of Environment Report - Wallonia 2017" (SOERW 2017) presents an assessment of the environmental situation and performance of Wallonia through a compilation of environmental, socio-economic, administrative and health indicators. This latest publication is part of a series of reports on the state of the Walloon environment that have been published regularly for 35 years. The diversity of the data collected, their monitoring over time, their validation, processing, analysis and dissemination make these reports remarkable documents in Wallonia. The assessment of the state of the components of the environment makes it possible to identify ongoing deterioration and degradation, monitor the evolution of this degradation, implement appropriate responses or estimate the effectiveness of measures already taken. The Biodiversity (Fauna, flora and natural habitats) set of indicators in the SOER provides an overview of the state of biodiversity in Wallonia and provides insight into the main trends. <http://etat.environnement.wallonie.be/home/home-en.html> Furthermore, an extensive monitoring programme is in place to monitor habitats and species of European interest in accordance with the EU Nature Directives.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: develop adequate monitoring methodologies and biodiversity indicators.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La mise au point de méthodologies de surveillance et d'indicateurs de la biodiversité au niveau national reste lacunaire.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<Add link> <Add file>

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information can be found)  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.3>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.4

Related to objective 7.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services and assess the values of such services.

Flemish Region

Some valuation and related studies:

An example of an economic valuation study of a habitat is the one carried out on the value of the Heverleebos-Meerdaalwoud in 2000. Putting together direct values (economic use: wood, mushrooms, other forest products, hunting permits, drinkable water, recreation, ...), indirect values (ecological use: carbon sequestration, pollution break down, noise absorption, mitigation of erosion, habitat for fauna and flora, ...), optional values (such as tourism) and existential values (intact natural landscapes, rare and threatened species, aesthetics, ...) led to a yearly total value of more than 24 million euro for this forest of 2,000 ha, equalling more than 12,000 euro per hectare and per year. A Dutch summary of this study is available at: [http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/ete/downloads/SUMMARY\\_VLINA1.pdf](http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/ete/downloads/SUMMARY_VLINA1.pdf).

Other examples of related research projects are ECOFRESH (ECOsystem services of FRESHwater systems, <http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/projects/ecofresh.e.pdf>, final report: [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/Reports/ECOFRESH\\_FinRep\\_2012\\_AD\\_2.pdf](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/Reports/ECOFRESH_FinRep_2012_AD_2.pdf)), ECOPLAN (Planning for Ecosystem Services, a conference was held on 31.05.2013: [http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=\\*ECOB&n=76239](http://www.ua.ac.be/main.aspx?c=*ECOB&n=76239)), VOTES (Valuation Of Terrestrial Ecosystem Services in a multifunctional peri-urban space, <http://www.votes-project.be>). The latter project investigates how the values of ecosystem services are likely to change under different scenarios. The issues of trade-offs, transfer, communication and distribution of ecosystem services are examined under economic, social and environmental perspectives with the local community and stakeholders. Development of new and/or adaptations to existing policy instruments is suggested, which implement the developed methodology into decision-making processes.

Studies on mapping and valorisation of ecosystem services ongoing. Based on this study, indicators may be developed.

The "nature value explorer"

The website <http://www.natuurwaardeverkenner.be>, called the "nature value explorer", is a calculation tool to value ecosystem services and can help everyone who wants to map the socio-economic importance of ecosystems. The calculated figures inform policy makers of the gain or loss of welfare resulting from the impact of a project or policy on the delivery of ecosystem services.

Importance of protected areas

The Flemish Institute for Technological Research and the universities of Antwerp and Ghent investigated the value of the Natura 2000-network in Flanders. They found out that the 166,000 hectares of protected areas in Flanders had among others the following benefits: more than 34 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> stored each year, 4,000 to 8,000 tons of fine dust eliminated from the air each year, 16 million m<sup>3</sup> of water purified each year and a gain of 2100 healthy life years (for about 1.8 million people), between 26 and 43 million visitors yearly. The experts concluded that the Natura 2000-areas in Flanders have a total value of 800 million to 1.2 billion euro for society. And this is still an underestimation given the fact that only 11 of the known 36 ecosystem services were taken into account. The report (in Dutch) is available at: [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur%20en%20Natura%202000/Natura\\_2000/Waarom/Voordelen.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur%20en%20Natura%202000/Natura_2000/Waarom/Voordelen.aspx).

For the summary in English:

<http://www.natuurenbos.be/~media/Files/Themas/Natuur/Natura%202000/abstract%20estimate%20benefits%20Natura%202000%20-%20EN.pdf>.

Wallonia Region

The only legal text in Wallonia that specifically uses the concept of ES is a Wallonia Government Decree regulating hedge planting.

The Wal-ES platform, which brought together the Public Service of Wallonia and Walloon universities, aimed to develop tools for public decision making using the concept of ES and to support initiatives around this concept. During its pilot phase from mid-2014 to mid-2016, Wal-ES defined a conceptual framework clarifying the concept of ES and a framework guiding their assessment. A typology of ESs adapted to the Walloon context has been set out and a database of available information and a website have been developed. This platform is no longer active.

In line with the Biodiversity Strategy to 2020, a mapping and assessment of ESs at the regional level are in progress. An environmental and socio-economic impact assessment tool for rural land development projects based on the concept of ES has been developed. It allows local actors to be taken into account while ensuring the multifunctionality of the agricultural territory. Unfortunately, only one project has applied the recommended actions until now.

Further work of Wal-ES is necessary to make it possible to accompany projects for the evaluation of ESs in Wallonia and the development of decision-making support tools that can be used by local and regional stakeholders (e.g. analysing the costs/benefits of infrastructure for regulating runoff, mud flows and erosion, analysing the contributions of green infrastructure to socio-economic development in land-use planning, carrying out a comparative analysis of brownfield site development scenarios, etc.).

Of the 400 species of bees present in Belgium (399 species of wild bees and bumblebees), only the honey bee *Apis mellifera* L. produces honey. In our regions, about 75% of the flowering plants reproduce thanks to pollinators (mainly wild bees, with the honey bee contributing no more than 15% of the pollination of crops). In Wallonia, the economic value of pollination can be worth several hundred million euros per year (see SOER2017 FFH 7).

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.4 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Map and assess the state of ecosystems and their services and assess the values of such services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.4>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.6

Related to objective 7.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve our knowledge of the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Flemish Region

Valuation of ecosystem services

The website <http://www.natuurwaardeverkenner.be>, called the "nature value explorer", is a calculation tool to value ecosystem services and can help everyone who wants to map the socio-economic importance of

ecosystems. The calculated figures inform policy makers of the gain or loss of welfare resulting from the impact of a project or policy on the delivery of ecosystem services.

#### Importance of protected areas

The Flemish Institute for Technological Research and the universities of Antwerp and Ghent investigated the value of the Natura 2000-network in Flanders. They found out that the 166,000 hectares of protected areas in Flanders had among others the following benefits: more than 34 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> stored each year, 4,000 to 8,000 tons of fine dust eliminated from the air each year, 16 million m<sup>3</sup> of water purified each year and a gain of 2100 healthy life years (for about 1.8 million people), between 26 and 43 million visitors yearly. The experts concluded that the Natura 2000-areas in Flanders have a total value of 800 million to 1.2 billion euro for society. And this is still an underestimation given the fact that only 11 of the known 36 ecosystem services were taken into account. The report (in Dutch) is available at: [http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur%20en%20Natura%202000/Natura\\_2000/Waarom/Voordelen.aspx](http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Natuur%20en%20Natura%202000/Natura_2000/Waarom/Voordelen.aspx).

For the summary in English:

[http://www.natuurenbos.be/~/\\_media/Files/Themas/Natuur/Natura%202000/abstract%20estimate%20benefits%20Natura%202000%20-%20EN.pdf](http://www.natuurenbos.be/~/_media/Files/Themas/Natuur/Natura%202000/abstract%20estimate%20benefits%20Natura%202000%20-%20EN.pdf).

#### Importance of biodiversity in the city

The Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests launched an inventory of the benefits of green in the city. The inventory identified not less than 14 ecological, social and economical benefits: climate mitigation, climate adaptation, air quality, noise mitigation, water management, human fitness and health, city agriculture, social cohesion, recreation and tourism, nature education, biomass, better housing and higher estate values, attractiveness to businesses. The inventory also shows the high costs when there is not enough city green.

Full report and summary, both in Dutch, are available at: <http://www.natuurenbos.be/nl-BE/Natuurbeleid/Groen/Investeer%20in%20groen.aspx>.

#### Federal level

##### Valuation of Belgian ecosystems

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector Science policy: Assessing the socio-economic value of biodiversity in Belgium. A BEES (Belgium Ecosystem Services) cluster was carried out with the aim to identify, stimulate, structure and focus research on ecosystem services in Belgium. This cluster materializes through a series of workshops covering different aspects of research including those developed and ECOFRESH (ECOsystem services of FRESHwater systems, <http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/projects/ecofresh.e.pdf>, final report: [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/Reports/ECOFRESH\\_FinRep\\_2012\\_AD\\_2.pdf](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/ssd/science/Reports/ECOFRESH_FinRep_2012_AD_2.pdf)) and VOTES (Valuation Of Terrestrial Ecosystem Services in a multifunctional peri-urban space, <http://www.votes-project.be>). The latter project investigates how the values of ecosystem services are likely to change under different scenarios. The issues of trade-offs, transfer, communication and distribution of ecosystem services are examined under economic, social and environmental perspectives with the local community and stakeholders. Development of new and/or adaptations to existing policy instruments is suggested, which implement the developed methodology into decision-making processes.

The BEES cluster has evolved into a community of practice open to all actors (now about 60 people) involved in the integration of ecosystem services into policy, business, management and the Belgian society. The BEES community (<http://www.beescommunity.be>) promotes the development and exchange of experiences, best practices, concepts and methodologies. A "BEES book" containing the contributions of many actors BEES community has been edited. The BEES community is hosted by the Belgian Biodiversity Platform secretariat.

The BEES Community is an open and flexible network that interfaces between different societal actors. The BEES community is open to all potentially interested organizations (policy, business, NGO's, science, consultancy, civil society,...). It was among others set up as a result of the BEES (BElgium Ecosystem Services) cluster of the Belgian Science Policy and the project 'BElgium Ecosystem Services - A new vision for society–nature interactions' (final report available on: [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/SSD/science/Reports/FinalReport\\_BEES%20ML.pdf](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/SSD/science/Reports/FinalReport_BEES%20ML.pdf)).

The BEES Community has the following objectives:

- Develop ecosystem services concepts, tools and practices that help to adapt human activity and clarify ecosystem thresholds in order to preserve the actual and potential well-being of present and future generations; and to stop ecosystem and biodiversity degradation and improve their status.
- Develop mainstreaming & policy tools to promote the integration of ecosystem services concepts in policy and management, business and society.
- Facilitate capacity building, exchange of expertise and experience: including methodologies and transfer of knowledge on Belgian ecosystem services to policy and share the needs from policy makers on this issue, to enable involvement of Belgian actors in national and international initiatives and build the capacity to conduct assessments of ecosystem services.
- Provide overviews of state of the art knowledge and best practices

On 27.04.2012, a conference on The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity in Belgium was organised in Brussels. The programme and presentations are available at <http://www.teebelgium.be/page/show/7>. The themes and presentations of previous workshops are available at <http://www.teebelgium.be/page/show/4>.

Financing of scientific research contributing to the best knowledge on, and understanding of biodiversity, ecosystems services and functions, their value and their socio-economic benefits.

The first phase (2012-2017) of the recurrent framework programme for research, BRAIN-be (Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks, see: <http://www.belspo.be/BRAIN-be/>) has been approved in 2012. It allows, through the funding of research projects based on scientific excellence and European and international anchorage, to meet the needs for scientific knowledge of the federal departments and to support the scientific potential of the Federal Scientific Institutes. One of the 6 thematic areas of this framework programme is "Ecosystems, biodiversity, evolution"; the integration of biodiversity issues is also taking into account in some of the other axes.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.6 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve our knowledge of the socio-economic benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des efforts ont été consacrés à la recherche relative aux avantages socio-économiques de la biodiversité.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.7

Related to objective 7.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve the science-policy interface in biodiversity and promote actor participation.

Improve the links and communication between research and policy

The science-policy interface has been improved through the establishment of Communities of Practices (CoP) at national level in support of the recently established Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), such as the communities of practice BEES (BELgium Ecosystem Services, see below, - and its working group BE-MAES for the mapping of ecosystem services), Invasive Alien Species, the Belgian Community of Practice on Biodiversity and Health (COPBH).

Science policy and research (policy)

The Belgian science policy office is a member of the BiodivERsA project (2009-2014). BiodivERsA is a European network involving 21 major research funding agencies (belonging to 15 European countries) with significant research funding in the field of terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity. Most members are represented on other fora which discuss and recommend requirements for European biodiversity research: including the CBD (SBSTTA), Diversitas, the European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy (EPBRS) and the European Science Foundation (ESF). Recommendations from these fora are often made without a formal mechanism to ensure connection with the strategies, priorities and budgets of national research funding agencies. BiodivERsA contributes to setting up such a mechanism, to achieve an efficient trans-national research co-operation in the field of biodiversity research funding. With the aim of contributing to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy, BiodivERsA allows the funding agencies to collate existing activities, compare future strategies and recommendations of consultative bodies, and systematically explore opportunities for future collaboration. BiodivERsA also contributes to better coherence and increased synergies between the national programmes of cooperation with developing countries in the field of biodiversity research funding. Furthermore, the Belgian Biodiversity Platform participates in the EPBRS network (European Platform for Biodiversity Research and Strategy).

Promote actor participation

Six stakeholders dialogues/debates between Federal and Regional administrations, political cells on environment and main stakeholders were organised; two on ABS issues (2012, 2013), one on "Recent achievements and steps forwards for biodiversity in Europe and internationally" (2011), one on "Updating the National Biodiversity Strategy until 2020" (2013), one during a study dedicated to the integration of biodiversity in the business sector (June 2012), one at the end of 2 studies on the integration of biodiversity in key market players (business and consumers, but also civil society) (December 2013). A public consultation was organised in 4 languages (EN / FR / NL / DE) on the pre-project of update of the NBS (May-July 2013).

Flemish Region

The yearly implementation plan includes an overview of research projects to gather new information for guiding policy planning or development or review of measures for biodiversity conservation. Research covers the following main thematic aspects: distance to target to conservation objectives, spread-densities-habitat dependencies of species (groups), ecohydrology and relations to flooding and droughts and pollution, impact of climate change, impact of various effect groups on habitats and species of European interest, effect of control measures on main invasive species, species and population modelling and population dynamics of game species and relation to hunting pressures, population genetics, priorities for defragmentation and impacts on migration and population dynamics.

Federal level

BRAIN-be

At the federal level, the recurrent framework programme for research, BRAIN-be (Belgian Research Action through Interdisciplinary Networks) has been approved in 2012. It allows, through the funding of research projects based on scientific excellence and European and international anchorage, to meet the needs for scientific knowledge of the federal departments and to support the scientific potential of the Federal Scientific Institutes. One of the 6 thematic areas of this framework programme is 'Ecosystems, biodiversity, evolution'; the integration of biodiversity issues is also taken into account in some of the other axes.

The Belgium Ecosystem Services (BEES) Community

Given the importance assigned to the subject, a Belgian community of practice was launched on ecosystem services (April 2012). The Belgium Ecosystem Services (BEES) Community (<http://www.beescommunity.be/en/>) is an open and flexible network that interfaces between different societal actors. The BEES community is open to all potentially interested organizations (policy, business, NGO's, science, consultancy, civil society, ...). It was among others set up as a result of the BEES (Belgium Ecosystem Services) cluster of the Belgian Science Policy and the project 'Belgium Ecosystem Services - A new vision for society-nature interactions' (final report available on: [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/SSD/science/Reports/FinalReport\\_BEES%20ML.pdf](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/SSD/science/Reports/FinalReport_BEES%20ML.pdf)).

The BEES Community has the following objectives:

- Develop ecosystem services concepts, tools and practices that help to adapt human activity and clarify ecosystem thresholds in order to preserve the actual and potential well-being of present and future generations; and to stop ecosystem and biodiversity degradation, and improve their status.
- Develop mainstreaming & policy tools to promote the integration of ecosystem services concepts in policy and management, business and society.
- Facilitate capacity building, exchange of expertise and experience: including methodologies and transfer of knowledge on Belgian ecosystem services to policy and share the needs from policy makers on this issue, to enable involvement of Belgian actors in national and international initiatives and build the capacity to conduct assessments of ecosystem services.
- Provide overviews of state of the art knowledge and best practices

On 27.04.2012, a conference on The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity in Belgium was organised in Brussels. The programme and presentations are available at <http://www.teebelgium.be/page/show/7>. The themes and presentations of previous workshops are available at <http://www.teebelgium.be/page/show/4>.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 7.7 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Improve the science-policy interface in biodiversity and promote actor participation.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des efforts ont été consacrés à l'amélioration des liens et de la communication entre le secteur de la recherche et la politique, et à la promotion de la participation des acteurs.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.7>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 7.8

Related to objective 7.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote research on the effects of GMOs and products of synthetic biology on biodiversity and on related socio-economic aspects, and on methodologies to assess these.

Federal level

A workshop entitled 'Vision on the evaluation of socio-economic impact of genetically modified organisms in food: evaluation of the socio-economic impact of GMOs' was organized in Brussels by the Federal Public Service health, Food Chain Safety and Environment on 29.03.2010. Further information and report:

[www.health.belgium.be/eportal/Environment/BiodiversityandGMO/GMOs/19069120?backNode=9222](http://www.health.belgium.be/eportal/Environment/BiodiversityandGMO/GMOs/19069120?backNode=9222).

Belgian delegates and experts were invited to participate in +/- 13 weeks (in 2011 and 2013) international online discussions relative to socio-economic considerations of LMOs in the context of the Cartagena Protocol. One delegate of the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment was invited by the Secretariat of the Protocol, on the basis of her participation in the online forum, in an international workshop on the issue in New Dehli (November 2011). The discussions were aimed at reaching a common ground of international understanding of Art. 26.1 of the Protocol (dealing with this issue), before developing some kind of international guidance to implement this article.

Belgian delegates and experts are also presently participating (in the context of the ESEB, European GMO Socio-Economic Bureau) in the development of consensual documents on methodologies for the evaluation of socio-economic implications of the cultivation of LM plants in the EU.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**



Related to objective 7.8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote research on the effects of GMOs and products of synthetic biology on biodiversity and on related socio-economic aspects, and on methodologies to assess these.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des efforts ont été consacrés à la recherche visant l'étude des effets des OGM sur la biodiversité et sur les aspects d'ordre socioéconomique y afférents.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/7#7.8>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 8

Related to objective 8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Involve the community through communication, education, public awareness and training.

Communication, Education and Public Awareness activities are undertaken by all 3 regions and by the federal administration, as well as by numerous stakeholders (universities, scientific institutions, NGOs, provincial and local authorities) each in their field of competence.

A national coordination group (the 'CEPA contact group' under the Belgian Steering Committee 'Biodiversity Convention') has been set up for the exchange of information and the coordination of activities relating to public awareness. One of its main tasks is to identify activities for the International Day on Biological Diversity on 22 May (see [www.biodiv.be/implementation/ibd](http://www.biodiv.be/implementation/ibd)).

Numerous Belgian governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic entities, scientific institutions, private companies and other actors celebrated the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) through a diverse set of events and activities. A non-exhaustive overview of Belgian IYB activities can be found in the official Belgian report to the CBD 'Overview of Belgian celebrations in the framework of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity': <http://www.cbd.int/iyb/doc/celebrations/iyb-Belgium-FinalReport2.pdf>. Additional information is available on the following webpage: <http://www.cbd.int/2010/country/?country=be>.

Development of national coordinated CEPA actions on the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

Several actions were carried out in this context: yearly celebration of the International Biodiversity Day; promotion of public engagement towards biodiversity conservation, e.g. through the national engagement campaign 'I give life to my planet' (<http://www.jedonnevieeamaplanete.be>), creation of an online educative kit for schools

(<http://jedonnevieamaplanete.enclasse.be>), press releases. Numerous Belgian governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic entities, scientific institutions, private companies and other actors celebrated the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) through a diverse set of events and activities. The CBD National Focal Point presents an overview of the diverse Belgian IYB activities that took place in Belgium's final report of the International Biodiversity Year (<http://www.cbd.int/iyb/doc/celebrations/iyb-Belgium-FinalReport2.pdf>).

Involve the community through education and training.

Trainings on the theme of biodiversity were organized at different levels. At the federal level, training cycles were provided, in partnership with the CBD National Focal Point team, to: the "underwriters" of the Ducroire / Delcredere (Belgian Export credit agency, 2010-2011); the Federal Directorate General for Development Cooperation (2011), the members of the SNCB Group (B-holding, Infrabel, Tucrail, Eurostation) (2012), the Maritime Transport and the DG for the Environment (2012), the EMAS federal network coordinating the environmental management of the federal institutions (2012), the FPS Economy (2012), the FPS for Public Health, Food Security and Environment (2014), and the secondary school teachers (yearly from 2011 to 2014). The training workshops were especially adapted to the needs of the participants with a special focus on their professional activities.

Flemish Region

Introduction of use of new types of media through facebook, twitter.

Use of ecopedia as online information system.

Local events and activities in nature areas with enhanced public access to promote awareness on value of nature for healthy environment, food, human health and recreation, ...

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 8 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Involve the community through communication, education, public awareness and training.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

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**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Suivant l'Eurobaromètre, il reste de nombreux progrès à accomplir pour changer l'attitude des citoyens. Des efforts et budgets croissants sont consacrés à des actions d'information, sensibilisation et éducation en matière de biodiversité, et ce, vers tous les acteurs.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/8>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 8.1

Related to objective 8.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Strive to include biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as the ecosystem approach in educational programmes.

Flemish Region

Specific school programmes MOS (Environment at School) and education projects by the Division for Nature and Environment Education of the Department.

Walloon Region

Different organisms provide educational school programmes in relation to nature conservation. The 'Institut d'éco-pédagogie' organises additional training courses for teachers on how to get in touch with nature. The 'Réseau Idée' assists schools to integrate activities aiming for the discovery of and sensitisation on nature and the environment. The Walloon Region finances and distributes pedagogic kits on different themes related to the environment and the natural heritage. The 'Centres de Dépaysement et de Plein Air' (CDPA), established by the French Community, conduct training and education activities in relation to the environment for schools.

Brussels-Capital Region

Regional centres for ecology initiation receive funding to develop training programs for schools. Communication actions for schools also exist.

The biodiversity theme is integrated in the general education and public awareness programmes of the Brussels Institute for Environmental Management (brochures, leaflets, presence at fairs and other public events, actions oriented towards families, schools, citizens, etc.). The Institute has a well-developed website with extensive information in French and Dutch (<http://www.ibgebim.be/>). Financial and logistic support is given to NGOs for awareness and educational programmes.

Among others, there is a programme called "Nature in the garden" which helps city dwellers develop a nature-based approach to their gardening practices (<http://www.natureaujardin.be/>)

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measure: improve the support to NGOs that are active in the field of public awareness and education.

Partnership with Perspective Brussels has been signed to promote biodiversity into school with 5 or 6 pilot projects to illustrate best practices. A brochure has also been published for schools to explain them how they can integrate biodiversity into educational courses and within the school.

Federal level

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences participates in the 'sciences congress' that provides training on biodiversity for science teachers.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 8.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Strive to include biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as the ecosystem approach in educational programmes.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Les écoles et universités reprennent progressivement la biodiversité dans leurs programmes.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/8#8.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 8.2

Related to objective 8.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote understanding of the importance of biodiversity and improve knowledge of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Flemish Region

The Agency for Nature and Forests uses a varied set of tools to make every inhabitant of Flanders aware of biodiversity, including website, newsletter and brochures as well as information sessions and consultations but also new social media twitter and facebook:

- increases the impact of its public awareness activities through integration and the collaboration with partners and other entities (support of target groups, collaboration projects with the private sector, structural consultations with focus groups, ...)
- as a good host, the Agency wants to open up its green spaces as much as possible in a way that they can be experienced by everybody (ADAGIO project)
- supports and facilitates partners, as well as makes them aware of their responsibility in relation to the accessibility and the sustainable use of nature, forests and green spaces, as well as about the extent in which they can be experienced
- executes enforcement actions to obtain respect for nature, forests and green spaces
- applies a communication strategy to strengthen the social and political basis for biodiversity

Cooperation in the new TV series 'Wild van dieren' and 'PlattelandsTV' for educational and awareness purposes of the general public on specific aspects of species and site conservation issues.

Activities undertaken by the visitor centres of the Agency for Nature and Forests and provincial authorities.

Financial support for Nature/Environment NGO's for awareness and educational programmes.

Organisation/participation in events related to biodiversity: outings, conferences, markets, fairs,

...

Public consultation and brochures on the Environment & Nature Policy Plan, Press conferences such as for the launch of Nature Reports NARA and Environmental and Nature Reports MIRA, newsletters, booklets and leaflets, brochures on the main domains of the Agency, website of the Agency with links to various topics on nature conservation issues (<http://www.natuurenbos.be>), development of apps with specifics on nature sites, the habitats and the species you may see there, special attractions of views, birdwatch towers, etc.

NGO's such as WWF, Natuurpunt, Natagora, Greenpeace, Goodplanet, etc. play an important role in awareness raising and educational activities:

- publish their newsletters and brochures on the biodiversity of the reserves and other areas they manage, on species or ecosystems they want to get attention for, on their campaigns, ...
- organise continuous awareness activities and guided tours in nature areas, management activities in reserve areas, youth training sessions on identification of species and nature education, training of volunteer groups for species monitoring and management.

### Walloon Region

Several actions to raise awareness on biodiversity are undertaken:

- awareness campaigns by the administration (many brochures, media campaigns, informative sessions, etc.)
- the website 'La biodiversité en Wallonie': <http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/accueil.html?IDC=6>
- the network of 'Centres Régionaux d'Initiation à l'Environnement' (CRIE) is made of centres for environmental education and awareness; their actions are mainly (but not exclusively) oriented towards school children aged 6-12
- one of the objectives of the natural parks is to inform their visitors and raise awareness on biodiversity
- most LIFE projects include public awareness activities
- naturalists' associations organise public awareness and education activities oriented towards nature conservation (e.g. excursions, visits of nature reserves, management of nature reserves, publications, etc.) or towards specific thematic areas (e.g. forests, quality of watercourses, etc.)
- through partnerships such as the river contracts, 'Plans Communaux de Développement de la Nature', the road verges operation, the 'Semaine de l'Arbre', etc.
- through the 'Plan Maya' on bees and pollinators
- the TV program 'Jardin extraordinaire' of the French Community addresses nature and biodiversity topics from Belgium and worldwide
- other associations such as GAWI (integrated and biological fruit production) and CARI (protection of pollinators) receive support from the Walloon Region to raise awareness on biodiversity
- the right to access environmental information is integrated in the Environment Code ('Code de l'Environnement'); one of the objectives is to make the environmental information readily available through websites and other technological means

- Nature associations also conduct communication campaigns
- L'asbl Natagriwal: Organise des séances d'information pour les propriétaires et gestionnaires forestiers et agricoles;
- International Nature Film Festival <http://www.festivalnaturenamur.be/>; Born in 1995, the Finn is now the meeting place for the lovers of nature and beautiful images, bringing together each year more than 35.000 spectators and visitors of all backgrounds! With its three international competitions - photos, home movies and professional films - and its many outdoor activities, it is now placed among the 5 biggest European events of the kind, bringing together each year photographers and filmmakers from around the world.

### Brussels-Capital Region

Regional centres for ecology initiation receive funding to develop training programs for schools. Communication actions for schools also exist.

The biodiversity theme is integrated in the general education and public awareness programmes of the Brussels Institute for Environmental Management (brochures, leaflets, presence at fairs and other public events, actions oriented towards families, schools, citizens, etc.). The Institute has a well-developed website with extensive information in French and Dutch (<http://www.ibgebim.be>). Financial and logistic support is given to NGOs for awareness and educational programmes. Among others, there is a programme called "Nature in the garden" which helps city dwellers develop a nature-based approach to their gardening practices (<http://www.natureaujardin.be/>) Public consultation and information campaigns for biodiversity action are organised (e.a. on the extension of protected areas in forests).

Objective 7 of the Regional Nature Plan states: 'the Brussels-Capital Region intends to continue its actions in the framework of the stimulation of and the support to the scientific research related to nature in the city, and will focus more particularly:

- on the evaluation of the state of conservation of the natural habitats and the species present on the regional territory;
- on the development of the ecological network within the region;
- on the integration of biodiversity in the urban context and on the evaluation of the ecosystem services'.

The Regional Nature Plan foresees the following measures:

- promote the participative management of public green spaces
- develop a global communication strategy in relation to nature and biodiversity
- install a 'nature facilitator' service aimed towards the developers of plans and projects
- promote good management practices of the green spaces
- improve the support to NGOs that are active in the field of public awareness and education
- install a 'nature task force' to strengthen the partnerships and coordination with the field actors
- formalise the 'nature partnerships' between the field actors and the Brussels-Capital Region by the signing of targets contracts

Federal level

Some examples of recent publications:

- booklet '366 tips voor de biodiversiteit / 366 gestes pour la biodiversité' was published in the framework of the International Year of Biodiversity and will be reprinted for the third time in 2013. Based on this booklet, the European Commission published the booklet '52 tips for biodiversity' in several languages.

- booklet 'Levend water! Biodiversiteit en Natura 2000 in het Belgische deel van de Noordzee / Une eau vive ! Biodiversité et Natura 2000 dans la partie belge de la mer du Nord' (2012)

- booklet 'Een mariene strategie voor de Noordzee / Une stratégie marine pour la mer du Nord' (2012)

- booklet 'Something's moving at sea' (2014)

Somewhat less recent publications that have been edited or reprinted several times and are still very much asked for by schools, administrations, press, etc.:

- booklet 'Biodiversiteit in België: een overzicht / La biodiversité en Belgique: un aperçu' (a new edition is scheduled in 2013)

- booklet 'Biodiversiteit in België: van vitaal belang / La biodiversité en Belgique: une question vitale' (a new edition is scheduled in 2013)

- booklet 'Biodiversiteit in België: de opmars van exoten / La biodiversité en Belgique: SOS invasions' (a new edition is scheduled in 2014)

- booklet 'Bezint eer je met hout begint - FSC en PEFC voor een verantwoord bosbeheer' / FSC et PEFC : le bois certifié ! Un petit conseil avant d'acheter ?'

- booklet 'Bombybook, biodiversifieer je met Bombylius / Bombybook, biodiversifiez-vous avec Bombylius'

- booklet 'Bombylius helpt de planeet / Bombylius protège notre planète'

- booklet 'Stop de verspreiding van invasieve waterplanten / Halte à la prolifération de plantes aquatiques invasives'
- several folders, brochures, dvd's and a website were developed during the AlterIAS LIFE project (ALTERnatives to Invasive Alien Species, see: <http://www.alterias.be/>) in collaboration with the Regions
- several actions were put in place in accordance to the Bees federal plan (see also [http://www.jedonnevieamaplanete.be/fr/biodiversite/publications\\_66.aspx](http://www.jedonnevieamaplanete.be/fr/biodiversite/publications_66.aspx))

## Campaigns

The engagement campaign 'I give life to my planet' is a close collaboration between the Belgian CBD National Focal Point, based at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, the Ministry for Public Health, Food Chain Safety and the Environment and several partners at the regional, provincial, local and NGO-level. The campaign has for objective to engage people in favour of biodiversity, by stimulating individuals to take small and simple steps that will have long-term positive effects. The campaign presents practical tools, relevant information and useful contacts to motivate people who want to take action. People can commit themselves via an engagement form or a website. The campaign, originally launched in 2007, was reactivated in 2010 during the International Year on Biological Diversity and will be up and running at least during the entire Decade for Biodiversity 2011-2020: <http://www.ikgeeflevenaanmijnplaneet.be/> / <http://www.jedonnevieamaplanete.be>. This unique concept incites people to sign in a special form and online about their personal involvement to preserve and promote biodiversity in their own environment. This concept also allows to keep statistics about the outcome of such a campaign. Up to now, almost 24,000 people have committed themselves to execute more than 87,000 actions for biodiversity.

## Participation in fairs and other public events

The federal Ministry of Environment and the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences both participate regularly in fairs and public events in order to disseminate information and raise awareness on biodiversity.

## Exhibitions

In 2010, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences opened a new permanent exhibition hall on 'biodiversity in cities'. During the following years, it will dedicate several renovated halls to biodiversity.

At the request of a member of the European Parliament (MEP), Catherine Bearder - ALDE group, the Belgian National Focal Point for Biodiversity (Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences) coordinated an exhibition (9-11 July 2018) in their headquarters. Main objective was to raise awareness on the issue of wildlife traffic among the members and collaborators of the European Parliament. An evening event and a press conference were organised during the exhibition.

Collaboration of the following partners: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (RBINS), Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA), Botanic Garden Meise, WWF-BE, WWF-EU, World Conservation Society (WCS), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), TRAFFIC, Brussels Airport Company, project Barcoding of Organisms and tissues of Policy Concern (BOPCO), project Capacities for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (CEBioS), CITES Management Authority (FPS Environment), Greenpeace, Liège University, Belgian Customs.

The exhibition consisted of three main sections (1. What is wildlife trade and traffic, 2. Scale and impacts, 3. Solutions and recommendations) and two case studies (1. Bushmeat, from bush to plate / 2. Wood: from forest to home).

Some results/conclusions:

- \* More than 1500 staff members of the European Parliament and their colleagues visited the exhibition during the three days.
- \* More than 90 specimens were on display.
- \* Working towards the exhibition, a broad collaboration was set up: creation of new and tightened collaborations between all the involved actors to enhance synergies and efficiency.
- \* The development of the exhibition also fits in the awareness project conducted with Brussels Airport Company (ongoing).
- \* The requesting MEP and her staff were impressed and very grateful for the successful exhibition. Work has been intensified in the framework of the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking.

A special event (Bee Party) was organised in July 2010 to celebrate the IYB. Theme of the event was the ( unsuspected) importance of pollinators in our daily lives. More than 4,100 people visited the event that took place at the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences. Through 22 info stands, 29 organisations and NGO's presented their work to promote pollinisation and products that depend on it. The event had a special section to showcase public awareness activities on the importance of pollinators that were organised in developing countries with funding by the Ministry of Development cooperation (see below). The same day a special seminar was organised on the taxonomy of African pollinators and the related manual that was published in the ABC-Taxa series. Another scientific conference dedicated to bees took place in June 2013.

#### Capacity building

The CHM partnership initiative contains a special Public Awareness component for partner countries. Between 2009-2013, 13 small projects to raise public awareness in partner countries have been implemented in 9 countries thanks to the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation.

In 2009 a special call was launched to enable partner countries to prepare public awareness activities for the International Year on Biodiversity 2010 on the importance of pollinators and their recent decline. 3 projects in Burundi, Benin and Cameroun were selected. The projects consisted of 2 phases: first a research phase in 2009 on the importance of pollinators in the specific country; second, a public awareness phase on the results of the study with a special event during the International Day on Biodiversity in 2010.

In 2011 a special call was launched to assist partner countries to research possible indicators for Aichi Target 1 and do a baseline study on these indicators. Three projects (Benin, Cameroun and Madagascar) were selected and successfully concluded in 2012. For more information on the indicators and the baseline studies: [http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm\\_coop/chm-partnering/public\\_awareness/results-chm-public-awareness-calls/results-chm-public-awareness-call-2011](http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm_coop/chm-partnering/public_awareness/results-chm-public-awareness-calls/results-chm-public-awareness-call-2011).

- > La stratégie #BeBiodiversity vise à déplacer les marchés vers des produits plus respectueux de la biodiversité en faisant jouer l'offre et la demande. Cette stratégie vise donc à mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises pour promouvoir un approvisionnement en matières premières durables, compatibles avec la protection de la biodiversité dans les pays d'origine.



Une campagne de communication a vu le jour en 2017 pour sensibiliser, éduquer et mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises tout en leur donnant les moyens de choisir des produits et producteurs plus respectueux de la biodiversité de manière informée. Divers outils de communications et activations des réseaux sociaux sont utilisés :

- Un site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be>) a été développé qui regorge d'information mais également de gestes pour préserver la biodiversité. Quatre vidéos d'accroche ont été lancées en 2017 pour l'inauguration de la stratégie et de la campagne.
- Cinq vidéos d'animation qui expliquent, entre autres, le lien entre la consommation ordinaire et les menaces pesant sur la biodiversité et les écosystèmes ont été créées. Ces vidéos d'animation, disponibles en anglais, français et néerlandais sur la chaîne YouTube #BeBiodiversity, ont été un franc succès: elles ont été visionnées plus de 500 000 fois sur Facebook et plus de 130 000 fois sur YouTube. La vidéo «Quel est le lien entre le sushi et une tortue» a remporté le Golden Green Award au 7ème festival des Deauville Green Awards, en juin 2018.
- Pour mieux connaître les habitudes de consommation des citoyens-consommateurs et leur impact sur la nature, un quizz été lancé fin 2018 avec pour objectifs de :
  - o continuer à sensibiliser ;
  - o commencer la phase de mobilisation notamment avec en 2019 avec une Fête des Voisins Biodiversité ;
  - o dégager des tendances de consommation
  - o mieux cibler les prochaines communications « consommateur » ;
  - o étayer la communication, influencer et mobiliser les entreprises.

Cinq animaux totem ont été choisis pour définir le profil de consommation et des petits conseils faciles à mettre en place au quotidien sont proposés.

- Après le succès de la campagne de communication auprès des citoyens, une campagne visant spécifiquement les entreprises sera lancée au début de l'année 2019. Cette campagne coïncidera avec le lancement d'un outil web aidant les entreprises à choisir et mettre en œuvre des actions en faveur de la biodiversité (BiodiversiTree – voir ci-dessous)). Quatre entreprises pionnières (Belvas, Amanprana, Ecosem et Tilman) ainsi que la Régie des bâtiments (service publique) sont partenaires dans ce projet et aide au développement des outils :
  - o Une page spéciale 'entreprises' a été développée sur notre site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>)
  - o Des vidéos de promotions des entreprises pionnières sont lancées pour inciter d'autres entreprises à s'engager dans la préservation de la biodiversité. Elles sont disponibles sur le site web (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>)

En parallèle, cette stratégie vise à agir au niveau de l'offre pour sensibiliser et aider les entreprises à entreprendre une démarche volontaire de préservation de la biodiversité et des services écosystémiques :

- Les entreprises et organisations qui désirent contribuer à la préservation de la biodiversité pourront compter sur le BiodiversiTree pour les guider dans la détermination des actions : du choix des partenaires/experts qui pourront les accompagner à la valorisation des investissements réalisés pour adapter leurs terrains, infrastructures, achats et processus. Les entités fédérale et régionales ont ainsi développé pour la Belgique cette plateforme web (BiodiversiTree) qui permet aussi l'échange d'informations mettant en avant les actions concrètes car pour mobiliser les entreprises rien de tel que des exemples réalisés par d'autres entreprises ! Cette plateforme est également un outil de sensibilisation afin de

permettre à chacun de se poser des questions sur sa marge de manœuvre au sein de son organisation. (<https://biodiversitree.be>)

- > Formations 'Biodiversité et services écosystémiques' vers divers publics cibles (entreprises, délégués syndicaux notamment comme relais auprès de leur entreprises, organisations publiques ...) et divers secteurs (économie, mobilité-transport (maritime, ferroviaire), EMAS). Ces formations ont connus un vif succès et ont permis, dans un premier temps, de mieux comprendre les concepts de biodiversité et de services écosystémiques. La démarche visait aussi à permettre de mieux appréhender les relations et les dépendances entre le groupe cible et la biodiversité afin de pouvoir identifier les mesures pour minimiser les impacts négatifs, ainsi que les opportunités potentielles à saisir.

La thématique « Biodiversité et entreprises » est appréhendée de deux façons :

- En mettant l'accent sur la biodiversité locale dans ou autour de l'entreprise : en préservant la faune et la flore locales, l'entreprise se concentre sur le développement de bonnes relations avec les entités voisines, associations ou clients, sur son image, sur les questions de santé. Dans certains cas, l'entreprise peut en retirer des avantages sur le plan économique. On songe ici au principe des toitures vertes isolantes, aux installations de recyclage de l'eau, à l'exploitation forestière responsable, à la pêche et à l'agriculture durables, etc.
- En axant la politique de l'entreprise sur les chaînes de production dont elle fait partie : en effet, bien souvent, les décisions prises par une entreprise ont un impact non pas sur la biodiversité locale mais sur la biodiversité présente ailleurs dans le monde. Il est ainsi possible de limiter les impacts de la chaîne de production sur la biodiversité, notamment via l'utilisation de matières premières durables (soja, sucres obtenus via des pratiques culturales durables) ou, indirectement, via une diminution des émissions / pollutions, qui constituent une menace pour la biodiversité. C'est dans ce contexte que la biodiversité s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large de la responsabilité sociétale des entreprises. Les entreprises engagées qui disposent par exemple d'un système de gestion de l'environnement, peuvent, par le biais de cet instrument et sur une base systématique, suivre les évolutions en la matière.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 8.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote understanding of the importance of biodiversity and improve knowledge of Belgium's biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Suivant l'Eurobaromètre, il reste de nombreux progrès à accomplir pour changer l'attitude des citoyens. Des efforts et budgets croissants sont consacrés à des actions d'information, sensibilisation et éducation en matière de biodiversité, et ce, vers tous les acteurs.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/8#8.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 8.3

Related to objective 8.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Raise awareness among, and provide thematic training courses for the sectors that impact directly or indirectly on biodiversity, including the private sector, using language tailored to the specific nature of the target sector.

Flemish Region

Awareness campaigns on the needs to involve all sectors in the conservation of nature values:

- organisation of awareness campaigns such as in relation with port development, transport infrastructure, military domains
- activities of awareness-raising on the use of indigenous material for forestry
- activities of awareness-raising for fishery societies on good fishery practices and standing waters management for fishermen
- trainings for hunters on good hunting practices, big-game licence, ornithology
- information sessions for stakeholders, other administrations and local authorities on Natura 2000 and the process for development of conservation objectives
- training sessions for local authorities for the management of parks and green spaces
- organisation of project calls for afforestation projects, Natura 2000 management actions, competition for the best project idea for greening cities, ...

Federal level

Training cycles

CEBioS and RBINS organised training sessions on the implications of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol for scientists at federal scientific institutes and staff of Development cooperation.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 8.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Raise awareness among, and provide thematic training courses for the sectors that impact directly or indirectly on biodiversity, including the private sector, using language tailored to the specific nature of the target sector.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des formations à destination des divers secteurs fédéraux qui ont un impact important sur la biodiversité sont implementées.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/8#8.3>

## **Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

### Action 9.1

Related to objective 9.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that the national strategy is supported by effective legislation and improve its enforcement.

#### Flemish Region

Nature decree – been revised to include also the forest decree aspects – including the principles for biodiversity conservation, derogation system.

Executive law on species protection including the list of protected species, derogation procedures on protection, procedures for development of species protection programmes.

New nature management plan procedure and format, and new executive law on subsidies to support development and implementation of nature management plan.

Law on hunting and procedures for permits, game species and hunting seasons, wildlife management units and requirements.

Law on inland fisheries.

#### Walloon Region

The law on the conservation of nature is the overarching legislative tool for biodiversity protection purposes, including species and habitats protections statuses, derogation systems etc.

- The Walloon environmental code adds to the nature Law on issues related to environmental impact assessments and the right to access to environmental information.
- The Territorial development code (CoDT) includes the “proportionate compensation” principle for urban projects in its art. D.II.45§3.
- One of the objectives of the Water Code is to prevent any degradation, to preserve and improve aquatic ecosystem condition as well as the need in water of these ecosystems and other terrestrial ecosystems.
- The law on hunting specifies notably the game species, hunt seasons for each species, and related hunting means.

#### Brussels-Capital Region

The coordinated regional law about nature

A coordinated regional law about nature was adopted in March 2012, consisting of 119 articles and 8 annexes, with the general aim of contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of components of biodiversity. Measures taken under this nature law are intended to:

- maintain or restore to a favourable conservation status natural habitats and species of fauna and flora of community and regional interest;
- contribute to the establishment of an ecological network in Brussels;
- contribute to the integration of biodiversity in an urban context.

This regional law requires the elaboration of a regional plan for nature that has been approved in April 2016. This plan foresees the elaboration of more specific action plans (art. 6 and 12 to 14). These action plans would aim at:

- the improvement of the conservation status of natural species and habitats.
- the struggle against biodiversity threats such as invasive alien species.
- the encouragement of sustainable use of biodiversity components.

[http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu\\_du\\_site/News/Ord\\_Nature\\_Natuur\\_2012.pdf?langtype=2060](http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu_du_site/News/Ord_Nature_Natuur_2012.pdf?langtype=2060)

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 9.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure that the national strategy is supported by effective legislation and improve its enforcement.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

De gros efforts de coordinations ont permis une ratification et une transposition plus rapides de la législation environnementale européenne ces dernières années. Les procédures EIE et EES sont désormais d'application, même si cela s'avère complexe à mettre en oeuvre au regard des composants liés à la biodiversité; elles sont cependant encore trop méconnues des autorités publiques, des responsables de planification, des entreprises et du public : des actions d'information doivent continuer. L'article 6.3-4 de la directive Habitat prévoit que des mesures compensatoires doivent être prises pour assurer la continuité du réseau Natura 2000 si pour des raisons impératives d'intérêt public majeur un projet ayant des impacts négatifs doit néanmoins être réalisé. Les infractions liées à l'environnement font désormais l'objet de poursuites systématiques dans certaines Régions. L'application de la législation sur la responsabilité environnementale en est encore à ses débuts. L'une des principales difficultés dans le processus de mise en application concerne l'évaluation des dommages causés à la biodiversité. Des formations spécifiques pour les magistrats devraient être mise en place pour améliorer leurs connaissances tant juridiques du droit de la biodiversité que techniques et scientifiques (ceci est prévu en RW). En matière de biosécurité, un fondement légal univoque et la mise en place de procédures pour l'évaluation scientifique des risques se fait dans un système commun aux différents niveaux de pouvoir. Ce système, datant de 1997, et basé sur une législation européenne renforcée depuis 2001, devrait être actualisé. Par ailleurs, pour tenir compte de la reprise des demandes d'autorisation, ce système d'évaluation des risques devrait être renforcé et réorganisé.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/9#9.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 10.3

Related to objective 10.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: All climate change, biodiversity and desertification cooperation projects funded by Belgium should be assessed to ensure that they are mutually supportive of the objectives of the three Rio conventions.

Federal level

Examples of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5) sector Development cooperation:

Environmental sustainability toolkit

A toolkit was launched: "environmental sustainability toolkit" for all projects and programs of the Belgian Directorate General for Development Cooperation.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 10.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: All climate change, biodiversity and desertification cooperation projects funded by Belgium should be assessed to ensure that they are mutually supportive of the objectives of the three Rio conventions.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Les projets de coopération sur le changement climatique, la biodiversité et la désertification financés par la Belgique ne sont pas encore évalués pour s'assurer qu'ils soutiennent mutuellement les trois conventions de Rio.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/10#10.3>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 11.3

Related to objective 11.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Make best use of Belgian expertise to support implementation of the Convention in developing countries.

Belgium participates as a member institution (RBINS) to the Consortium of Scientific Partners of the CBD. The Consortium has as main goal to assist the CBD to give training to Parties on needs and priorities expressed by them.

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the Belgian Development Cooperation have continued to strengthen technical and scientific capacities for the implementation of the CBD in developing countries.

The framework strategy has been agreed at the end of 2012 between the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGD) and RBINS for a ten years period (2014-2023), with the aim to build scientific and technical capacities for a more effective implementation of the CBD in the partner countries of the Belgian Development cooperation. The main achievements of the five-year programme 2014-2018 included i.e. the improvement of the exchange of information on biodiversity and the training of scientific and technical staff both in developing countries and in Belgium. A framework agreement between the Directorate-General for the Environment and RBINS also includes the capacity-building of federal actors, for a better integration of biodiversity in their activities.

The Belgian Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) partnership with African countries provides for the building of capacities and for the transfer of technologies for the development of CHM websites, in collaboration with the European Community CHM (EC CHM) and other European countries. The websites are developed using the web content management system 'EC CHM Portal Toolkit' During the period 2014-2018, 506 persons followed training workshops on the use of the CHM tool through national or regional workshops or training in Belgium. Many trainees also participated in follow-up trainings organised by their national focal some months after the initial training, financed by CEBioS. These training took place in 14 of the countries where CEBioS can work but also in 10 Arab speaking countries and 3 francophone countries through South-south cooperation projects with Morocco or Benin.

The result of this were the 3<sup>rd</sup> price for Belgium during the CHM Awards at COP13, first price for Burundi and 3<sup>rd</sup> price for Morocco for existing CHM and 3<sup>rd</sup> price for Guinea-Bissau for new CHM during COP14.

Belgian capacity building programme within the Framework Agreement with Belgian Development Cooperation (Royal Museum for Central Africa). Through this programme, the Department of African Biology is providing travel grants to African researchers in several fields. The ABIC (African Biodiversity Information Centre) has provided individual training in diverse taxonomic groups or access to the natural history collections of the RMCA to more than 140 African counterparts since 2005. The RMCA also organizes group training in biodiversity data management, ichthyology, fruit fly pest and wood biology on a regular basis. Several North-South collaborations between the RMCA and African institutions conduct research, including aspects on knowledge transfer, on biodiversity related issues in western, Central and Eastern Africa.

Through CEBioS, the GTI capacity building programme has enabled 68 visits to Belgium to receive taxonomic training or to use the expertise and collections of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. Furthermore, 110 taxonomists and para taxonomists participated in training workshops in developing countries. Eight manuals in the ABC-Taxa series have been produced in the reporting period. More information on these manuals can be found on the ABC-Taxa website: <http://www.abctaxa.be>.

Seen the importance of monitoring of changes in ecosystems and habitats towards management decisions or external factors a special programme was started in 2009 to monitor changes in habitats and to support research towards monitoring. One of the activities is the monitoring of vegetation changes in national parks in DR Congo, Burundi and soon Benin. Part of this programme within CEBioS consists of training park rangers in how to include/integrate habitat changes in their normal monitoring missions. Another activity is the monitoring and modelling of sea currents in Delta's to predict implications of human activities on among other the biodiversity

in Vietnam, Peru and Bénin. Through this programme more than 380 people received training in the reporting phase. Four lexica were produced. A tool for a sea monitoring modelling project with IRHOB (Benin) won the third place for the D4D price in 2018.

A new part of the programme was Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV). Under this part partner countries were stimulated to develop indicators and baselines for their NBSAPs. A total of 26 projects were implemented and resulted in 12 policy briefs (including from other parts of the programme of CEBioS, <http://www.biodiv.be/cebios2/docs/publications/policy-briefs>).

The Flemish Inter University Council-Cooperation for development, VLIR-UOS, is supporting institutional cooperation in 20 partner countries where environment is an important issue, and with a strong component on research and capacity building in the field of biodiversity (<https://www.vliruos.be/en/projects/20>), as well as several ICP master programmes at Flemish universities for students from developing countries related to environmental issues.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 11.3 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Make best use of Belgian expertise to support implementation of the Convention in developing countries.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Développement en cours d'un toolkit pour évaluer l'impact environnemental des projets de coopération au développement; acteurs cibles et phasage avec le cycle des projets initiés restent à clarifier. Plusieurs programmes de renforcement des capacités en matière de biodiversité sont financés par la Belgique sur le long terme. La Belgique ne promeut pas encore suffisamment l'intégration de la biodiversité et de la biosécurité dans les plans de développement des pays partenaires.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/11#11.3>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 12

Related to objective 12 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Influence the international agenda within biodiversity-related conventions.

Since the adoption of the NBS, Belgium continued to be involved at the forefront of the biodiversity-related conventions and actively participate in all important meetings. The negotiating team of the Belgian Presidency has contributed to the success of the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>



Conference of Parties to the CBD especially on matters related to Synergies between Conventions, Marine, Capacity building and Technical and scientific cooperation, Financial Mechanism and more.

The development of DART in partnership with the EU, Switzerland and UNEP (InforMEA and WCMC) to assist parties to use reporting from one MEA towards the reporting of other MEAs has continued and will be finalised in 2019.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 12 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Influence the international agenda within biodiversity-related conventions.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La Belgique continue à jouer un rôle majeur pour assurer la cohérence entre les conventions liées à la biodiversité en 2011-2012, notamment grâce à sa participation au bureau du SBSTTA.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<Add link> <Add file>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 13.2

Related to objective 13.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Support efforts of developing countries to combat illegal logging and associated illegal trade as well as their efforts to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (redd+).

Federal level

Forestry

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5), sector Development cooperation: the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade) file for Democratic Republic of Congo was prepared and several projects have been launched around the forestry and forest management, both bilateral and multilateral or under indirect cooperation.

The Belgian science policy office finances the project COBIMFO aiming at: (i) providing a baseline reference data on the C-balance and biodiversity in pristine and intervened dense tropical forests of the Congo Basin and (ii) increasing understanding in the relationship between both variables as a function of forest management and degradation:  
<http://www.belspo.be/belspo/fedra/proj.asp?l=en&COD=SD/AR/01A>.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 13.2 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Support efforts of developing countries to combat illegal logging and associated illegal trade as well as their efforts to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and the enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (redd+).

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

La politique d'achat fédérale a amorcé un dialogue animé au niveau national et international, toujours en cours actuellement, et qui a entraîné une sensibilisation du secteur et du grand public, soutenue entre autres par des campagnes d'information. Un accord sectoriel ambitieux a été signé avec le secteur. La mise en application d'une politique d'achat de bois durable dans les services publics fédéraux et régionaux est difficile à imposer. Pour garantir une application efficace, en mesure d'engendrer des changements de comportement significatifs dans le secteur concerné et auprès du grand public, il faudrait disposer de plus amples moyens. Six Accords de Partenariat ont été conclus avec des pays exportateurs de bois. D'autres accords sont en cours de négociations et un certain nombre de pays supplémentaires ont exprimé leur intérêt par rapport à la démarche. Le processus est long, complexe et ambitieux, notamment lors de la mise en oeuvre d'un système de vérification de la légalité du bois.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/13#13.2>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 14

Related to objective 14 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities in the implementation of the biodiversity strategy 2020.

Flemish Region

Cooperation with local authorities is organised through the provincial administrations.

## Wallonia Region

Municipalities have an essential role to play in taking biodiversity into account outside protected areas. In particular they have the possibility of setting up various environmental programmes in their territory with the financial and/or logistical support of Wallonia.

In addition to river contracts, there are 6 types of programmes: The tree week, the late mowing of roadsides, the Maya Plan, the label Cimetiere Nature, Nature parks and PCDN,

The tree week, the late mowing of roadsides and the Maya Plan (Plan Maya) were at the top of the list with respectively nearly 99%, 86% and 80% participation.

- Through the charter that they sign for 6 years, the Maya municipalities commit themselves to carry out improvements which benefit pollinating insects (planting of melliferous plants, drafting of a plan to reduce pesticides and a plan for the differentiated management of green spaces, support for beekeepers) as well as awareness-raising actions.
- The late mowing of roadsides (16,000 km for about 3,600 ha), which had already been launched but was strengthened as part of the Maya operation, allows the flora of these areas to reach full maturity.
- As regards tree week, municipalities can apply for aid for the distribution of seedlings, the creation of a green space and the planting of trees and hedges.
- The most recent programme promotes the gradual and continuous reintegration of biodiversity into municipal cemeteries: 53 cemeteries in 13 municipalities were awarded the Nature Cemetery label (label Cimetiere Nature) in 2015.
- 56 municipalities are associated with one of the 10 natural parks in Wallonia and as such are committed to protecting, managing and sustainably developing their territory through a management plan.
- A municipality may draw up, in consultation with all local stakeholders, a Municipal Nature Development Plan (Plan communal de developpement de la nature - PCDN) for which an annual subsidy may be requested. The coordination of all programmes can be facilitated by hiring or retaining an eco-counsellor for whom the municipalities can benefit from an annual subsidy.

## Brussels-Capital Region

The coordinated regional law about nature and the regional plan for nature

A coordinated regional law about nature was adopted in March 2012, consisting of 119 articles and 8 annexes, with the general aim of contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of components of biodiversity. Measures taken under this nature law are intended to:

- maintain or restore to a favourable conservation status natural habitats and species of fauna and flora of community and regional interest;
- contribute to the establishment of an ecological network in Brussels;
- contribute to the integration of biodiversity in an urban context.

This regional law has required the elaboration of a regional plan for nature, adopted in April 2016. It also foresees the elaboration of more specific action plans (art. 6 and 12 to 14). These action plans would aim at:

- the improvement of the conservation status of natural species and habitats.
- the struggle against biodiversity threats such as invasive alien species.
- the encouragement of sustainable use of biodiversity components.

[http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu\\_du\\_site/News/Ord\\_Nature\\_Natuur\\_2012.pdf?langtype=2060](http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu_du_site/News/Ord_Nature_Natuur_2012.pdf?langtype=2060)

Municipalities are often cited as partners or to be consulted for the implementation of these plans and measures.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 14 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Promote the commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities in the implementation of the biodiversity strategy 2020.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective  
 Measure taken has been partially effective  
 Measure taken has been ineffective  
 Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

<Text entry>

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/14>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 14.1

Related to objective 14.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Encourage local authorities to develop and implement local biodiversity strategies and related action plans.

Flemish Region

Cooperation with local authorities is now organised through the provincial administrations.

Walloon Region

Municipality plans for Nature development (PCDN): A municipality may draw up, in consultation with all local stakeholders, a Municipal Nature Development Plan (Plan communal de developpement de la nature - PCDN).

Brussels-Capital Region

The coordinated regional law about nature and the regional plan for nature

A coordinated regional law about nature was adopted in March 2012, consisting of 119 articles and 8 annexes, with the general aim of contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of components of biodiversity. Measures taken under this nature law are intended to:

- maintain or restore to a favourable conservation status natural habitats and species of fauna and flora of community and regional interest;
- contribute to the establishment of an ecological network in Brussels;
- contribute to the integration of biodiversity in an urban context.

This regional law has required the elaboration of a regional plan for nature, that has been approved in April 2016. It also foresees the elaboration of more specific action plans (art. 6 and 12 to 14). These action plans would aim at:

- the improvement of the conservation status of natural species and habitats.

- the struggle against biodiversity threats such as invasive alien species.
- the encouragement of sustainable use of biodiversity components.

[http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu\\_du\\_site/News/Ord\\_Nature\\_Natuur\\_2012.pdf?langtype=2060](http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/uploadedFiles/Contenu_du_site/News/Ord_Nature_Natuur_2012.pdf?langtype=2060)

The objectives of the plan are:

1. Improvement in access of Brussels residents to nature, so that every Brussels resident has an accessible and inviting green space of over 1 hectare less than 400 metres from his/her residence, and one of less than 1 hectare less than 200 metres away.

2. Consolidation of the regional green network; preservation of the green nature of the Region and strengthening of the coherence of the Brussels ecological network, to provide the conditions necessary for proper functioning of the ecosystems and expression of a high degree of biodiversity, benefitting the quality of life in the city and the attractiveness of the Region.

3. Incorporation of nature issues into plans and projects; improved consideration of nature and the green network in plans and projects, including those outside protected areas.

4. Extension and support of ecological management of green spaces; improved management of public areas and assurance of consistency between the approaches of the numerous managers.

5. Reconciliation of accommodation of wildlife and urban development; maintenance or reestablishment of natural habitats and species in a favourable state of preservation as well as reduction of nuisances by problematic species.

6. Raising awareness of and mobilising Brussels residents on behalf of biodiversity; development of an overall communication strategy, in an understanding with those involved in the field, that will identify the key messages to be transmitted and the audiences to be targeted as a priority. The objective also aims to promote respect for public green spaces and their facilities.

7. Improved governance with regard to nature; developing cross-disciplinary and consistent approaches by facilitating meetings and exchanges between those responsible for management of green spaces and the public area and those involved, publicly and privately, in development and planning in the Region.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 14.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Encourage local authorities to develop and implement local biodiversity strategies and related action plans.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

<Text entry>

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/14#14.1>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

## Action 15

Related to objective 15 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure the provision of adequate resources for biodiversity.

Investigate financing possibilities for biodiversity:

Belgium is working on the Strategy for Resource Mobilisation; it participates in the reflection on the mobilisation of additional financial resources under the CBD to increase funding for biodiversity related activities, both nationally and globally. Belgium also makes extensive use of the possibilities of co-financing through European projects.

### Walloon Region

In 2015, 86% of the monitoring network was spent on air and water quality monitoring and control measures. These budgets increased steadily until 2011, mainly because of the monitoring requirements imposed by the various European directives and the emergence of new problems, however, since 2011, it is decreasing.

Financing of several measures have a direct effect on biodiversity:

- Measures in relation to agri-environmental subsidies
- Natura 2000 remunerations for the farmers and for the forestry sector
- Conservation and valorisation of the rural patrimony
- Dispensation of property tax and of succession and donation rights within Natura 2000.
- Life programs: since 1992, more than 55millions euros were invested in 21 programs
- Subsidies for biological agriculture.
- Supplementary subsidies for agri-environmental measures in Natura 2000 sites and in the main ecological structure areas (SEP).
- Subsidies for the planting of hedges, tree rows and orchards.
- Subsidies attributed through the 'Plan Communal de Développement de la Nature', for delayed mowing, hedges, for the program 'combles et clochers', within river contracts, for the Maya Plan, for natural parks, for the action 'Semaine de l'Arbre', etc.
- Subsidies for the regeneration of broadleaved and conifer species.
- Subsidies for the management of open spaces
- Subsidies for the acquisition of land that will be designated as nature reserve.
- Forestry Code: dispensation of succession and donation rights to improve the profitability of forestry production. This disposition also stimulates private owners to develop forest stands with a diversified age composition.
- Moreover, the Walloon Region gives subsidies to nature associations for management or for communication and awareness purposes.

### **For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 15 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: Ensure the provision of adequate resources for biodiversity.

### **Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Peu de moyens spécifiques sont alloués pour la mise en oeuvre des différents objectifs de la Stratégie nationale. Des moyens humains et financiers pour des actions concrètes initiées par chaque niveau de pouvoir vont croissants et permettent de mettre en place des mesures sur le terrain. La Belgique a largement recours aux possibilités de co-financements européens. Les contributions volontaires à la CDB sont modestes mais croissantes. Les contributions volontaires et actions concrètes dans le cadre du Protocole de Carthagène sont inexistantes.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/15#15>

**Describe a measure taken to contribute to the implementation of your country's national biodiversity strategy and action plan**

Action 15.1

Related to objective 15.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2020 at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for biodiversity from all sources (including possible innovative financial mechanisms) should increase substantially compared to the average annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006-2010.

The Rio Marker system was not designed to provide accurate information on expenditures. For this reason, Belgium will not use this system for reporting on its biodiversity-related expenditures and is reflecting on possible alternative methodologies to the Rio Markers based on the OECD/DAC CRS. In this respect Belgium recalls the CBD COP X/3 decision which states in paragraph 12: "Invites the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) to revisit the Rio Markers with a view to providing methodological guidance and coherence in support of paragraph 7, indicator 1(a)". Belgium believes that an alternative methodology needs to be discussed at the international level so that it can be adopted and applied by all.

Federal level

Study on federal financial mechanisms

Example of implementation of the Federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors (see action 5): a study has been conducted to identify possible federal mechanisms that could be designed for financing federal actions to integrate biodiversity in other sectors (fiscal measures, establishment of a biodiversity funds, etc.). Several discussions took place to better implement the outputs of this study.

**For the implementation measure, please indicate to which national or Aichi Biodiversity Target(s) it contributes**

Related to objective 15.1 of the National Biodiversity Strategy: By 2020 at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for biodiversity from all sources (including possible innovative financial mechanisms) should increase substantially compared to the average annual biodiversity funding for the years 2006-2010.

**Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation measure taken in achieving desired outcomes:**

- Measure taken has been effective
- Measure taken has been partially effective
- Measure taken has been ineffective
- Unknown

**Please explain the selection and where possible indicate the tools or methodology used for the assessment of effectiveness above**

Des moyens humains et financiers pour des actions concrètes initiées par chaque niveau de pouvoir vont croissants et permettent de mettre en place des mesures sur le terrain.

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).  
<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/national-strategy/implementation/15#15.1>



### SECTION III. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS EACH NATIONAL TARGET

<p>Objective 1 - Identify and monitor priority components of biodiversity in Belgium.</p>
<p><b>Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On track to exceed target <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On track to achieve target <input type="checkbox"/> Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate <input type="checkbox"/> No significant change <input type="checkbox"/> Moving away from target <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown</p>
<p><b>Date the assessment was done:</b></p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Additional information</b> (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).</p> <p>The priority habitats and species were identified and are monitored among others within the framework of the EU Habitats Directive.</p>
<p><b>Indicators used in this assessment</b></p> <p><i>Indicator(s) used in this assessment</i></p> <p>Flanders and Wallonia already use biodiversity indicators closely linked to the SEBI and CBD indicators to evaluate and report on the status of biodiversity in their region upon on a yearly basis. The City-biodiversity index (CBI indicators) is tested in the Brussels-Capital Region.</p>
<p><b>Level of confidence of the above assessment</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Based on comprehensive evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Based on partial evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Based on limited evidence</p>
<p><b>Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.</b></p> <p>Indicators and reporting in place.</p>
<p><b>Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is adequate <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue) <input type="checkbox"/> No monitoring system in place <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring is not needed</p>
<p><b>Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place</b></p> <p>Monitoring is in place to ensure an information and data flow for the reporting on nature and environment.</p>

Objective 2 - Investigate and monitor the effects of threatening processes and activities and their causes.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Threatening processes are monitored through specific types of indicators and are reported upon on a regular basis. The impacts of some threatening processes on biodiversity might nevertheless deserve closer monitoring as for example climate change, nitrogen and phosphorus depositions, land use changes.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

*Indicator(s) used in this assessment*

Specific regional / federal indicators are used to follow up threatening processes.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

Indicators and reporting in place.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

**Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place**

Monitoring is in place to ensure an information and data flow for the reporting on nature and environment.

Objective 3 - Maintain or restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in Belgium to a favourable conservation status.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target  
 On track to achieve target  
 Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate  
 No significant change  
 Moving away from target  
 Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

According to the latest report on the conservation status of habitats and species covered by the Habitats Directive, 8.6% of the habitats' biogeographic assessments were favourable in 2013 in Belgium (EU 27: 16%). Furthermore, 17 % are considered to be unfavourable–inadequate (EU27: 47%) and 73 % are unfavourable – bad (EU27: 30%). As for the non-bird species, 19.2 % of the assessments were favourable in 2013 (EU 27: 23%) 26 % at unfavourable-inadequate (EU27: 42%) and 42% unfavourable-bad status (EU27: 18%). Moreover, 27% and 29.7% of the unfavourable assessments respectively for species and habitats were showing a positive trend in 2013.

For the period 2007-13, the Habitats Directive's Article 17 conservation status report for the Region of Wallonia indicated rapid area losses for two grassland habitat types, even inside Natura 2000 sites. On the other hand, the same report also indicated measurable improvements for less widespread but important habitat types in terms of biodiversity conservation, mostly attributable to LIFE-funded habitat restoration projects in the Ardennes region.

As far as birds are concerned, 66 % of the breeding species showed short-term increasing or stable population trends (for wintering species this figure was only 7 %).

High emission levels of farm-based nitrogen into Natura 2000 sites remains an issue of concern, particularly in the lowland parts of Belgium. A strategic nitrogen abatement programme is scheduled to be launched in Flanders and is expected to lead to a progressive reduction of nitrogen emissions into Natura 2000 sites over the coming decades.

Compared to the EU average, the number of complaints related to the EU Nature Directives is rather low in all Belgian regions.

Belgium has benefited from EU funding under LIFE-Nature, thanks to a strong network of Nature NGOs and public authorities pursuing a strong restoration agenda. Conservation strategies in Belgium are strongly based on land purchase and habitat restoration.

In early 2016, a LIFE Belgian Nature Integrated Project (BNIP) was granted, to support the implementation of the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) of Flanders, Wallonia and the Federal Marine Division. This project will be focussing on measures aimed at the management of the Natura 2000 network, through improved governance, capacity building and collaboration between the Flemish, Walloon and Federal authorities. It also aims to improve stakeholder involvement, and to implement specific objectives such as developing integrated site management plans, monitoring and database systems.

Due to the extensive range of Natura 2000 sites restoration measures carried out since 2003 in the frame of six coordinated LIFE projects covering several thousands of hectares of peat bogs and wetlands in the Belgian Ardennes, the Belgian authorities were able to report, in 2013, significant positive trends in the conservation status of a dozen different habitat types and associated species protected by the EU Habitats Directive. Other large scale restoration and nature development

projects under LIFE, INTERREG or regional programmes, are carried out along the Schelde river, the Zwin estuary, the coastal area and the Grensmaas.

Suggested action: undertake further efforts to ensure that the Natura 2000 network is managed towards favourable conservation status of protected habitats and species, especially by reducing the pressures from agriculture.

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report\\_be\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_be_en.pdf)

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

Based on comprehensive evidence

Based on partial evidence

Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

Reporting is in place, among others in the framework of the Habitats Directive.

Objective 4 - Ensure and promote the sustainable use of components of biodiversity.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

On track to exceed target

On track to achieve target

Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate

No significant change

Moving away from target

Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Efforts are being undertaken at the federal, regional and local levels, focussing among others on sustainable production and consumption, sustainable farming and fishing, biodiversity-friendly procurement criteria, the wise use of wetlands and forests, but at insufficient rates and levels to ensure habitats and species' favourable conservation status, thus although significant progress has been made, the implementation scale and rate both need to increase.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

Based on comprehensive evidence

Based on partial evidence

Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

Monitoring related to this target is adequate

Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)

No monitoring system in place

Monitoring is not needed

Objective 5 - Improve the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant sectoral policies.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Efforts are being undertaken, mainly at the regional and federal level, focussing among others on the integration of biodiversity concerns into land-use planning, infrastructure, energy production, trade and transport, ... More recently, efforts are increasing in relation to business and biodiversity. Although progress is made, the scale and range need to be enlarged a lot.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

*Indicator(s) used in this assessment*

<Indicator(s) used> Please provide a list of indicators used for the assessment of this target

or:

- No indicator used

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

<Text entry>

**Relevant websites, web links and files** (Please use this field to indicate any relevant websites, web links or documents where additional information related to this assessment can be found).

<Add link> <Add file>

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

<Text entry>

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

Objective 6 - Promote and contribute to an equitable access to and sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- X Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization has been ratified by Belgium. Within the limits of the decisions already taken at the international and European level, the competent Belgian authorities are now proceeding with the development of legal measures in order to enable its implementation.

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

Belgian Contact Group on ABS.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- X Monitoring is not needed

Objective 7 - Improve and communicate scientific knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- X On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Scientific reports and assessments are published very frequently at the regional, federal and national levels. Ecosystems and their services are reported upon and valued, by some actors as well as the Belgian Biodiversity Platform. Efforts are also dedicated to the improvement of the science-policy interface. Communication is widely performed through websites, media tools as facebook and twitter, and other means.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence  
 Based on partial evidence  
 Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate  
 Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)  
 No monitoring system in place  
 Monitoring is not needed

Objective 8 - Involve the community through communication, education, public awareness and training.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target  
 On track to achieve target  
 Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate  
 No significant change  
 Moving away from target  
 Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Communication, Education and Public Awareness activities are undertaken by the National Focal Point, by the three regions and by the federal administration, as well as by numerous stakeholders (universities, scientific institutions, NGOs, provincial and local authorities) each in their field of competence. Biodiversity is more and more integrated in school courses as well as proposed to children and youth through other actions and means.

The CHM partnership initiative contains a special Public Awareness component for partner countries. Between 2009-2013, 13 small projects to raise public awareness in partner countries

have been implemented in 9 countries thanks to the support of the Belgian Development Cooperation.

La stratégie #BeBiodiversity vise à déplacer les marchés vers des produits plus respectueux de la biodiversité en faisant jouer l'offre et la demande. Cette stratégie vise donc à mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises pour promouvoir un approvisionnement en matières premières durables, compatibles avec la protection de la biodiversité dans les pays d'origine.

Une campagne de communication a vu le jour en 2017 pour sensibiliser, éduquer et mobiliser les citoyens-consommateurs et les entreprises tout en leur donnant les moyens de choisir des produits et producteurs plus respectueux de la biodiversité de manière informée. Divers outils de communications et activations des réseaux sociaux sont utilisés :

- Un site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be>) a été développé qui regorge d'information mais également de gestes pour préserver la biodiversité. Quatre vidéos d'accroche ont été lancées en 2017 pour l'inauguration de la stratégie et de la campagne.
- Cinq vidéos d'animation qui expliquent, entre autres, le lien entre la consommation ordinaire et les menaces pesant sur la biodiversité et les écosystèmes ont été créées. Ces vidéos d'animation, disponibles en anglais, français et néerlandais sur la chaîne YouTube #BeBiodiversity, ont été un franc succès: elles ont été visionnées plus de 500 000 fois sur Facebook et plus de 130 000 fois sur YouTube. La vidéo « Quel est le lien entre le sushi et une tortue » a remporté le Golden Green Award au 7ème festival des Deauville Green Awards, en juin 2018.
- Pour mieux connaître les habitudes de consommation des citoyens-consommateurs et leur impact sur la nature, un quizz été lancé fin 2018 avec pour objectifs de :
  - o continuer à sensibiliser ;
  - o commencer la phase de mobilisation notamment avec en 2019 avec une Fête des Voisins Biodiversité ;
  - o dégager des tendances de consommation
  - o mieux cibler les prochaines communications « consommateur » ;
  - o étayer la communication, influencer et mobiliser les entreprises.

Cinq animaux totem ont été choisis pour définir le profil de consommation et des petits conseils faciles à mettre en place au quotidien sont proposés.

- Après le succès de la campagne de communication auprès des citoyens, une campagne visant spécifiquement les entreprises sera lancée au début de l'année 2019. Cette campagne coïncidera avec le lancement d'un outil web aidant les entreprises à choisir et mettre en œuvre des actions en faveur de la biodiversité (BiodiversiTree – voir ci-dessous)). Quatre entreprises pionnières (Belvas, Amanprana, Ecosem et Tilman) ainsi que la Régie des bâtiments (service publique) sont partenaires dans ce projet et aide au développement des outils :
  - o Une page spéciale 'entreprises' a été développée sur notre site web de campagne (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>).
  - o Des vidéos de promotions des entreprises pionnières sont lancées pour inciter d'autres entreprises à s'engager dans la préservation de la biodiversité. Elle sont disponibles sur le site web (<https://bebiodiversity.be/que-puis-je-faire-en-tant-quentreprise/>).

En parallèle, cette stratégie vise à agir au niveau de l'offre pour sensibiliser et aider les entreprises à entreprendre une démarche volontaire de préservation de la biodiversité et des services écosystémiques :

- Les entreprises et organisations qui désirent contribuer à la préservation de la biodiversité pourront compter sur le BiodiversiTree pour les guider dans la détermination des actions :



du choix des partenaires/experts qui pourront les accompagner à la valorisation des investissements réalisés pour adapter leurs terrains, infrastructures, achats et processus. Les entités fédérale et régionales ont ainsi développé pour la Belgique cette plateforme web (BiodiversiTree) qui permet aussi l'échange d'informations mettant en avant les actions concrètes car pour mobiliser les entreprises rien de tel que des exemples réalisés par d'autres entreprises ! Cette plateforme est également un outil de sensibilisation afin de permettre à chacun de se poser des questions sur sa marge de manœuvre au sein de son organisation. (<https://biodiversitree.be>).

Formations 'Biodiversité et services écosystémiques' vers divers publics cibles (entreprises, délégués syndicaux notamment comme relais auprès de leur entreprises, organisations publiques ...) et divers secteurs (économie, mobilité-transport (maritime, ferroviaire), EMAS). Ces formations ont connu un vif succès et ont permis, dans un premier temps, de mieux comprendre les concepts de biodiversité et de services écosystémiques. La démarche visait aussi à permettre de mieux appréhender les relations et les dépendances entre le groupe cible et la biodiversité afin de pouvoir identifier les mesures pour minimiser les impacts négatifs, ainsi que les opportunités potentielles à saisir.

La thématique « Biodiversité et entreprises » est appréhendée de deux façons :

- En mettant l'accent sur la biodiversité locale dans ou autour de l'entreprise : en préservant la faune et la flore locales, l'entreprise se concentre sur le développement de bonnes relations avec les entités voisines, associations ou clients, sur son image, sur les questions de santé. Dans certains cas, l'entreprise peut en retirer des avantages sur le plan économique. On songe ici au principe des toitures vertes isolantes, aux installations de recyclage de l'eau, à l'exploitation forestière responsable, à la pêche et à l'agriculture durables, etc.
- En axant la politique de l'entreprise sur les chaînes de production dont elle fait partie : en effet, bien souvent, les décisions prises par une entreprise ont un impact non pas sur la biodiversité locale mais sur la biodiversité présente ailleurs dans le monde. Il est ainsi possible de limiter les impacts de la chaîne de production sur la biodiversité, notamment via l'utilisation de matières premières durables (soja, sucre obtenu via des pratiques culturelles durables) ou, indirectement, via une diminution des émissions / pollutions, qui constituent une menace pour la biodiversité. C'est dans ce contexte que la biodiversité s'inscrit dans le cadre plus large de la responsabilité sociétale des entreprises. Les entreprises engagées qui disposent par exemple d'un système de gestion de l'environnement, peuvent, par le biais de cet instrument et sur une base systématique, suivre les évolutions en la matière.

#### **Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence  
 Based on partial evidence  
 Based on limited evidence

#### **Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

<Text entry>

#### **Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate  
 Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)  
 No monitoring system in place  
 Monitoring is not needed

**Please describe how the target is monitored and indicate whether there is a monitoring system in place**

On an irregular basis studies on the people's knowledge about biodiversity and its importance are conducted.

Objective 9 - Strengthen the biodiversity-related regulatory framework and ensure the implementation of, compliance with and enforcement of biodiversity related legislations.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Legislative and enforcement means and efforts need to be stepped up, although this is not an easy task seen the fragmentation of competences in relation to biodiversity matters and seen the number of legislative bodies within the country.

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

Objective 10 - Ensure a coherent implementation of / and between biodiversity-related commitments and agreements.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Although a lot of efforts are already performed, more concertation, coordination and willingness are needed between all the biodiversity-, desertification- and climate change-related entities. Adequate mainstreaming of biodiversity issues in renewable energy measures related to climate change mitigation is lacking.

**Indicators used in this assessment**

*Indicator(s) used in this assessment*

<Indicator(s) used> Please provide a list of indicators used for the assessment of this target

or:

No indicator used

**Please describe any other tools or means used for assessing progress**

Among others observations and assessments made during (infra-)national Steering Committee and Working Group meetings.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

Based on comprehensive evidence

Based on partial evidence

Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

Monitoring related to this target is adequate

Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)

No monitoring system in place

Monitoring is not needed

Objective 11 - Ensure continued and effective international cooperation for the protection of biodiversity.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

On track to exceed target

On track to achieve target

Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate

No significant change

Moving away from target

Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Several cooperation projects are undertaken by different Belgian entities. Belgium is member of the Consortium of Scientific Partners of the CBD as well as of the Coalition of the Willing on Pollinators. Development cooperation projects are mainly performed with African countries, but also with South-American and Asian ones. Although funding and means were increased already, much more could and should be done.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

Objective 12 - Influence the international agenda within biodiversity-related conventions.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Since the adoption of the NBS, Belgium continued to be involved at the forefront of the biodiversity-related conventions and actively participate in all important meetings. Belgium has also chosen biodiversity and climate as priority themes for the environment during its EU Presidency. The Belgian negotiating team is highly valued by and within EU-level and international meetings as illustrated by the numerous chair positions.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

Objective 13 - Enhance Belgium's efforts to integrate biodiversity concerns into relevant international organisations and programmes.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

- Based on comprehensive evidence
- Based on partial evidence
- Based on limited evidence

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

- Monitoring related to this target is adequate
- Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)
- No monitoring system in place
- Monitoring is not needed

Objective 14 - Promote the commitment of cities, provinces and other local authorities in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

- On track to exceed target
- On track to achieve target
- Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate
- No significant change
- Moving away from target
- Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

**Additional information** (Please provide information on the evidence used in the assessment of this target, drawing upon relevant information provided in section II, including obstacles in undertaking the assessment).

Flanders and Wallonia have programmes in place to stimulate nature and biodiversity plans and actions by local authorities / municipalities. Provinces have substantial competences on nature and

biodiversity. Brussels is a green capital with its part of the Sonian Forest, parks, gardens, the green and blue network. It elaborated and implements a nature plan.

**Level of confidence of the above assessment**

Based on comprehensive evidence

Based on partial evidence

Based on limited evidence

**Please provide an explanation for the level of confidence indicated above.**

<Text entry>

**Adequacy of monitoring information to support assessment**

Monitoring related to this target is adequate

Monitoring related to this target is partial (e.g. only covering part of the area or issue)

No monitoring system in place

Monitoring is not needed

Objective 15 - Ensure the provision of adequate resources for biodiversity.

**Category of progress towards the implementation of the selected target:**

On track to exceed target

On track to achieve target

Progress towards target but at an insufficient rate

No significant change

Moving away from target

Unknown

**Date the assessment was done:**

Ongoing

## SECTION IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH GLOBAL AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGET

Target 1 - By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/a/targets/1>

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform ([www.biodiversity.be](http://www.biodiversity.be)) invests substantially in knowledge brokerage from the Belgian scientists towards different types of stakeholders. Through its day-to-day communication (incl. social media channels), it also helps to raise awareness for biodiversity issues.

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

Based on the book “366 gestes pour la biodiversité / 366 tips voor de biodiversiteit”, a booklet “52 actions for biodiversity” was created, translated into more than 30 different languages and distributed widely across the European Union and further worldwide.

Following the online publication of the book “366 gestes pour la biodiversité / 366 tips voor de biodiversiteit” into a bio-action-machine (<http://www.1001pourelabiodiversite.be/fr/tips> / <http://www.1001voorbiodiversiteit.be/nl/tips>) and its enrichment through a contest inviting the public to suggest new actions for biodiversity, it is foreseen to search for one or more partnership(s) to enable translation of this online instrument into English and other languages. In that way, it could reach far more public in a sustainable way than the paper version.

CEBioS has within its programme 2014-2018 a special strategic objective related to awareness raising. 36 projects were undertaken to raise awareness in developing countries. The projects were decided by the partner countries and had to be submitted to an annual call. To enable to measure the impact of awareness raising 5 baseline studies on public awareness were financed in Burundi, Benin, DR Congo, Niger and Togo. In Burundi the baseline study was redone in 2018, however the final results aren't known yet. In DR Congo the baseline study should be redone in the coming years. The target public of the projects ranged from schoolkids (5 projects), traditional healers and the Nagoya protocol (3 projects), scientific community/decision makers and NGOs (18 projects), general public (5 projects). The results of the projects can be found in the national CHMs of the partner countries and through [http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm\\_coop/chm-partnering/public\\_awareness](http://www.biodiv.be/cooperation/chm_coop/chm-partnering/public_awareness). In 2017 and 2018 special awareness activities were organised to promote the results of taxonomic research (10 projects) as well as MRV projects (15 projects) to policy makers, researchers and local populations.

**Based on the description of your country's contributions to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, please describe how and to what extent these contributions support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals:**

These awareness-raising activities on the importance of biodiversity and the various ways to protect and conserve it supports most SDGs and in particular:

- **Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**
- **Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

- **Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**
- **Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**

Target 2 - By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/a/targets/2>

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform hosts the IPBES National Focal Point which regularly organizes events and discussion sessions to promote uptake and use of IPBES products (incl. translation into concrete actions at national and sub-national level).

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS, as a member of the expert team of the UNEP-WCMC CONNECT project, contributes its expertise, acquired via its Measurement, Reporting and Verification projects for biological indicators, to ensure biodiversity is taken into account in decision making across government sectors by improving development decision makers' access to and use of biodiversity information and embedding biodiversity information within national development decision making processes. More information on <https://www.connectbiodiversity.com>.

Target 3 - By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/a/targets/3>

Target 4 - By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/a/targets/4>



Target 5 - By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/5>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

In the DR Congo, CEBioS supports, among others, the activities of the Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité in Kisangani, which is working with local populations to stop degradation and fragmentation of forests in valuable areas which are not yet or only partially protected. CEBioS is working closely with Institut Congolais de la Conservation de la Nature to monitor habitats in the National Parks in the DR Congo. Through its 26 Measurement, Reporting and Verification projects (2014-2018) (12 in DR Congo, 3 in Uganda, 2 in Benin, Rwanda and Tanzania and 1 in Burundi, Morocco, Kenya, Ghana and Palestine), CEBioS contributes to the development of biodiversity indicators for natural habitats and their possible degradation. It has used 15 of those projects as a starting point of awareness raising actions with local populations, decision makers and scientists (1 in Burundi, 2 in Benin, 13 in DR Congo).

Target 6 - By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/6>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS and VLIR-UOS have assisted Burundi, DR Congo and Vietnam in specific ecosystems through applied research to better understand the life-cycle of the fishes, take an inventory of the spawning grounds, identify parasites that effect the health of the fish stocks. Studies have also been undertaken to identify with fishermen in DR Congo on the decline of harvest, the reasons behind this decline and actions to develop to ensure sustainable fisheries, even to the extend as to change local legislation.

The Africa Museum has continued the work on FISHbase to better understand the biodiversity of fishes.

Target 7 - By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/7>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS has worked together with partner countries towards this goal. Projects ranged from sustainable mushroom harvesting, management of invasive species, pollinators management, charcoal production, bush meat, and the creation of awareness about these ecosystem services.

Target 8 - By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/8>

Target 9 - By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/9>

The threat caused by IAS to biodiversity in Belgium is addressed in the NBS via operational objective 3.7 but also via other operational objectives (2.3, 5.7, 7, 8.3) dealing with internal and external trade and whose implementation is guided by ten principles, including the precautionary approach and the polluter pays principle (see part III of the NBS).

This target is in line with article 8h of the CBD (1992) supplemented by Aichi Target 9 (2010) as well as with the EU Biodiversity Strategy Target 5 (2011). At international level, the CBD has developed guiding principles in order to help Parties to prevent the introduction of IAS, to detect early new introduced IAS and to undertake mitigation measures for established IAS (CBD Decision VI/23).

In order to establish rules to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse effects of invasive alien species (IAS), the EU Regulation 1143/2014 entered into force on 1 January 2015. The Regulation stipulates a series of measures that apply to any organism listed on the list of invasive alien species of Union Concern. At the European level, the actual implementation of the Regulation is performed through two main bodies:

- The EU Scientific Forum on IAS, made up of representatives of the scientific community appointed by the Member States, which provides advice on any scientific question related to the application of the Regulation, and in particular, on whether additional species for

inclusion on the list of EU concern and their associated risk assessments are robust and fit for purpose.

- The EU Committee on IAS, composed of representatives of all Member States, discusses the compliance of the proposed species with the criteria for listing. Any update of the Union list is subject to the positive opinion of the IAS Committee.

The implementation of the EU Regulation on IAS is based on a close cooperation between all the Member States. Concretely, the species included on the list of EU concern are subject to restrictions and measures set out in the Regulation. These include restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding and growing. Member States are required to take action on pathways of unintentional introduction, take measures for early detection and rapid eradication of these species, and to manage species. The Belgian implementation of the Regulation involves the competences of the Federal State and the Regions. Therefore, in order to implement this Regulation in Belgium, a Cooperation Agreement has been drafted and is under the process of being endorsed between the federated entities. The Cooperation Agreement creates three official national structures:

- The Scientific Council on IAS, composed of scientific experts providing advice to the National Committee on IAS.
- The National Committee on IAS, composed of decision-makers who develop and adopt Belgium's position on the Union List and its updating (Belgium's position is then shared with other Member States within the EU Committee on IAS).
- The National Scientific Secretariat on IAS, supporting the Scientific Council in answering questions of the National Committee on IAS.

According to article 13 of the EU IAS Regulation, all member states are required to identify and prioritize pathways of unintentional introduction of alien invasive species of Union concern. Priority pathways of unintentional introduction for the 49 invasive alien species of Union Concern listed to date, were identified at the scale of Belgium. Based on this exercise, a set of action plans are under development in order to address the priority pathway identified. Belgium will establish and implement these action plans for its territory and as far as possible coordinated at the appropriated regional/federal level.

Additionally, member states are required to take a decision on the management options. For this purpose, Belgium performed a manageability assessment in 2018. The project relies on experts to score the feasibility of management strategies for Union List species using an adaptation of the Non-Native Risk Management scheme (NNRM) of Booy et al (2017)

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10530-017-1451-z/fulltext.html> . Species that are believed to be unable to establish in Belgium are excluded from the exercise. The NNRM uses semi-quantitative response and confidence scores to assess seven key criteria linked with management feasibility of an invasive species: Effectiveness, Practicality, Cost, Impact, Acceptability, Window of opportunity and Likelihood of re-invasion. The approach was slightly adapted to fit the needs and practice in Belgium. The undertaking of this assessment was agreed upon and formalized by the Belgian IAS scientific council & IAS committee and aims to: 1) Support the EU Regulation implementation in Belgium; 2) Provide a sound evidence base for decisions on IAS management through a transparent, repeatable process; 3) Provide an evidence base for derogations on the rapid response obligation ( Art 18 ); 4) Provide a means of structured decision making for IAS management through a participatory approach of the Belgian expert community on IAS. The outcome of the present manageability assessment therefore provides support to the decision-making process but is not in any way a management recommendation.

The Commission will also be considering how to better integrate additional biodiversity concerns into the new Plant and Animal Health Regimes.

As a Party to the Bern Convention (Council of Europe), Belgium should implement the specific Bern recommendations on IAS issues including article 11, 2 b) which states that each Party should

take measures to strictly control the introduction of non-native species. In order to implement this provision, the Standing Committee adopted a Pan-European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species which inter alia recommends drawing up and implementing national strategies on IAS taking into account the above-mentioned pan-European strategy (Recommendation No. 99/2003).

Tackling the IAS issue in an integrated way is a particular challenge in Belgium due to its complex institutional framework resulting in a division and fragmentation of competences on issues dealing with different aspects of IAS (e.g. environment, health and agriculture). In order to address this problem and meet the various commitments regarding alien species under treaties to which Belgium is a Party, concrete steps must be urgently taken and coordinated action plans developed when necessary by and between all the competent authorities.

The TrIAS project is currently undertaken. It is aimed at dynamically, from year to year, track the progression of alien species, identify emerging species, assess their current and future risk and timely inform policy in a seamless data-driven workflow. One that is built on open science and open data infrastructures. By using international biodiversity standards and facilities, TrIAS ensures interoperability, repeatability and sustainability. This makes the process adaptable to future requirements in an evolving IAS policy landscape both locally and internationally.

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS has worked together with DR Congo on studies towards the eradication of invasive species in mountain forest areas in the eastern part of the country. In Ivory Coast a project has been undertaken to raise the awareness of the population of invasive species around protected areas and in agriculture.

Target 10 - By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/b/targets/10>

Target 11 - By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/c/targets/11>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS has been involved with ICCN (DR Congo), OBPE (Burundi) and Pendjari national Park (Benin) to assist them in the monitoring of the habitats of the national parks. Long term monitoring has started since 2010 to give these authorities tools to effectively manage their parks based on changes in vegetation. Also in the DR Congo, CEBioS supports, among others, the activities of the Centre de Surveillance de la Biodiversité and the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Kisangani, which are constantly inventorying and monitoring biodiversity in not or partially protected areas in order to obtain their protection in the long run.

Target 12 - By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/c/targets/12>

Target 13 - By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/c/targets/13>

Target 14 - By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/d/targets/14>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

The Belgian Development cooperation through ENABEL has undertaken the Kilombero and Lower Rufiji Wetlands Ecosystem Management Project in Tanzania. The main objective of the project was “to sustainably manage the wetlands Ecosystem of the Kilombero Valley and Lower Rufiji so that its ecological balance is conserved, the local communities’ livelihoods are improved and economic development is sustained. The results of the project were:

- Key resource users (wildlife, forest, fisheries, land & water) are organized to manage their resource base on wise principles within the framework of Community Based Natural Resource Management.

- Key resource users, transformers and traders (wildlife, forest, fisheries, grazing land, water etc) organized to derive sustainable economic benefits from wise resources management through access to markets and sound business management.
- Strengthened capacities of central, regional and local government structures to support and monitor the implementation of policies at local level and improved coordination between Natural Resource governance stakeholders at all relevant levels.

Target 15 - By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/d/targets/15>

Target 16 - By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/d/targets/16>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS contributed to the development of know-how on the Nagoya Protocol:

- In DR Congo by organising a training session (>100 participants) and by setting up test cases for the exportation of scientific biological material in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. Assistance was given to the National focal point for the Nagoya Protocol to add the new legislation to the ABS-CH.
- In Burundi by assisting the OBPE with the development of the national legislation, developing a policy brief for decision makers, setting up of a network between traditional healers and researchers at the University of Burundi as well as setting up a working agreement with them.

Target 17 - By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/e/targets/17>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS works with privileged partner institutes in DR Congo, Burundi, Benin, always in tight cooperation with their national ministries of environment. This allows for the ministries to call on those institutes to contribute to the updating of and reporting to the NBSAPs. The national CHMs of 30 developing countries are hosted at the national CHM of Belgium. The national CHM are used to follow-up the implementation of the NBSAP of these countries.

Target 18 - By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/e/targets/18>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS facilitated the drafting of an agreement between traditional practitioners and the national ministry of environment in Burundi regarding access and benefit sharing. To use the traditional knowledge of IPLCs that live near National Parks in Benin, Burundi and DR Congo, CEBioS has published with the national authorities and experts during the reporting phase 2 lexica on the vegetation of the national Parks (Pendjari, Benin and Kibira, Burundi).

Target 19 - By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/e/targets/19>

**Please describe other activities contributing to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Target at the global level (optional)**

CEBioS has worked towards the sharing of knowledge, the science base and technologies through its programme 2014-2018 through capacity building in developing countries of the Belgian Development cooperation. Information on CEBioS and its activities can be found on the website <https://cebios.naturalsciences.be>. Some of the highlights are the following:

- Sharing of knowledge: This has been done through assisting partner countries in developing their national CHMs. In the section II/action 7.1 and action 11.3 of this national report these activities have been reported.

- The science base: through the GTI, habitat monitoring, Coherens and MRV objectives of the CEBioS programme the science base in developing countries has been improved see section II/action 11.3 for more information.
- Technologies relating to biodiversity have also been addressed in partner countries not only through training developing country students on DNA barcoding but also on using drones for surveillance, extraction techniques for active ingredients in mushrooms and more.
- Values of biodiversity, status and trends as well as the consequences of its loss have had special attention in the programme with OBPE in Burundi where projects have been implemented on ecosystem services, valuation of losses and costs of restoration, value chains, have been implemented.

Target 20 - By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

**Please describe how and to what extent your country has contributed to the achievement of this Aichi Biodiversity Target and summarize the evidence used to support this description:**

<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu/aichi/goals/e/targets/20>



## SECTION V. DESCRIPTION OF THE BELGIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE TARGETS OF THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR PLANT CONSERVATION

**Please describe the major measures taken by your country for the implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.**

### **Target 1: An online Flora of all known plants.**

Belgium, through activities of Meise Botanic Garden, is active member of the World Flora Online consortium, which aims at fulfilling this target by 2020. It contributes in human capacity and data on Belgium and Central African vascular plant species.

Meise Botanic Garden coordinates the production of the Flore d'Afrique centrale, which will deal with c. 11,000 species of vascular plants. Progress is good (c. 6500 species treated), with the aim to finish this Flora series by 2028.

Meise Botanic Garden, together with Naturalis Biodiversity Center at Leiden, also coordinates the production of Flore du Gabon, the Netherlands, which will deal with c. 5,000 species of vascular plants. Progress is good (c. 3300 species treated), with the aim to finish this Flora by 2023.

Basic taxonomic work on plants, which delivers the data for the online flora, is executed at several Belgian universities and Meise Botanic Garden.

### **Target 2: An assessment of the conservation status of all known plant species, as far as possible, to guide conservation action.**

All species of vascular plants of the Belgian flora have been evaluated in terms of their conservation status:

Flemish region: <https://www.inbo.be/nl/zoek-de-rode-lijsten-vlaanderen>

Walloon region: <http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/liste-des-taxons.html?IDC=3076&IDD=1755>

Several staff members of Meise Botanic Garden are members of IUCN red Listing authorities. A specific project coordinated by Meise Botanic Garden will deliver the Red List assessments of c. 400 taxa of trees endemic or subendemic to the Central African region.

As part of the Eastern Plants Red Listing Authority (EAPRLA), Meise BG evaluates approximately 300 taxa per year. For the flora of Burundi, 137 endemic and sub-endemic taxa were assessed. Some of these assessments are already published by IUCN: [https://www.friscris.be/en/persons/salvatore\(6a7b39bb-88ee-4ccc-bee1-c7c979613c35\)/publications.html?page=1](https://www.friscris.be/en/persons/salvatore(6a7b39bb-88ee-4ccc-bee1-c7c979613c35)/publications.html?page=1)

Before the end of 2018, a small illustrated book on these taxa will be published.

Other taxa present in Burundi but whose overall distribution does not exceed the Lake Victoria Basin were evaluated in the framework of the project "Assessment of Threatened Plants of Lake Victoria Basin" piloted by EAPRLA.

### **Target 3: Information, research and associated outputs, and methods necessary to implement the Strategy developed and shared.**

November 2018 marks the 10 years of existence of the portal [Observations.be/waarnemingen.be](http://Observations.be/waarnemingen.be) developed by Natagora and Natuurpunt. Thousands of naturalists and the scientific community use it daily to improve their knowledge of the Belgian flora and fauna. As of 8 November 2018, the portal contained 6,996,210 data of plant species observations in Belgium. The portal offers a module to encode, manage and share data. The data (updated in real time) are public and searchable by all (free information sharing service). The portal uses a universal nomenclature to make it possible to exchange data with other database systems. [Observations.be/waarnemingen.be](http://Observations.be/waarnemingen.be) collaborates with local and regional working groups and provides a customized module for encoding

and visualization of data. It aims to centralize quality data. For this purpose, the data are validated daily by a group of experts.

#### Plant reintroduction protocols

Thanks to the European LIFE project 'Herbages' (LIFE+ 11NAT/BE/001060), Meise BG has become a centre of excellence in plant reintroductions. Extremely rigorous protocols have allowed Belgium to be recognized worldwide in this area. In particular, pre-transplant experience on four rare plant species (*Arnica montana*, *Campanula glomerata*, *Dianthus deltooides*, and *Helichrysum arenarium*) has been shared in several publications, highlighting aspects we need to focus on while planning plant reintroductions into the wild.

- Godefroid S., Le Pajolec S., Van Rossum F. 2016. Pre-translocation considerations in rare plant reintroductions: implications for designing protocols. *Plant Ecology* 217: 169-182.
- Godefroid S., Van de Vyver A., Stoffelen P., Vanderborgh T. 2017. Effectiveness of dry heat as a seed sterilisation technique: implications for *ex situ* conservation. *Plant Biosystems* 151: 1054-1061.
- Godefroid S., Le Pajolec S. & Van Rossum F. 2017. Population reinforcements of critically endangered plant species in grassland habitats. In: *From Idea to Realisation - BGCI's Manual on Planning, Developing and Managing Botanic Gardens*. Chapter 7: Using the Plant Collection – Research, Conservation, Education, Public Engagement, Recreation and Tourism. pp 171-172. <https://www.bgci.org/resources/2016-bgci-botanic-garden-manual/>
- Godefroid S., Van Rossum F. 2018. Monitoring and post-care. In: Heywood V., Shaw K., Harvey-Brown Y. and Smith P. (Eds.) 2018. *BGCI and IABG's Species Recovery Manual*, pp 87-95, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Richmond, United Kingdom. <http://www.bgci.org/resources/2017-bgci-iabg-species-recovery-manual/>

#### Evolutionary processes in ex-situ collections

A research project funded by the Swiss Science Foundation aimed to assess whether ex-situ living collections and seed banks can accurately preserve life-history traits and quantitative trait variability of wild populations and whether differences in traits and in genetic variation of the traits between ex-situ and wild plants affect survival and early-establishment of the plants when reintroduced into their wild habitat. We are addressing these issues by using a broad approach including a quantitative-genetic common-garden experiment and a reintroduction experiment in the field.

- Ensslin A., Van de Vyver A., Vanderborgh T., Godefroid S. 2018. Ex situ cultivation entails high risk of seed dormancy loss on short-lived wild plant species. *Journal of Applied Ecology* 55: 1145-1154.
- Ensslin A., Godefroid S. 2018. How cultivating wild plants in botanic gardens can change their genetic and phenotypic status and what it means for their conservation value. *Sibbaldia* 16: accepted.

**Target 4: At least 15 per cent of each ecological region or vegetation type secured through effective management and/or restoration.**

In Belgium there is no special target requiring that protected areas cover a minimum percentage of the ecological regions. However, the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive include qualitative targets for the designation of protected areas for the listed endangered species and habitats in Belgium.

**Flemish Region:** at the end of 2017, the total area recognized as nature reserve was 18,607 ha. The total surface of Natura 2000 areas is 166,322 ha or 12.3% of the Flemish land area.

**Walloon region:** at the end of June 2017, around 14,972 ha of natural sites enjoyed strong legal protection, which corresponds to 0.89% of the territory of Wallonia. If we add the 5544 hectares of integral forest reserves, 1.22% of the territory is protected. Walloon Natura 2000 sites cover 220,000 hectares (13% of Wallonia's territory).

**Brussels region:** 14 nature reserves (130 ha) and 2 forest reserves (112 ha) have been designated in the Brussels-Capital Region, which represents 1.5% of the territory of the region. However, as much as 14% of the Brussels-Capital Region is designated as Natura 2000 area (2334 ha).

**Target 5: At least 75 per cent of the most important areas for plant diversity of each ecological region protected with effective management in place for conserving plants and their genetic diversity.**

None of the regions has a list of most important areas for plant diversity. However, Natura 2000 is focusing on some vegetation types important for plant diversity such as peat bogs, alluvial forests, etc. The Natura 2000 network of protected areas is expected to include most important areas for plant diversity in Belgium.

**Target 6: At least 75 per cent of production lands in each sector managed sustainably, consistent with the conservation of plant diversity.**

**Flemish region:** in 2016, the area of cultivated land with nature-oriented management agreements was (per category): species protection (2,560 m<sup>2</sup>), botanical management (331 m<sup>2</sup>), field edges (1385 m<sup>2</sup>), wood edges (79 m<sup>2</sup>), and hedges (543,803 m).

**Walloon region:** according to the latest data available in their entirety (2012), the overall rate of adhesion to agri-environmental measures is 56.4% (8 621 farmers) for a total of 250 000 ha (1/3 of the Walloon agricultural area). In the top 5 of agri-environmental measures in 2012, we find (in terms of number of participants): hedgerows (5,231 producers, 12,370 km), winter cover (3,616 producers, 54,100 ha), trees, shrubs and groves (2,415 producers, 144,000 members), natural grasslands (2,139 producers, 15,460 ha), field edges (2,064 producers, 2,940 km).

**Target 7: At least 75 per cent of threatened plant species conserved in situ.**

Natura 2000 and the Bern Convention, among others, are contributing to this objective but cannot be regarded as specific targets for this.

**Flemish Region:** 3 species listed under Annex 1 of Bern convention & Habitat Directive

*Luronium natans*: 77% of recent populations in Habitat Directive areas

*Liparis loeselii*: single population in Habitat Directive area

*Apium repens* (= *Helosciadium repens*): most populations in Habitat Directive areas

**Walloon Region:** only one endemic taxon, *Sempervivum funckii* var. *aqualiense*, which is under very high threat. It is protected by the law on nature conservation. Species listed under the Annexes of the Bern Convention and the Habitat Directive, and which are also under total protection status: *Drepanocladus vernicosus*, *Dicranum viride*, *Trichomanes speciosum*, *Luronium natans*, *Bromus grossus*, *Bromus bromoideus* (extinct), *Liparis loeselii*, *Cyripedium calceolus* (extinct).

Between 2013 and 2015, 17 populations (9,100 plants) belonging to 4 endangered species (*Arnica montana*, *Dianthus deltooides*, *Helichrysum arenarium* and *Campanula glomerata*) were reintroduced, thus helping to prevent their extinction in situ.

**Target 8: At least 75 per cent of threatened plant species in *ex-situ* collections, preferably in the country of origin, and at least 20 per cent available for recovery and restoration programmes.**

Botanic Garden Meise houses several collections of threatened plant species:

- The only Belgian seed bank devoted to the conservation of wild taxa, where several groups of species of conservation concern are safely stored:
  - 1014 accessions of the Belgian flora. Wallonia: 44% of the threatened species (CR, EN, VU) are already preserved in the seed bank (200 species). 142 additional species have to be collected in order to reach the target. Flanders: 43% of the threatened species (CR, EN, VU) are already preserved in the seed bank (92 species). 71 additional species have to be collected in order to reach the target.
  - 891 accessions (67 species) of the endangered flora of the Katangese Copper Belt. For 73% of these 67 taxa and 92% of the 26 endemics, Belgium is the only ex situ site worldwide to conserve these taxa (according to BGCI's PlantSearch database).
- 1959 CITES-listed taxa (from all over the world)
- 50% of the 199 *Euphorbia* species assessed by IUCN as either vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered with at least one accession per taxon. MeiseBG engages to reach 75% of threatened *Euphorbia* and Xanthorrhoeaceae in its ex situ collections.
- One of the most species-diverse orchid collections: with 470 orchid species, Meise BG is ranked 16th in the world (according to Govaerts et al. 2016. World Checklist of Orchidaceae)
- Important collections of Exceptional species such as Palms, Cycads (with a focus on *Encephalartos*), Oaks (125 taxa) and Impatiens
- Collection of coffee trees: 20 continental African taxa (of which a few a CR, EN, VU and a few undescribed species).

Meise BG manages PLANTCOL, a database being set-up to make an inventory of the content of all Belgian ex-situ collections of living plants (<http://www.plantcol.be>)

All seed accessions of the Belgian flora are available for recovery and restoration programmes. In the framework of the LIFE project 'Herbages' (LIFE11 NAT/BE/001060), the Garden has already reintroduced/reinforced 4 red-listed species (*Dianthus deltoides*, *Helichrysum arenarium*, *Arnica montana*, *Campanula glomerata*) in 3 to 6 populations of 500 to 700 individuals each (totalising 9,100 individuals transplanted into the wild) and provided about 3000 plants (*Helichrysum arenarium*, *Arnica montana*, and *Campanula glomerata*) to the nature association Natagora for additional translocations.

#### Weston Global Tree Seed Bank Project – Europe

Between 2015 and 2017, Meise BG was one of ten partners of the Weston Global Tree Seed Bank Project – Europe. This is a European tree seed collecting programme that is part of a global programme that will secure the future of more than 3000 of the world's rarest, most threatened and most useful trees (Balding 2016). In Europe, the project aims at collecting and conserving 248 native European tree species and big shrubs in seed banks. In the framework of that project, Meise BG has collected seeds of 22 populations (16 taxa).

**Target 9: 70 per cent of the genetic diversity of crops including their wild relatives and other socio-economically valuable plant species conserved, and associated indigenous and local knowledge respected, [preserved][protected] and maintained.**

#### Conservation of wild banana species and varieties

The development of this collection started recently (2017). Our objectives are to maximise our efforts to become the central repository for seeds of wild banana species recognized by the Global Crop Diversity Trust and to manage a reference collection of wild banana varieties for conservation, research and production / distribution of genetic material in collaboration with Bioversity International (<https://www.bioversityinternational.org/>).

#### Wild beans

At Meise BG, a collection of 2149 accessions (231 taxa) of wild beans is stored in the seed bank. This

collection is unique in Belgium and Europe from the point of view of its genetic diversity (23 genera originating from 94 countries). Diversity and evolution of wild beans in the collection is being studied by integrating molecular phylogenetic studies with distribution and plant trait data. Such studies will enable us to improve conservation efforts through an improved delimitation of areas with high taxon and trait diversity. Insight in how species are adapted to adverse conditions such as drought and how wild species are related to cultivated plants will also improve the selection of potentially useful material for breeding.

#### Assessment of genetic diversity and conservation of *Coffea* in the DR Congo

Meise Botanic Garden has been studying the wild diversity of *Coffea* in Central and West Africa for almost 25 years and is a reference for the knowledge on wild coffee diversity. Recently the Garden started two projects aiming to better conserve the genetic diversity of *Coffea* in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In a first project the Garden is, in collaboration with local partners, evaluating and rehabilitating the existing coffee collecting of the INERA Yangambi. The staff is trained and the coffee collection, consisting mainly of *Coffea canephora* (Robusta) is enriched with genetic diversity collected in the wild and in backyards. In a second project Meise Botanic Garden will contribute to the *ex-situ* conservation and knowledge on Coffee in the Kivu (with the focus on the high altitude forests and an endemic coffee species from these forests). This project runs in collaboration with local Universities, Research Institutes, INERA Mulungu and an NGO which is supporting local coffee farmers. In addition, assessments of the genetic diversity of wild coffee species in the DR Congo are being made, as well as surveys of local (medicinal) use and consumption of coffee.

#### Rubiaceae project

The seed bank contributes to a better understanding and conservation of the fourth largest family of flowering plants (Rubiaceae). In collaboration with the Laboratory of Tropical Crop Improvement (K.U.Leuven), a methodology is being developed for cryopreservation and tissue culture of tropical Rubiaceae. When finalized, this methodology can provide a way out for *ex-situ* conservation of tropical tree species, many of which are recalcitrant.

#### **Target 10: Effective management plans in place to prevent new biological invasions and to manage important areas for plant diversity that are invaded.**

Belgium is participating in the International Plant Sentinel Network (IPSN), and three institutes are Euphresco (EUropean PHYtosanitary RESEARCH COordination) partners (Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research, Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, and Walloon Agricultural Research Centre). In collaboration with Meise BG, they are building a network of gardens within Belgium who are all working towards better plant health surveillance and biosecurity.

In Belgium, the federal government is responsible for import, transit and export of exotic plants. The regions are competent for possession, trade and management. The control of established populations of invasive exotics is the responsibility of each landowner/site manager. In 2018, a cooperation agreement between the federal state and the three regions is being drawn up to coordinate certain actions, including the adoption of an action plan relating to pathways for the movement of invasive alien species.

**Flemish region:** information is gathered about the recognition, distribution and impact of invasive species. Regional authorities also provide an overview of good management practices. Reports are produced that can help managers to choose an objective with appropriate management. These documents are written for administrators in the broad sense of the word: municipalities, provinces, agencies, private administrators, etc. The Ecopedia website also shows a selection of practical experiments, which can also be consulted via an interactive module. From each 'case', the goals and outcomes are outlined, how the management was implemented and what the results are.

**Walloon region:** since November 2009, the Interdepartmental Cell on Invasive Species has been responsible for coordinating actions to limit the damage caused by invasive species in Wallonia. Its activities are based on the commitment of the Walloon Government to prevent the installation of new invasive species and to fight against those whose proliferation poses a problem. It is attached to the Operational General Directorate of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment (D GARNE or DGO3) of the Public Service of Wallonia. The Interdepartmental Cell on Invasive Species targets in particular emerging alien species capable of causing significant damage to the environment. Emerging species that are harmful to the economy and public health are also considered. The areas of activity that fall directly under the responsibility of the Cell are as follows: Implementation of preventive measures and adaptation of the regulatory framework; Development of an alert system; Coordination of control operations; Improvement of knowledge; Communication to managers and the general public.

**Brussels region:** the Brussels-Capital Region already has a strict legal framework for the fight against invasive alien species and their management. The ordinance of 1 March 2012 on nature conservation has an appendix listing invasive alien species. These species are already subject to various prohibitions, with no possibility of derogation.

**Target 11: No species of wild flora endangered by international trade.**

Meise BG holds for Belgium the mandate to receive shipments of plants that are confiscated within the framework of CITES by all CITES enforcement authorities, such as customs officials. Several staff of the Meise Botanic Garden are appointed and licensed by the competent Minister to provide identifications and expert reports of all CITES listed plant species found by these enforcement authorities. When necessary or desirable the plants and/or seeds are accessed and safeguarded in the Living Collection.

One member of the staff of Meise BG is member of the Belgian CITES Scientific committee that was established in 1984 to fill gaps in biological and other specialized knowledge regarding species of plants that are (or might become) subject to CITES trade controls. Its role is to provide technical support to the Belgian decision-making about these species.

In July 2018 Meise Botanic Garden contributed to the Stop wildlife trafficking exhibition at the European Parliament to raise further awareness and action among policymakers (<http://www.biodiv.be/cebios2/news/wildlife-trafficking-exhibition>).

**Target 12: All wild harvested plant-based products sourced sustainably.**

To date no corresponding quantitative target has been defined for Belgium. However, in the different regions plans are in place to guarantee the sustainable use of forests.

As of 05/11/2018, Belgium has 34,334 ha of FSC certified forests (almost 4% of the country's forest area) and 299,324 ha of PEFC certified forests (44% of the country's forest area).

**Flemish region:** after a number of large domain forests had already obtained an FSC certificate in an individual way in the late 1990s, the Flemish Government in 2006 took full advantage of FSC forest certification through a group certificate. Since 2008, this group certificate - which is managed by the Agency for Nature and Forest (ANB) - is open to all Flemish forest owners, both private and public. In the meantime, this group certificate has grown to more than 22,000 hectares of FSC certified forest. There are not yet PEFC certified forests in Flanders, but the Flemish region is showing a growing interest in PEFC forest certification.

**Walloon region:** since mid-October 2017, the FSC certification in Wallonia is now also accessible to private forests through a new group certification. On the public side, several municipalities have already expressed an interest in obtaining their municipal forests FSC certified. PEFC certification is more developed in Wallonia, with 299,324 hectares of forests that are PEFC certified, representing 54% of the Walloon forest area.

**Brussels region:** the Brussels administration (Brussels Environment) has had an individual FSC certificate for more than 10 years for the part of the Sonian Forest under their management (1,665 hectares).

**Target 13: Indigenous and local knowledge innovations and practices associated with plant resources, maintained or increased, as appropriate, to support customary use, sustainable livelihoods, local food security and health care.**

Belgium ratified the Nagoya protocol on 09/08/2016.

The Belgian Development Cooperation funds a number of programs that aim to support indigenous communities in partner developing countries, including the recovery and the promotion of traditional knowledge and practices. Most of those actions though are implemented through third actors such as NGO's, universities or multilateral organisations.

Vernacular names of Central African vascular plants have been made available on GBIF (<https://www.gbif.org/dataset/a0b06e2e-287a-4687-8a6c-2c0cfb31c16d>)

Botanic Garden Meise (2018). Vernacular names of the Flore d'Afrique Centrale. Version 1.7. Checklist dataset <https://doi.org/10.15468/hwrwlp>

In the framework of the EFTA project (Edible Fungi of Tropical Africa), a digital platform supervised by Meise Botanic Garden has been put online recently. EFTA's ambition is to provide a complete inventory of edible mushroom species in tropical Africa and to produce a distribution map based solely on reference specimens and / or georeferenced photographs.

- Degreef J., De Kesel A., 2017. The Edible Fungi of Tropical Africa annotated database. [www.efta-online.org](http://www.efta-online.org)
- Eyi Ndong H., Jérôme Degreef J., André De Kesel A. 2011. Les champignons comestibles de l'Afrique centrale. Abc Taxa volume 10, 253 pp.

**Target 14: The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation incorporated into communication, education and public awareness programs.**

The importance of plant diversity is incorporated in and addressed by communication, education and public awareness programmes on nature and biodiversity.

- **Flemish Region's** visitors centres:
  - o Agency for Nature and Forests
  - o Inverde
  - o CVN (NGO)
  - o Natuurpunt (NGO)
  - o Botanic Gardens/Arboreta
  - o Research Institute for Nature and Forest
- **Walloon Region's** visitors centres:
  - o Education-environment

- o CRIE (non profit organisations)
- o Botanic Gardens/Arboreta
- o activities in and around Nature reserves
- o Natagora (NGO)
- **Brussels Region's** visitors centres:
  - o CRIE (asbl Tournesol/Zonnebloem vzw)

The importance of plant diversity and the need for its conservation are incorporated into several programmes:

- communication via brochures, leaflets, posters etc. (description of semi-natural sites and parks, description of walking tours, with special attention to present biodiversity and its need to protection);
- educational programmes: regional centres for environmental and ecological education, green classes, organising training sessions, guided walks, information days or workshops on medicinal and edible plants, a biodiversity interface on Belgium's natural treasures, plant fairs, etc. for children, adults, naturalists, others.

**Target 15: The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities sufficient according to national needs, to achieve the targets of this Strategy.**

The number of trained people working with appropriate facilities has decreased due to budget cuts caused by financial crisis.

**Target 16: Institutions, networks and partnerships for plant conservation established or strengthened at national, regional and international levels to achieve the targets of this Strategy.**

Through Meise BG, Belgium is active in the following networks associated with the targets of the GSPC:

- International Plant Sentinel Network
- Ecological Restoration Alliance of Botanic Gardens (ERA)
- European Native Seed Conservation Network (ENSCONET)
- International Network for Seed-Based Restoration (INSR)

**Federal:**

Belgian Biodiversity Platform

The mission of the Platform is to foster biodiversity research that contributes to sustainable development, by:

- Facilitating access to biodiversity data, science and research information;
- Encouraging interdisciplinary cooperation amongst scientists;
- Stimulating interaction between scientists, policy makers and stakeholders in biodiversity research;
- Advising on the designation of biodiversity research priorities;
- Promoting Belgian biodiversity research at international fora.

Belgian Committee for Plant Genetic Resources (NCPH)

The Committee is a working group that coordinates at the national level all actions and initiatives related to Plant Genetic Resources and cultivated plant biodiversity. This Committee works under the supervision of the 'Permanent Working Group Inter-Ministerial Conference on Agricultural Policy' (PW-ICLB/ GTP-CIPA).

**Flemish Region:**

FLO.WER (<http://www.plantenwerkgroep.be/>): a project on identifying and collecting seeds of trees and shrubs from autochthonous origin with the aim to propagate them is developed in Flanders. Genetic



analysis, inventory of the complete area (Flanders), and delimitation of distribution areas of autochthonous plant species material. The aim is to recognise locations suitable for seed collecting, to start the creation of seed orchards and to create a contact point for the propagation of autochthonous forest plants. Part of the project is devoted to capacity building and information towards the professionals in order to stimulate the use of autochthonous woody plant material.

The Catholic University of Leuven (KULeuven) has developed a European and intercontinental network on cryopreservation of many crops both in research, training and applications for long-term use.

**Walloon Region:** AEF (Association pour l'Etude de la Floristique)

The AEF is a non-profit organization consisting of both amateur and professional botanists, who work in the collection and updating of floristic data, primarily from the Walloon Region and the Brussels-Capital Region.

## SECTION VII. UPDATED BIODIVERSITY COUNTRY PROFILES

### **Biodiversity facts**

#### **Status and trends of biodiversity, including benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services and functions:**

The geographical and geological characteristics of Belgium, together with long-standing human impact on land use, have resulted in magnificent biodiversity. The Belgian diversity of life forms is estimated to comprise up to 55,000 species. In addition to some 300 species of blue-green algae, Belgium is home to a few thousand species of bacteria. The best known organisms are the vascular plants (flowering plants, conifers, ferns, horsetails, quillworts, clubmosses), bryophytes, macro-algae and macro-lichens, vertebrates (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals), carabids (ground beetles), butterflies, and dragon- and damselflies. Yet they represent less than 4% of the species living in Belgium. The main vegetation types found in Belgium are deciduous and conifer forests, grasslands, heathlands, peat bogs, wetlands, lakes and rivers, and marine ecosystems in the North Sea; their distribution varies from region to region. For example, about 80% of the forested areas are found in the southern part of the country, while northern Belgium is noted for its semi-natural grasslands, wetlands, heathlands and coastal dunes.

Recent observation data shows that many species are in decline or have even disappeared. It can be roughly estimated that between 20% and 70% of species are threatened per main group of organisms, depending on the group and the region of the country:

- In Flanders, at least 7% of formerly recorded species are extinct. Of the remaining assessed species, 17% are endangered to critically endangered and 29% are vulnerable to near threatened; only 52% are considered safe or at low risk (for 2% of the assessed species, data are insufficient to define a status).
- In Wallonia, 9% of the animal and plant species have already disappeared and 31% of the animal and plant species are threatened to disappear.
- In the Brussels-Capital Region, a special focus can be found at <https://environnement.brussels/synthese-2015-2016/espaces-verts-et-biodiversite/monitoring-des-especes> and more detailed data for the monitoring of species can be found on the webpage: [http://document.environnement.brussels/opac\\_css/elecfile/FD\\_14\\_Biodiversite](http://document.environnement.brussels/opac_css/elecfile/FD_14_Biodiversite).

The Belgian marine area suffers from severe declines in fish and crustaceans, notably in commercial species. In addition, the quality of the structure and function of sandbanks and biogenic reefs have been affected by bottom-disturbing activities.

Various studies have been conducted in Belgium on the importance and value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. A few are cited herewith with further details on these studies and others provided in Chapter I of the fifth national report. The "Nature Value Explorer" website serves as a calculation tool to value ecosystem services and assist in the mapping of the socioeconomic importance of ecosystems. In addition, the Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forests compiled the mapping and scientific assessment of the ecosystems and their services in Flanders, while the University of Namur has elaborated a scientific assessment of the services provided by the ecosystems in the Walloon Region. A case study was also developed in the Walloon Region on the monetary value of the forest ecosystem services in the region, three of which (wood, big game, carbon sequestration) together represent more than 6.5 billion euros. The Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests launched an inventory of the benefits of greening cities, identifying no less

than 14 ecological, social and economic benefits: climate mitigation, climate adaptation, air quality, noise mitigation, water management, human fitness and health, city agriculture, social cohesion, recreation and tourism, nature education, biomass, better housing and higher real estate values, attractiveness to businesses.

#### **Main pressures on and drivers of change to biodiversity (direct and indirect):**

Land conversion, whether for urban and industrial expansion, agriculture (including impact by input of nitrogen and phosphorus), infrastructure or tourism, is undoubtedly the main cause of biodiversity loss in Belgium. Such activities result in the loss, degradation or fragmentation of habitats, and currently affect all habitat types. In Flanders, Brussels and the marine area, changes in environmental quality due to eutrophication also impose heavy pressure on fauna and flora. This problem is probably less acute in Wallonia however pollution (including eutrophication) is nevertheless considered a secondary threat to biodiversity in the region. The urban nature of the Brussels-Capital Region leads to specific problems, such as very high recreation pressure on green areas. Cities are also important introduction points for alien species. There is growing attention placed on the issue of invasive alien species, especially given the rapid expansion of some introduced plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and invertebrates, such as insects, crayfish, mussels, land slugs, etc. Climate change is a growing concern, already having a perceptible impact on biodiversity (notably on the geographical range, phenology and behaviour of organisms, such as migrating birds and insects). It also exacerbates other threats to biodiversity, such as habitat fragmentation and biological invasions.

#### **Measures to enhance implementation of the Convention**

##### **Implementation of the NBSAP:**

In November 2013, Belgium's Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment adopted an update of the National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Based largely on the previous Strategy (2006-2016), the update incorporates provisions aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. It will guide activities for revising federal and regional biodiversity action plans and be promoted in sectoral policy-making.

The new Strategy's main focuses are: a) tackling emerging risks and the impact of internal trade of live specimens; b) protecting and restoring biodiversity and associated ecosystem services through protected areas - green infrastructure - no net loss; identifying pathways of introduction on IAS; c) phasing out perverse incentives and using guidelines on the integration of the values of biodiversity and ecosystem services in development strategies, planning processes and reporting systems included; developing an approach to include these values in national accounting; d) implementing the Nagoya Protocol; e) mapping ecosystem services in Belgium and assessing their values; f) ensuring the implementation and enforcement of biodiversity legislation; g) involving provinces, cities and other local authorities; h) boosting the mobilization of resources (including through innovative mechanisms) and enhancing capacities. The Strategy contains 15 priority strategic objectives and 85 operational objectives that have been mapped to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and to the targets of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Specific actions and indicators for the Strategy will be developed at a later stage (during the implementation process).

##### **Overall actions taken to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020:**

In 2010, the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences opened a new permanent exhibition hall on "Biodiversity in Cities" and plans to dedicate more halls to biodiversity in the next years.

The Belgium Ecosystem Services (BEES) Community was launched in April 2012, with the following objectives: develop ecosystem services concepts, tools and practices; stop ecosystem

and biodiversity degradation, and improve their status; develop mainstreaming and policy tools to promote the integration of ecosystem services concepts in policy and management, business and society; facilitate capacity building, exchange of expertise and experience: including methodologies and transfer of knowledge on Belgian ecosystem services to policy and share the needs from policy makers on this issue, to enable involvement of Belgian actors in national and international initiatives and build the capacity to conduct assessments of ecosystem services; provide overviews of state of the art knowledge and best practices.

The adoption of biodiversity criteria in public procurement policies is increasing. For example, as a result of federal and regional authorities encouraging the use of certified wood in public works, the concept of "green procurement" is gaining popularity.

Various incentives and support programs are having direct positive effects on biodiversity. An example is the Flemish rural development program which provides support for agro-environmental measures (e.g. organic agriculture, planting and maintenance of orchards with tall fruit trees, preservation of local breeds, mechanical weed control, confusion technique in fruit cultivation, cultivation of Leguminosae, agroforestry).

In Flanders about 15% of the forest area has a recognized FSC label. In Wallonia, 54% of the forest area is PEFC certified. Also, one of the objectives of Walloon's Forestry Code is to combat climate change and preserve biodiversity. Notably, as a result of measures taken to reduce acidification in forests, the extent of affected forest surfaces was reduced from 90% in 1990 to 10% in 2007.

In the Brussels-Capital region, the adoption of the new Ordinance on Nature Conservation ensures that 14,6% of the region's territory is protected under active status [Natura 2000 (2316 ha) and natural and forestry reserve (287 ha)]. The Green and Blue Network Program endeavors for a greener city where green spaces are ecologically managed and better connected through the development of green infrastructures when possible. A strong focus is currently put on developing partnership with other public and private stakeholders (planners, urbanists) in order to maintain remaining areas of high biological interest, to promote the development of green infrastructures and the integration of biodiversity into building. This will reinforce the Brussels Ecological Network.

Measures are being implemented to reduce the rate of habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation in the North Sea (e.g. sand and gravel extraction, dredging and dumping of dredge spoil are subject to licenses; zero tolerance policy in relation to oil pollution; development of a cleaning policy for the North Sea through the "Fishing for Litter Program"; regulation of coastal fisheries to protect marine mammals; ongoing actions to reduce import of nutrients and hazardous substances).

At the national level, as a result of collaboration between the federal and regional authorities, a code of conduct in relation to invasive plants has been elaborated within the framework of the AlterIAS project.

In June 2012, Belgium officially submitted notification of its intent to join the Multilateral System of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of a European Genebank Integrated System.

**Support mechanisms for national implementation (legislation, funding, capacity-building, coordination, mainstreaming, etc.):**

The Belgian CHM has continued to support the exchange of relevant information through the national CHM website (<http://www.biodiv.be>). In collaboration with the European CHM, a tool has been developed to facilitate the reporting obligations related to the implementation of national and EU biodiversity strategies by Parties, as well as to the CBD and related Conventions (<https://be-tct.biodiversity.europa.eu>). It will focus on using indicators for the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the Belgian Development Cooperation have continued to strengthen technical and scientific capacities for the implementation of the CBD in developing countries. The CHM partnership activity worked with 27 countries to assist them with the development of their national CHM. Between 2014 and 2018, 506 people were trained through 19 national workshops in partner countries, 4 training workshops in Belgium and 6 regional workshops. The result of this were the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for Belgium during the CHM Awards at COP13, first prize for Burundi and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for Morocco for existing CHM and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for Guinea-Bissau for new CHM during COP14. Seven countries have started their national CHM through these activities. In addition, the GTI capacity building programme has enabled 68 visits to Belgium to receive taxonomic training or to use the expertise and collections of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences. Furthermore, 110 taxonomists and para taxonomists participated in training workshops in developing countries. Eight manuals in the ABC-Taxa series have been produced in the reporting period. Seen the importance of monitoring of changes in ecosystems and habitats towards management decisions or external factors a special programme was started in 2009 to monitor changes in habitats and to support research towards monitoring. One of the activities is the monitoring of vegetation changes in national parks in DR Congo, Burundi and soon Benin. Part of this programme consists of training park rangers in how to include/integrate habitat changes in their normal monitoring missions. Another activity is the monitoring and modelling of sea currents in Delta's to predict implications of human activities on among other the biodiversity in Vietnam, Peru and Bénin. Through this programme more than 380 people received training in the reporting phase. Two lexica were produced. A tool for a sea monitoring modelling project with IRHOB (Benin) won the third place for the D4D price in 2018.

The implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity is carried out by the federal government, the regions, the communities and the local authorities (provinces and municipalities). The regions are in charge of territorial matters. They have therefore the greatest amount of responsibilities on biodiversity-related issues: nature conservation, forest management, agriculture, exploitation of natural resources, land use and spatial planning, hunting, fisheries, etc. They are also in charge of tourism. The federal government is the competent body for the biodiversity management of the Belgian part of the North Sea, for the international dimension of the marine environment policy and coordinates the Belgian external relations with respect to biodiversity. It is the federal government that undertakes the follow-up of trade in threatened species and that takes measures relating to the trade (import, export and transit) of exotic species. The communities take care of issues linked to culture, research, education and public awareness. The regions and the federal government can also conduct research and raise public awareness in their own fields of competence. The provinces and the municipalities play an important role at the local level, in accordance with regional policy. The coherence of international environmental policy at national level is ensured by a coordination mechanism composed of representatives from the federal government, the regions and the communities. It is called the Coordinating Committee for International Environment Policy (CCIEP). This body functions under the high level authority of the Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment (ICE). Under the CCIEP different committees, convention related or thematic, have been established, such as for Biodiversity, Climate Change, Adaptation to Climate Change, Forests, Nature, etc.

**Mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing implementation:**

Although the status of a set of biodiversity and environment indicators is published every year by the regions, the new National Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 calls for the further development of indicators, as a support mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of measures taken to implement the Strategy.