

Third National Report of Belgium to the Convention on Biological Diversity

C. ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION

Article 10 - Sustainable use of components of biological diversity

67. On Article 10(a), has your country integrated consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making?

| | |
|---|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but steps are being taken | |
| c) Yes, in some relevant sectors (please provide details below) | X |
| d) Yes, in most relevant sectors (please provide details below) | |

Further information on integrating consideration of conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making.

Flemish Region: the forest policy is part of the Environment Policy Plan 1997-2002 and the Environmental Policy Plan 2003-2008 under the theme Biodiversity. In general, policy planning is part of a more generic and specific strategic planning process. The forest policy is described in:

- the Flemish Government Act on Forests (13.06.1990);
- the Long Term Forestry Plan (draft) describes the strategy for a sustainable forest policy up to the year 2100;
- the Forestry Action Plan (draft) defines 33 actions for the next five years.

The Flemish Forest decree created the basis for a more plan-oriented forest policy. A background study 'Long Term Forestry Plan' describes the strategy for forest policy up to the year 2100. The first step towards realisation of this strategy is formulated in the document 'Forestry Action Plan' which is now being finalised. This plan defines more than 30 key-actions for the next five years. There are three levels of implementation of the Flemish forest policy:

- forests owned by the Flemish Region: forest management is carried out by the Division of Forests and Green Spaces and an exhaustive management plan has to be made;
- other public forests: the technical forest management is carried out by the Division of Forests and Green Spaces and an exhaustive management plan has to be made;
- private forests: for forest grouping, grants awarded, management plan (limited or extended version) needed, licenses and permits for all activities not included in the management plan, (subject to) advice.

Every forest must be managed in a way that the permanent fulfilment of the different forest functions is accomplished. The forest owner has to prove this by submitting a forest management plan, drawn up according to a model established by the Flemish Government. Forest reserves and shelter-forests are appointed by the Flemish Government and must be primarily managed according to their special role.

Public forest owners must pay special attention to the ecological forest function and the forest management must fulfil some regional guidelines:

- conservation or restoration of the natural flora and fauna;
- stimulating the indigenous or site-adapted species;
- stimulating the natural regeneration;
- stimulating uneven-aged and irregular formed forest stands;
- advancing the ecological balance.

The grants which can be provided to private forest owners disposing of an agreed forest management plan and wanting to afforest or reforest in a natural or an artificial way are higher if indigenous species are used. Integration of several forest properties in order to make a common integrated management plan is encouraged by providing grants. Integration of forest management and other forms of land use (agriculture, nature conservation) is stimulated by means of the Municipal Nature Development Plans and rural land use management plans.

The keywords of the Flemish forest policy are a multifunctional and sustainable forestry. To apply this forest policy, a management vision is being worked out, in a first phase for the forest owned by the

Flemish Region. This vision consists of:

- specific and concrete guidelines for a close-to-nature forest management;
- a framework to assess the forest functions;
- a method for quality control.

The guidelines are based on the principles of the Flemish Pro Silva working group. The aims are: attaining a reasonable production of high quality wood, reaching an attractive forest with sufficient variation for recreational uses able to withstand a certain level of disturbance, giving the indigenous flora and fauna chances and obtaining a forest that can fulfil the shelter function. The Flemish Forest Service supports the principles of Pro Silva Flanders as a means, together with the principle of multifunctional forestry, to obtain a sustainable forestry.

Walloon Region:

1) The Environment Code contains a Water Code. This Water Code was adopted as a Decree on 27.05.2004. The basic principle of the Water Code is: « water is part of the common heritage of the Walloon Region. The water cycle is managed in a global and integrated way, as to assure water quality and perennity, in the framework of sustainable development ». The objectives of the Water Code are:

- to prevent all additional degradation, and to preserve and improve the situation of the aquatic ecosystems, as well as, for what concerns their need of water, of the terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on them;
- to promote the sustainable consumption of water, based on the long term protection of available water resources;
- to strengthen the protection and improve the quality of the aquatic environment, among others by specific measures aiming to progressively reduce the discharge, emission and leaking of priority substances as well as the progressively halting or suppression of the discharge, emission or leaking of dangerous priority substances;
- to assure the progressive reduction of groundwater and surface water pollution, and to prevent the worsening of the pollution;
- to contribute to the reduction of the impacts of flood and drought;
- to protect peoples' health from the noxious effects of the contamination of drinking water by assuring its salubrity and cleanliness.

2) Piscicultural Management Plan for a Sustainable Management of the Semois Basin, its environment and species. Objectives of this plan are: connect the different piscicultural actors, preserve the aquatic environments and fish fauna, protect the natural ecological processes, develop recreational hanging in a sustainable way, preserve the natural genetic diversity of the species. This type of plan will be expanded to other subbasins in the Walloon Region.

3) Concerning forest certification, the Walloon Region is member of the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). This system involves the implementation of a progressive plan containing a chapter on biodiversity as well as a charter which owners must subscribe if they want to benefit from the certification. This two tools enable a sustainable management of the forest (see also the part on forests).

4) In its strategic plan, one of the orientations of the Nature and Forest Division is to reduce the investments through a reduction of interventions in the field. The Division pleads for the use of closer-to-nature silvicultural techniques as well as the testing of the Pro Silva method. In several areas, tests of the Pro Silva silviculture have been launched (Habay-la-Neuve, Bouillon, Nassogne, Bièvre, Paliseul). An INTERREG has been set up in collaboration with the non-profit organisation 'Forêt Wallonne' to gather a maximum of information on this method and the necessary instruments for his application.

5) A revision of the agri-environmental measures took place in the Walloon Region. A new Order of the Walloon Government (28.10.2004) foresees incentive agri-environmental measures for: the conservation of ecological network and landscape elements (hedges, tree rows, trees, isolated shrubs, long-stemmed fruit trees, groves, ponds), natural grasslands, verges, grasslands of high biological value, etc.

6) The management plans of forests subject to the circular of 1997 (see also thematic part on forests below: 'objectives of the management measures developed in the circular on biodiversity in forests') are reviewed. It involves the principle of multifunctionality aiming towards an optimal equilibrium between production, protection of soil and water, conservation of biodiversity and social functions. Up to now, almost half of the forested surfaces have been reassigned.

7) The 'fallowland-fauna' instrument exists in the Walloon Region since 2000. It allows for the

covering of resting arable lands with vegetation, creating a privileged habitat for fauna. However, the instrument has had only limited success until now probably due to unawareness of many farmers and hunters about the instrument, the severity of the penalty when violations are detected and the heavy administrative burden placed on farmers and hunters. To remedy to this situation, the instrument was reviewed for 2005 and several constraints have been removed to obtain an enhanced network. Examples of adaptations of the instrument are the reduction of the minimal surface for fields to be eligible and a simplification of the procedures.

Brussels Capital Region: sustainable forestry management is the major guideline for the development and implementation of forest management plans (e.g. management plan of the Sonian Forest, the Brussels Capital Region most important forest, covering 10% of the Brussels Capital Region surface). This forest received the FSC certificate.

The **Federal** Government Agreement 2003 addresses specifically the issue of forests. In this document, the government makes a commitment to promote timber products certified as being produced in a sustainable way and to tackle illegal logging. Action 19 of the 2nd Federal Plan for Sustainable Development indicates how the federal level can contribute to those commitments.

68. On Article 10(b), has your country adopted measures relating to the use of biological resources that avoid or minimise adverse impacts on biological diversity?

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|--|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but potential measures are under review | |
| c) Yes, some measures are in place (please provide details below) | X |
| d) Yes, comprehensive measures are in place (please provide details below) | |

Further information on the measures adopted relating to the use of biological resources that avoid or minimise adverse impacts on biological diversity.

See under question 70.

69. On Article 10(c), has your country put in place measures that protect and encourage customary use of biological resources that is compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements?

| | |
|--|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but potential measures are under review | |
| c) Yes, some measures are in place (please provide details below) | X |
| d) Yes, comprehensive measures are in place (please provide details below) | |

Further information on the measures that protect and encourage customary use of biological resources that is compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements.

Brussels Capital Region: following traditional forest legislation, use of biological resources such as mushrooms is forbidden. Recent legislation (transposition of Habitats Directive, which concerns all forests) has integrated the prohibition of use of biological resources such as picking of mushrooms, collecting of mosses, cutting flowers etc. Hunting is prohibited by law. Only recreational fishing is allowed.

Flemish Region: one example is the promotion of organised hunting in Wildlife Management Units (WMU) so that they can act as joint manager of the open space. The Flemish Parliament Act on Hunting (24.07.1991), art. 12 is the foundation for the integral management of hunting grounds by defining that the Government of the Flemish Region can determine conditions under which separate hunting grounds are to be joined voluntarily into larger units of management to facilitate game management, nature conservation and supervision. On 01.12.1998 a Flemish Government Decree was adopted laying down the conditions under which separate hunting grounds can be amalgamated

voluntarily into larger management units and the criteria by which management units can be recognised, making the recognition and subsidising of game management units possible. At the end of 2004, 162 game management units were recognised, which cover approximately 60% of the huntable space of the Flemish Region. This can be considered as a huge success. The wildlife management units have to submit a game hunting plan, monitoring scheme and overview of data to receive their subsidies.

70. On Article 10(d), has your country put in place measures that help local populations develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced?

| | |
|--|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but potential measures are under review | |
| c) Yes, some measures are in place (please provide details below) | |
| d) Yes, comprehensive measures are in place (please provide details below) | X |

Further information on the measures that help local populations develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biodiversity has been reduced.

Subsidies are available to local people for nature restoration and management purposes.

71. Has your country identified indicators and incentive measures for sectors relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity? (decision V/24)

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|---|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but assessment of potential indicators and incentive measures is under way | |
| c) Yes, indicators and incentive measures identified (please describe below) | X |

Further comments on the identification of indicators and incentive measures for sectors relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Indicators have been identified and are in place. Incentive measures however are lacking in most cases.

Information on indicators relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can be found in the thematic report 'Indicators for biological diversity in Belgium' compiled by the National Focal Point:

bch-cbd.naturalsciences.be/belgium/implementation/documents/thematicreports/indicators/indicators.htm

72. Has your country implemented sustainable use practices, programmes and policies for the sustainable use of biological diversity, especially in pursuit of poverty alleviation? (decision V/24)

| | |
|---|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but potential practices, programmes and policies are under review | |
| c) Yes, some policies and programmes are in place (please provide details below) | X |
| d) Yes, comprehensive policies and programmes are in place (please provide details below) | |

Further information on sustainable use programmes and policies.

See all other questions related to article 10, mainly question 70. In Belgium, there is no real connection between biodiversity considerations and poverty, thus practices, programmes and policies

are generally not linking this two objectives.

73.  Has your country developed or explored mechanisms to involve the private sector in initiatives on the sustainable use of biodiversity? (decision V/24)

| | |
|---|---|
| a) No | |
| b) No, but mechanisms are under development | |
| c) Yes, mechanisms are in place (please describe below) | X |

Further comments on the development of mechanisms to involve the private sector in initiatives on the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Representatives of the private sector participate in coordination and concertation mechanisms such as meetings of the Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development, in the development of programmes and plans, etc. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to convince the private sector of the need to conserve and sustainably use components of biological diversity.

74. Has your country initiated a process to apply the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity? (decision VII/12)

| | |
|--|---|
| a) No | X |
| b) No, but the principles and guidelines are under review | |
| c) Yes, a process is being planned | |
| d) Yes, a process has been initiated (please provide detailed information) | |

Further information on the process to apply the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity.

Several actions are undertaken to enhance and ensure sustainable use of natural resources, however no specific reference is made to the Addis Ababa Principles or Guidelines.

75. Has your country taken any initiative or action to develop and transfer technologies and provide financial resources to assist in the application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity? (decision VII/12)

| | |
|---|---|
| a) No | X |
| b) No, but relevant programmes are under development | |
| c) Yes, some technologies developed and transferred and limited financial resources provided (please provide details below) | |
| d) Yes, many technologies developed and transferred and significant financial resources provided (please provide details below) | |

Further comments on the development and transfer of technologies and provision of financial resources to assist in the application of the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity.

Biodiversity and Tourism

76. Has your country established mechanisms to assess, monitor and measure the impact of tourism on biodiversity?

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| a) No | |
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|---|---|
| b) No, but mechanisms are under development | |
| c) Yes, mechanisms are in place (please specify below) | X |
| d) Yes, existing mechanisms are under review | |
| Further comments on the establishment of mechanisms to assess, monitor and measure the impact of tourism on biodiversity. | |
| Selected tourism infrastructures such as hotels, marina's, riverside embarkment structures for canoe and kayak, etc. are subject to EIA. | |
| On the basis of such EIA reports, some activities have been cancelled in some zones, such as kayak in some 'fragile' zones of a river system, (seasonally) closed zones on beaches. | |
| In the framework of EIA and specific assessments for Natura 2000 sites, extensions or development of tourism infrastructure are subject to impact assessment. | |
| Few studies have been undertaken to assess the impact of tourism on beaches and their biodiversity, and more research is needed. | |

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| 77. Has your country provided educational and training programmes to the tourism operators so as to increase their awareness of the impacts of tourism on biodiversity and upgrade the technical capacity at the local level to minimise the impacts? (decision V/25) | |
| a) No | |
| b) No, but programmes are under development | X |
| c) Yes, programmes are in place (please describe below) | |
| Further comments on educational and training programmes provided to tourism operators. | |
| Flemish Region: the responsibility for tourism development lies at provincial level as part of their overall duty to promote sustainable economic development and to develop provincial tourism strategies. They are required to consult with stakeholders in this process, such as the Regional Landscape Organisations under the Nature Division. Educational programmes are included in the training system but can certainly be enhanced. | |
| Walloon Region: this is taken care of within the Natural Parcs. A Natural Parc is a rural territory with high biological and geographical interest, subject to measures to protect the environment in harmony with the needs of the population and the socio-economic development. To reach this ambitious objective, the regional actors (persons in charge at municipal and regional level, farmers, tourism sector, forestry sector, nature protection associations, etc.) gather to look for solutions satisfying all partners. The management plan among others tries to integrate biodiversity considerations into the tourism sector. | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 78. Does your country provide indigenous and local communities with capacity-building and financial resources to support their participation in tourism policy-making, development planning, product development and management? (decision VII/14) | |
| a) No | X |
| b) No, but relevant programmes are being considered | |
| c) Yes, some programmes are in place (please provide details below) | |
| d) Yes, comprehensive programmes are in place (please provide details below) | |
| Further comments in the capacity-building and financial resources provided to indigenous and local communities to support their participation in tourism policy-making, development planning, product development and management. | |

Belgian Development Cooperation: limited development cooperation support to:

- training for communities and villagers in tourism policy and marketing (bilateral cooperation in Tanzania; ended in 2001);
- awareness raising in Belgium on ethical and sustainable tourism overseas (not country-specific);
- UNV/UNESCO natural resource management programme, including sustainable tourism, in Cambodia.

Some aspects were taken into account in the following two research projects, initiated following a call for proposals of the **Belgian GTI-NFP** and funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation:

- biodiversity assessment at three protected areas in Northwest Cambodia;
- herpetological species richness and community structure on the Kaieteur National Park Tepui.

79. Has your country integrated the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in the development or review of national strategies and plans for tourism development, national biodiversity strategies and actions plans, and other related sectoral strategies? (decision VII/14)

| | |
|---|---|
| a) No, but the guidelines are under review | |
| b) No, but a plan is under consideration to integrate some principles of the guidelines into relevant strategies | X |
| c) Yes, a few principles of the guidelines are integrated into some sectoral plans and NBSAPs (please specify which principle and sector) | |
| d) Yes, many principles of the guidelines are integrated into some sectoral plans and NBSAPs (please specify which principle and sector) | |

Further information on the sectors where the principles of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development are integrated.

Some guiding principles will be included in the National Biodiversity Strategy (in preparation).

Box XLIX.

Please elaborate below on the implementation of this article and associated decisions specifically focusing on:

- a) outcomes and impacts of actions taken;
- b) contribution to the achievement of the goals of the Strategic Plan of the Convention;
- c) contribution to progress towards the 2010 target;
- d) progress in implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans;
- e) contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- f) constraints encountered in implementation.

Walloon Region: the Decree on Touristic Accommodations (18.12.2003) and the Order of the Walloon Government (09.12.2004) executing this Decree foresee measures specifically for camping sites:

- encourage the camping owners to foresee vegetation and to use indigenous species for this;
- for the zones with increased inundation risks, it is systematically imposed to allow only short camping stays in a way to respect the river features and to let it play its regulational role;
- all officially recognised touristic campings and caravan parks receive financial aids to meet their obligation to build a wastewater treatment installation;
- caravan parks are financially aided to put in place a system for the selective collection of waste.

Flemish Region: with the following sectors or key stakeholders specific agreements for cooperation on nature conservation have been or are being developed: energy sector, defence and military areas, tourism and recreation, sports, youth, drinking water companies, wind mill companies, infrastructure and railways, water courses and roads departments, agriculture, forestry, inland fisheries, etc.

Coastal dunes are fragile habitat types, but also under very high pressure from tourism development and are therefor protected by law (Dune Decree of 1993). During revision of land use and land destination maps all efforts are done to implement this protection scheme and extent the fully

protected and rehabilitated surface of dune areas. Under this programme thorough soil sanitation works have been carried out and dunes restored in an abandoned military domein, and extraction of infrastructure and rehabilitation of vegetation of camping sites for which the exploitation permission was not extended.