

## The VNR in a Nutshell – National Strategies for SDGs.

### Belgium

Capital	Brussels
Population	11,35 million
Area (in sq.km)	11,787
Languages	Dutch, French, German
Per capita income	41,860
International Tourist Arrivals (2015)	8,335



Sources: UNDP, World Bank, UNWTO

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The recognition of the role of tourism in sustainable development and the emphasis placed in the SDGs on the development of public policies for sustainable tourism is a landmark breakthrough that provides a unique opportunity for all governments to create a sound and favourable policy foundation.

The first two years of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda have shown that countries are making headway in aligning national strategies, adapting institutional frameworks and adjusting policies to realize the SDGs.

The countries' efforts have been reported in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), presented by UN Member States during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2016 and 2017.

**Title of VNR:** Pathways to sustainable development. First Belgian National Voluntary Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda

**Presenter for VNR:** Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister

#### National Thematic Focus:

##### Priority areas

- Sustainable food,
- sustainable building and housing,
- sustainable public procurement,
- means of implementation,
- awareness-raising and contributions to the follow-up and review of the SDGs

#### Institutional Arrangement:

Lead and coordination entity: In Belgium, the Inter-Ministerial Conference for Sustainable Development (IMCSD) serves as the central coordination mechanism for dialogue regarding implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Also tasked with drafting the National Sustainable Development Strategy, it is composed of ministers responsible for sustainable development within the federal, regional, and community governments.

#### Implementation of the SDGs:

- At the federal level, implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Belgium is overseen by the Minister of Sustainable Development, while the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers verify the sustainability dimension of new federal laws.
- The Interdepartmental Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD) provides for coordination between federal administrations and facilitates the planning of federal sustainable development policies.

- A dedicated administration under the authority of the Minister of Sustainable Development, the Federal Institute for Sustainable Development (FISD), is in charge of assisting the federal government in the preparation and enforcement of policy decisions related to sustainable development.

### SDG Incorporation to National Framework:

The various governments have developed their own policy in the field of sustainable development, Federal level, Walloon Parliament, Brussels-Capital Region, Flanders and the German-speaking community. A first National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was approved in Spring 2017 after consultation with the stakeholders. It focuses on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Belgium and aims to create the basis for a coherent approach to sustainable development policies

- Flanders set out seven interconnected transition priorities: (1) continuing the transition to the circular economy; (2) smart housing and living; (3) making the leap to an 'industry 4.0'; (4) life-long learning and the dynamic personal and professional life cycle; (5) taking care seriously and 'well-being 4.0'; (6) working on a smooth and safe mobility system; and (7) delivering the energy transition. (p. 68 Overarching Strategies and Initiatives)
- Governments are aligning sectoral and thematic policy plans at national, subnational and local levels to the 2030 Agenda.
- The focus is on all SDGs, working through overarching strategies and initiatives to address interlinkages and to enhance cooperation within and between the various governments.

### Tourism Ministry /NTA portfolio:

Divided per region: Wallonia, Flanders,

[Ministry of Agriculture, Rural, Environment and Tourism Wallonia](#)

[Flanders Tourism](#) - Ministry for Mobility and Public Works, the Brussels Periphery, Tourism and Animal Welfare

### Tourism and SDGs in Belgium:

#### Opportunities

- **Poverty Eradication**
- **Partnerships**



Partnering with relevant actors in the sector, Wallonia has worked out a government-wide plan 2 in view of using all regional levers that can reduce poverty: housing, food and nutrition, energy, water, health, family policies, mobility, leisure and the digital realm. It provides concrete and efficient answers to specific difficulties encountered by people living in or at risk of precariousness or poverty.

- **Biodiversity**
- **Partnerships**



Belgium supports sustainable tourism projects in Tanzania that are also training villagers to become 'wild scouts' who can engage alongside government rangers in the fight against poachers (p. 57 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss)

## Challenges

- **Waste Management**
- **Marine and Coastal Protection**



The Flemish government has set a target to reduce the leakage of litter to the marine environment by 75% by 2025. An action plan is currently being drafted providing a set of measures aiming at the short, medium and long term. These measures will address both sea- and land-based sources of marine litter, will look into measures related to the leakage into the sea through rivers and waterways, and will also focus on education and communication campaigns as well as international cooperation.

Specific actions will include improved availability and use of port reception facilities for waste from commercial shipping, fishing vessels, recreational craft, aquaculture and offshore activities; general waste policy and regulatory framework focusing on the prevention of litter; plastics and circular economy; phasing out of micro-plastics; waste from beach tourism; the collection of floating litter in waterways and ports; and the possibilities of improving sewage treatment plants in order to capture micro-plastics.

## Resources and Useful Links

[Belgium VNR 2017](#)