

# Third National Report of Belgium to the Convention on Biological Diversity

## C. ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION

### Article 6 - General measures for conservation and sustainable use

<b>12.</b> Has your country put in place effective national strategies, plans and programmes to provide a national framework for implementing the three objectives of the Convention? (Goal 3.1 of the Strategic Plan)	
a) No	
b) No, but relevant strategies, plans and programmes are under development	
c) Yes, some strategies, plans and programmes are in place (please provide details below)	X
d) Yes, comprehensive strategies, plans and programmes are in place (please provide details below)	
Further comments on the strategies, plans and programmes for implementing the three objectives of the Convention.	
<p><b>Flemish Region:</b> the Environment and Nature Policy Plan 2003-2007 includes objectives and measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as projects for supporting conservation efforts under international cooperation such as the Flemish Fund for Tropical Forests, specific projects under other MEA's.</p> <p><b>Walloon Region:</b> a Nature action plan is being developed. Objectives and measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are integrated in the Natura 2000 Decree (modifying the Law on nature conservation), in the Water Code, in a Piscicultural Management Plan for the Semois bassin, in the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification.</p> <p>The Walloon Region is promoting a closer-to-nature sylviculture and the Pro Silva method, and has reviewed its agri-environmental measures to protect some natural landscapes elements and adopt biodiversity-friendly measures. The development of fallow lands with rich fauna is supported. More information on these initiatives will be given further in this report. Furthermore, wet zones of biological interest, underground cavities of scientific interest, domanial or other nature and forest reserves continue to be designated.</p> <p>Until now, the <b>Brussels Capital Region</b> has not developed a specific nature policy plan or biodiversity strategy plan which provides a framework for implementing the objectives of the convention. However, preservation of biodiversity is integrated in general policy. Two main programmes which are guiding the Brussels Capital Region policy on open green space do include measures an objectives of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity: the green and the blue network programme.</p> <p>The green network emphasises the cohesion and continuity of green spaces and semi-natural areas in the urban environment. The intention is to integrate the scenic, esthetical, social, recreational and ecological functions of the green spaces and to develop of their interconnectivity by greenways and new green areas. The programme green network also includes the objectives of an ecological network, so as to take the development of ecological corridors, when possible, into account when developing green connexions between green spaces. However, no legal obligations or regulations exist. It should also be emphasised that due to the urban situation, realisation of ecological corridors is very difficult and (political) priority is given to social aspects (e.g. walking and cycling).</p> <p>Simultaneously, work is being done to implement the blue network. Its purpose is to have an integrated, durable and ecologically-justified management of the open waterways in the Region. This requires active co-operation between the various sectors, in particular between the green spaces managers and the infrastructure department. Much attention is devoted to the increase of natural values and biodiversity in such a way that the public still has access to the areas concerned.</p> <p>In the land use plan of the Brussels Capital Region (soil zone plan, GBP-PRAS, 2001), within the</p>	

category of green spaces, a new category has been integrated: sites with high biological value. Most semi-natural sites with high biological value, and not represented in category forest or park, which until this land use plan of 2001 had no protection, have received this value. With the category forests, these sites are legally protected for nature and biodiversity values and have special management plans.

About 240 ha or 1.5% of the Brussels Capital Region territory is nature- and forest reserve. About 14% of the territory or +/- 2,320 ha has been designated as SAC following the Habitats Directive. Most semi-natural sites (forests, humid areas, etc.) has received this special European protection, also sites which until now had no specific natureprotection as nature or forest reserve, forest or site of high biological value. Special management plans to protect and develop biodiversity of these sites are being developed. The total area under protection has thus increased. Management plans are under construction for these SAC, and already partially realised. It is very probable that some SAC will receive the status of nature reserve.

Forest management has been oriented to integrate conservation of biodiversity values and sustainable use. The FSC-label has been granted to the largest forest of the Brussels Capital Region, the Sonian forest.

The first and second **Federal** Plans for Sustainable Development list strategic objectives and actions in line with the three objectives of the CBD. Action 18 of the second FPSD is for example devoted to biodiversity and focuses on sectoral integration of biodiversity in federal key sectors (transport, economy, development cooperation, scientific policy).

The National Biodiversity Strategy is expected to be adopted early 2006. The aim of the strategy is to bridge the gap between, at the one hand, the effective integration of biodiversity into relevant sectors of activity, and at the other hand, current activities in Belgium and in Belgium's international relations.

**13.  Has your country set measurable targets within its national strategies and action plans? (decisions II/7 and III/9)**

a) No	
b) No, measurable targets are still in early stages of development	X
c) No, but measurable targets are in advanced stages of development	
d) Yes, relevant targets are in place (please provide details below)	
e) Yes, reports on implementation of relevant targets available (please provide details below)	X

Further comments on targets set within national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

- b) **Walloon Region:** measurable targets are in early stage of development.
- d) **Brussels Capital Region:** specific targets have been developed in the framework of the green and blue network.
- e) **Flemish Region:** the Environment and Nature Policy Plan 2003-2007 includes objectives, measures and targets for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. A yearly planning document includes a brief analysis on the implementation of the set targets. A bi-annual Nature Report reviews the status and trends of relevant biodiversity aspects.

**14. Has your country identified priority actions in its national biodiversity strategy and action plan? (decision VI/27 A)**

a) No	
b) No, but priority actions are being identified	
c) Yes, priority actions identified (please provide details below)	X

Further comments on priority actions identified in the national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

**Flemish Region:** priority actions are included in the chapter on biodiversity of the Environment and Nature Policy Plan.

Some priority actions have been and are undertaken in the **Walloon** and **Brussels Capital Regions** but these are not specifically identified and mentioned as such in a strategic document. So far, the Brussels Capital Region has no specific biodiversity strategy plan.

Some priority actions have been identified in the first (2000-2004) and second (2004-2008) **Federal** Plan for Sustainable Development.

The National Biodiversity Strategy (in preparation) will also include priority objectives. It is proposed to ensure and promote sustainable use of components of biodiversity through sectoral integration of biodiversity (in agriculture, fishery, forestry, hunting, tourism, transport and energy).

**15.** Has your country integrated the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as well as benefit sharing into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies? (decision VI/27 A)

a) No	
b) Yes, in some sectors (please provide details below)	X
c) Yes, in major sectors (please provide details below)	
d) Yes, in all sectors (please provide details below)	

Further information on integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and benefit-sharing into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is up to some level included in programmes and policies on agriculture, inland waters, forestry and infrastructure.

Action 19 of the second **Federal** Plan for Sustainable Development (2004-2008) is devoted to sectoral integration of biodiversity in four federal key sectors.

The Nationale Biodiversity Strategy will among others focus on sectoral and cross-sectoral integration of biodiversity considerations.

**16.** Are migratory species and their habitats addressed by your country's national biodiversity strategy or action plan (NBSAP)? (decision VI/20)

a) Yes	X
b) No	

l) If **YES**, please briefly describe the extent to which it addresses

a) Conservation, sustainable use and/or restoration of migratory species	Implementation according to the Bonn Convention. Specific attention to migratory water birds within the framework of the AEWa Agreement. Implementation of the EU Birds Directive with reference to migratory bird species.
b) Conservation, sustainable use and/or restoration of migratory species' habitats, including protected areas	Within the framework of the Bonn Convention, Ramsar Convention, EU Habitats and Birds Directives, AEWa, EUROBATS, ASCOBANS and the section on migratory fish species under the Benelux agreements.
c) Minimising or eliminating barriers or obstacles to migration	Scientific institutes are doing research on the impact of wind mill(park)s on migratory birds.
d) Research and monitoring for migratory species	A large-scale network of volunteers to monitor water birds during winter exists. Compilation of

	data is performed by Wetlands International.
e) Transboundary movement	Participation in international projects, e.g. International Waterbird Census and in relation to marine oil pollution of birds.

### Biodiversity and Climate Change

<b>17.</b> Has your country implemented projects aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change that incorporate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use? (decision VII/15)	
a) No	
b) No, but some projects or programmes are under development	X
c) Yes, some projects have been implemented (please provide details below)	
Further comments on the projects aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change that incorporate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.	
<p><b>Flemish Region:</b> the Institute of Forestry and Game Management (IBW) investigates the spatial and temporal variations of C-stocks in forest soils, in order to support policy within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol.</p> <p>For the development of the conservation objectives and measures for rehabilitation and conservation of the Scheldt estuary, aspects relevant to mitigation and adaptation to climate change are being taken into account.</p> <p>The <b>Brussels Capital Region</b> developed a CDM-project: a large scale afforesting in a degraded savanna around Nioki (Democratic Republic of Congo), category (JI/CDM). The afforesting project is using indigenous species and in accordance with the local communities with aim to reach the FSC label. The study started in 2003, the concrete afforesting is expected by the end of 2006. The expected date for the project termination is 60 years. The estimated amount of Certified Emission Reduction generated by the project is 44000 tCO per year during the first CP, not yet estimated for the next CP. The project involves mainly public funds from the Brussels Capital Region.</p> <p>The <b>Federal</b> Government has engaged itself to acquire emission rights from JI (Joint Implementation) and CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) projects. All project activities are eligible, except land use, land use change and forestry projects. Projects must follow approved JI or CDM methodology. The assessment of the contribution of the project to sustainable development will be based on indicators of three broad components of sustainable development: environmental sustainability (which include biodiversity), social sustainability and economic development.</p>	

<b>18.</b> Has your country facilitated coordination to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation projects are in line with commitments made under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification? (decision VII/15)	
a) No	
b) No, but relevant mechanisms are under development	X
c) Yes, relevant mechanisms are in place (please provide details below)	
Further comments on the coordination to ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation projects are in line with commitments made under the UNFCCC and the UNCCD.	
<p>The <b>Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Security and Environment</b>, responsible for the coordination of UNFCCC, underlines that projects financed by Belgium should respect the objectives of all three conventions. However, as there could be practical limitations to this, the idea is still under discussion and no political decision has been taken yet.</p> <p>The Strategy for Environment of the <b>Belgian Development Cooperation</b> intends to integrate environmental concerns in the development cooperation. As this is not limited to one aspect, this</p>	

Strategy contributes to ensuring an integrated approach towards the objectives of the UNCBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD.

In providing financial contributions to UNEP, one of the priorities of Belgium is to improve the coherent implementation of UNCBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD.

**Brussels Capital Region:** see question 17.

#### **Box XLII.**

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.

The 2004 brochure 'Biodiversity in Belgium: an overview' (in French and Dutch) draws the following conclusions:

Comparisons of old and new observations reveal that not less than one third to half of the species are threatened in Belgium. About the entire decline of biodiversity is a result of human activities. Main threats are:

- the destruction and fragmentation of open space for industry, agriculture, roads and housing;
- pollution and more especially eutrophication;
- the rising pressure of tourism and recreation;
- invasive alien species;
- climate change;
- the depletion of natural resources.

But also:

- the lack of ecological and taxonomical knowledge;
- the rising number and often non-concerted feature of meetings, reports, etc.

**Flemish Region:** the bi-annual Nature Reports describe status and trends of habitats, species, main ecosystem functions, pressures and impacts. Sets of indicators have been developed, based on the indicators listed on regional, international and global level. A first evaluation will be available through the indicator website of the Institute of Nature Conservation ([www.instnat.be](http://www.instnat.be)).

The main causes of biodiversity loss or decline were identified as habitat loss and degradation, fragmentation and pollution. Agriculture was the most important underlying cause of habitat loss/degradation. The biggest constraints to progress were seen as a lack of man-power and finances for proper implementations, political support and public participation, policy supportive research and monitoring.

**Walloon Region:** at the end of 2003, the Walloon Government has taken note of the orientations of the action programme for the air quality in the framework of the 2010 Objective. These orientations take into account among others the European programme on climate change.

The State of the Walloon Environment mentions climate change as one of the causes of the shift in distribution area of species groups such as the Odonata.

The **Brussels Capital Region** publishes every two years the State of the Environment. It provides essential information on status on trends of habitats and species.