

Nature Conservation in Europe: Approaches and Lessons

Annex BE.1. Biodiversity 2020, Update of Belgium's National Biodiversity Strategy (2013)

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The update of Belgium's first *National Biodiversity Strategy for 2006–2016* (Belgian National Focal Point to CBD, 2006) was an opportunity to translate into national policy the ambitious global agreements reached at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the CBD in Nagoya, during the Belgian Presidency of the EU (at the end of 2010), and also consider the contribution of Belgium to the implementation of the *EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020* and the other commitments under the biodiversity-related agreements. The updated strategy, *Biodiversity 2020* (Belgian National Focal Point to CBD, 2013) had 85 actions, and 10 guiding principles, that contributed to the following 15 strategic objectives:

1. Identification, monitoring
2. Threatening processes
3. Management, restoration
4. Sustainable use of resources
5. Sectoral integration
6. ABS Nagoya protocol
7. Scientific knowledge
8. Education, training, awareness
9. Regulatory framework
10. Coherence in implementation
11. International cooperation
12. Global biodiversity agenda
13. Global concern
14. Local authorities
15. Mobilisation of resources

Appendix 1 of the Strategy shows the concordance of the Aichi Targets with the *EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020* and Belgium's *Biodiversity 2020* strategy.

The main new additions of objectives and actions in *Biodiversity 2020* concerned the following points:

- Addition of a Vision to 2050, in line with the EU 2050 vision adopted in 2011.
- Better embracing the EU 2020 Headline Target by updating the General Objective of the Strategy until 2020.
- Tackling emerging risks and the impact of internal trade of live specimens.
- Protecting and restoring biodiversity and associated ecosystem services through protected areas (min.17% at land, 10% at sea), green infrastructure and requiring no net loss.
- Identifying pathways of introduction of Invasive Alien Species.

- Mapping ecosystem services in Belgium and assessing their values.
- 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; and developing an approach to include these values in national accounting.
- Implementing the Nagoya Protocol.
- Ensuring the implementation and enforcement of biodiversity legislation.
- Involving provinces, cities and other local authorities.
- Boosting the mobilisation of resources (including through innovative mechanisms included) and enhancing capacities.

As regards the process that led to the updated strategy, the first *National Biodiversity Strategy* was adopted in 2006 by the competent ministers of the Federal Government, the three Regions of Belgium and the three Communities after a thorough participative process completed by a public consultation in the three national languages, widely advertised by the authorities. This resulted in 175 individual recommendations, one coordinated response from the Federal Council on Sustainable Development and three from Regional advisory bodies. An unpublished mid-term evaluation in 2011 of Belgium's first *National Biodiversity Strategy* (2006–2016) guided the updating process by Belgian Coordination Committee.

The updating process that started in 2012 involved the same actors and thematic groups as for the preparation of the first strategy. Similarly, the consultation and adoption followed the same procedure but was restricted to the changes to the text only. This resulted in twenty-three recommendations received from associations and individuals. Overall 61% of the respondents to the public consultation fully agreed with the proposed updates to the strategic and operational objectives, and 22% proposed amendments. Comments received concerned the clear definition of concepts (e.g. ecosystem services, not net loss and green infrastructure), their integration in all objectives, and concern for climate change. The intrinsic value of biodiversity and its importance for future generations were also stressed. The lack of clear financial mechanisms at federal and regional levels, and the technical text, were justified by the strategic nature of this national document, and the need to translate it into actions by the competent federal and regional ministers. Overall, the high ambition of the strategy was welcomed. On 13 November 2013, the final version of the updated strategy was adopted by no less than ten ministers of the Inter-ministerial Conference for the Environment, which clearly showed increased political attention in Belgium to biodiversity.

Source

Marianne Schlessor, *in litt.* (2013) RBINS.

References

Belgian National Focal Point to CBD (2006) *National Biodiversity Strategy for 2006–2016*. Brussels: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

Belgian National Focal Point to CBD (2013) *Biodiversity 2020 – Update of Belgium's National Biodiversity Strategy*. Brussels: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

Further information on the Strategy (in French, Dutch and English) and its implementation can be found on The Belgian Clearing-House Mechanism www.biodiv.be/

Recommended citation

Martens, E. & Ventocilla, J. (2023) Biodiversity 2020, Update of Belgium's National Biodiversity Strategy (2013). In *Nature Conservation in Europe: Approaches and Lessons*, ed. G. Tucker, online Annex BE.1. Cambridge, UK / New York: Cambridge University Press. www.cambridge.org/natureconservation