



Integration for Biodiversity in Belgium

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Water management	2
3. Agriculture.....	3
4. Forestry	4
5. Military areas	5
6. Business.....	6
7. Local authorities.....	7
8. Private public partnership.....	8
9. Land use planning	9
10. Budgets	9
11. Construction.....	10
12. Federal level.....	10
13. Economy.....	12
14. Development cooperation	12
15. Science policy	12
16. Cross cutting issues	13

1. Introduction

Belgium's national strategy federates the country's various biodiversity initiatives into one common framework of action. One of its overarching principles is sectoral integration. Objective 4 of the strategy deals with sustainable use issues such as sustainable product policies, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, hunting and tourism. Objective 5 focuses specifically on sectoral integration. It targets stakeholder partnerships; the involvement of the private sector; the identification of negative and positive effects in land use planning, transport and energy; encourages the development of financial instruments for biodiversity; foresees the integration of biodiversity concerns into national export credit policy and in import and export decisions, encourages the implementation of CITES, and also maintains and reinforces the social function of biodiversity. (http://www.biodiv.be/implementation/docs/stratactplan/national_strategie_biodiversiteit_en.pdf.) The various administrations of the regional and the federal government are the main implementation bodies of the national strategy. They ensure that the objectives provided in the biodiversity strategy are met through adequate initiatives.

2. Water management

Flemish region

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. The Flemish Environmental Policy Plan (2003-2010) aims to achieve free fish migration within a priority network of 3000 km that comprises the most important breeding sites and migration routes. An evaluation of the Benelux situation shows that restoration is in progress, but far too slowly to achieve the 2010 target. A postponement to 2015 (90%) and 2021 (100%) is under preparation, synchronising the target with the European Water Framework Directive. By the end of 2007, 116 of the 796 barriers (15 %) along this network had been dealt with. If the present trend continues, the fish migration barriers on the priority network will be removed by 2047, far later than 2015. 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

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 phyto-benthos, 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. Following the same trend in the future, the goal of 2015 will not be reached.

Walloon region

- **Morphological quality of watercourses:** out of the 354 bodies of surface water in the Walloon Region, around 70 % are qualified as «natural», 25% are «heavily modified» (in other words, penalised by major obstacles to the circulation of fish or with artificial banks), and the remaining 5 % are «artificial» surface water bodies (canals). The EU Water Framework Directive stipulates the implementation of a network monitoring the hydromorphological quality of watercourses. The Walloon network will be operational by 2009. A better understanding of the physical status of watercourses should help target and adapt measures already included in the Walloon project of river basin district management plan. The main actions aim to prohibit access to the watercourses for cattle, to restore the functionality of rivers or to manage watercourses and their annexes in an ecological manner. <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p089>.
- **Ecological quality of watercourses:** in 2007, more than 65 % of the 54 sites in the surveillance network presented water of good or high ecological quality. While water is generally of a (very) good quality in forest areas, it often becomes bad where there is a high level of urbanisation, industry and intensive farming. The number of sites where the ecological quality of the water is moderate to very good has slightly improved over the last 15 years. This improvement is connected to increasing awareness on the part of the general public (in particular through River Contracts) and new legislation, the effects of which have been seen in the increase in the level of treatment of waste water and the reduction in pollutant waste water discharges. The implementation of the “Programme de gestion durable de l’azote en agriculture” and the ecological restoration of watercourses also seem to have had positive effects. <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p090>.

3. Agriculture

Flemish region

Agri-environment schemes (in cooperation with the administrations for land use management and agriculture). Schemes for field margin management and for the management of small landscape elements (pools, hedges, wooded banks), which aim to strengthen the ecological infrastructure in farmland areas, have been widely adopted by farmers. At the end 2007, 1 236 ha of field margins (4.9 times the target) had been installed and schemes for 81.7 ha of wooded banks and 179 km of hedges were in place (60% of the target). The agri-environmental schemes aimed at the development, conservation and restoration of specific farmland species and communities have been far less successful. By the end of 2007 only 37% of the intended 1 500 ha for species protection (meadow birds and Common Hamster) and 29% of the intended 6 000 ha for botanical grassland management had been realised.

Area under organic farming (actions supported by the administrations for agriculture and land use management). The area under organic farming increased from 640 ha in 1994 to 4 026 ha in 2001. However, between 2002 and 2005 the total area and the number of organic farms decreased noticeably. In 2006 this trend was halted with a slight increase in the organically farmed area to 3 836 ha in 2007. This area corresponds to about 0.62% of the total farmland area in Flanders. Several socio-economic factors underpin the stagnation since 2000. Firstly, biological farmers have experienced difficulties in marketing their products. Secondly, traditional farming organisations erroneously uphold the idea that

organic farming is technically and economically less sustainable. The stagnation of organic farming in Flanders since 2001 sharply contrasts with the strong increase in organically farmed area elsewhere in the EU-15, where organic farms comprised about 4% of the total farmland area in 2005.

Walloon region

- The **agri-environmental measures** largely relate to biodiversity, the landscape and protection of surface and underground waters. At the end of 2006, nearly half of farmers were involved in one or more agri-environmental measure. The most successful measures were those for hedges, isolated items (trees, ponds) and winter coverage of the ground before a spring crop. More than 9,600 km of hedges were subsidised as AEMs in 2006, while nearly 25,000 hectares of fields were given winter coverage (just under 20 % of the land covered by the main arable spring crops). The agri-environmental programmes are reviewed regularly in order to target the most effective measures and priority zones from an environmental perspective. Comparing the situation in the Walloon Region at the end of 2006 with the aims of the Plan wallon de Développement Rural (PDR) 2000-2006(2) shows that apart from the lengths of hedges and maintenance of low livestock densities, which have been very successful, the aims of the PDR have generally only been 50 to 80 % successful. It should also be observed that the budget allocated to the AEMs was 14.2 million € in 2007, which was five times the 2004 budget. <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p018>.

- The number of **organic farms** and their cultivated areas are on the rise. At the end of 2007, organic plots covered 29,200 hectares (mainly grazing land), or 3.9 % of the agricultural land used. The recent increase (2006 and 2007) can be explained by the implementation of a more generous regional support scheme (subsidies) and a more encouraging context (increased awareness of producers and consumers). <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p019>.

4. Forestry

Flemish region

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). Forest management plans are 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. Between 1990 and 2006, 42 190 ha of forest management plans were approved (13 958 ha extensive and 28 232 ha limited). Around 29% of the 150 000 ha of Flemish forest area is now covered by approved management plans. At the moment, there is no data available to evaluate the effectiveness of forest management. An analysis shows that limited forest management plans gradually increase their attention towards the ecological functions of forests. As the total forest area is three times the size of the area with conservation management, forest management plans are an important tool for maintaining biodiversity.

Walloon region

- 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.).

- In the Walloon Region, PEFC **certified forests** cover nearly 268,000 ha, or 49% of the Region's forest areas. Nearly 90% of certified forest land belongs to public landowners. In 2006, a new 'Plan de progrès pour la gestion forestière wallonne' (for documents, go to <http://www.pefc.be>) was drawn up for 2007-2011 by a task group which included all stakeholders. It contains 11 objectives organised into 27 actions. <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p022>.

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. It belongs to the Natura 2000 network 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. 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. <http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/Templates/Particuliers/Informer.aspx?id=1840&langtype=2060>.

5. Military areas

Flemish region

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.

Walloon region

- **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.

6. Business

Flemish region

Several actions related with business sector have been set up in the framework of the Environment Policy Plan (2003-2007, recently extended till 2010).

- **Sector-specific platforms** have been established under the Department for Environment, Nature and Energy for exchanging information and sharing experience between administrations of the regional environment authority and user groups such as: Environment and Agriculture, Environment and Industries, Environment and Consumers. The main objectives of these platforms is to look into (1) possible common programmes in which the actors agree to take up their responsibilities and through which the environmental performance can be improved; (2) cooperate for improving jurisdiction and instruments and sector specific objectives.

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: Drink Water Companies, Waste Water Management (Aquafin), Waste Handling Companies (Remo), the Departments Waterwegen & Zeekanaal (Waterways and Sea Canal) 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.

Walloon region

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.

7. Local authorities

Flemish region

Under the Cooperation Framework with local authorities municipalities receive financial and technical support for projects they submit for nature conservation actions. 226 out of 318 municipalities undersigned the cooperation agreement for 'nature', and 122 projects for specific actions received financial support. About 50% of these projects concerned acquisition and restoration of nature of forest areas, 14% for species protection actions. The other projects include installation of green roofs, development and implementation of management plans for parks and for road or river verges.

Walloon region

- Several initiatives on the basis of the **participatory approach** contribute to biodiversity protection in Wallonia: Municipality plans for Nature development (PCDN), Nature Parks, and River Contracts (Contrats de Rivières). They include actions in favour of biodiversity conservation and protection at local scale. Two other nature development programmes focus on "roadside management" (e.g. through late mowing) and "attics and steeples". In 2007, 62 % of municipalities were involved in one or two programmes and 18 % in three programmes. Four municipalities are involved in all of the programmes. There were 47 municipalities which were not yet involved in any programmes. The most successful programmes are the «roadside» and «attics and steeples» conventions.

<http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p115>

- **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. Since 1993, 19 river committees have been formed, working on 19 river basins covering more than 78 % of Wallonia. Furthermore, 196 Walloon municipalities have become partners in a river contract. The total land area covered by signatory municipalities is $\pm 12,000$ km², or 71 % of the region. the river contracts currently incorporate more than 5,000 actions, the majority of which (69 %) are intended to practically preserve and improve the qualitative (physical, chemical and biological), quantitative, historical and aesthetic aspects of watercourses.

Brussels-Capital region

Management of public green spaces

Certainly to be mentioned is the Brussels effort to manage green spaces as biodiversity-friendly as possible. It is called “differentiated management”. No pesticides are used, favour is given to native species, dead trees are maintain as long as people security is secure, grass are less often mowed where compatible with the recreational demand.

<http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/Templates/Particuliers/Informer.aspx?id=1834&langtype=2060>.

8. Private public partnership

Flemish region

- 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.

Walloon region

Consultation groups and advice bodies

- A consultative group has been set up within the Walloon administration to have clear indications on which agricultural lot can benefit of agricultural financial aids. Natura 2000 sites and Natural reserves have now a particular status so as to continue to benefit from these measures even if not totally in agreement with previous specifications.
- A new group has been set also within the Walloon administration to better take into account the environment in cross compliance.
- A platform has been set up to identify what could be improved for biodiversity conservation in the CWATUPE (Code wallon de l'aménagement du territoire, de l'urbanisme, du patrimoine et de l'énergie).

9. Land use planning

Walloon region

Wallonia's 23 'plans de secteur' (land use planning) mainly aim to manage the pressure that urbanisation puts on the area by defining zones which can be built on (270,000 ha) and zones to be used for agriculture, forests, or wildlife (1,400,000 ha). The areas defined in the 'plans de secteur' largely correspond to actual use for agricultural land (91% of agricultural land in agricultural zones) and forest land (88% of forests in forest zones). However, 27 % of the wildlife areas defined in the PDSs are built on. <http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportproblematique.aspx?id=p001>.

The **principle of compensation**: since 2005 in Wallonia, any new zone to be urbanised must be compensated either by a modification going in the other direction, for a similar-sized area not to be urbanised (agricultural, forest, natural, etc.), or by "alternative compensation defined by the Government". Furthermore, the implementation of urbanisation projects within the framework of the ZACCs (zones d'aménagement communal concerté) depends on an urban and environmental report which must look at the impact that the projects may have.

Brussels-Capital region

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. This plan needs to be completed and actualized. In the mid-term, it should integrate the Brussels ecological network. See: <http://www.pras.irisnet.be/PRAS/>.

10. Budgets

Walloon region

While they only represent a part of the resources to be mobilised, the budgets dedicated to nature development provide information about the action potential taken by the authorities, as well as about the major focuses for work undertaken in this area. The budgets for nature development have been recently going up slightly in Wallonia: + 54% for the period 2005-2008. More than 40% of the budgets are allocated to protection and management measures for sites of biological interest (purchase and

management of natural reserves, LIFE Nature programmes for the conservation of Natura 2000 habitats etc.). The relative significance of budgets for the support of themed operations management should also be noted («attics and steeples», roadsides, PCDNs, etc.). They represent around 10 % of the total budget, depending on the year.
<http://environnement.wallonie.be/eew/rapportProblematique.aspx?id=p116>.

11. Construction

Brussels-Capital region

Eco-construction

Lots of efforts are made towards the **architects and the construction sector**, among others with the publication of a guide book on eco-construction for professionals. Several chapters concern biodiversity:

- How to maximise ecological productivity (based on the Biotope Area Factor developed by authorities for the city of Berlin, Germany) (fiche TER 05)
- How to build green roofs (fiche TER06)
- How to set up green walls (fiche TER07)

Training workshops are also organised for professionals.

[http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/soussites/guide/\(S\(1doljvr1xfrqbm2jfydvoebe\)\)/Guide.aspx?langtype=2060](http://www.bruxellesenvironnement.be/soussites/guide/(S(1doljvr1xfrqbm2jfydvoebe))/Guide.aspx?langtype=2060)

Federal level

12. Federal level

A federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity in four key sectors will be 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.

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. Table 1 highlights the composition of the committees.

Table 1. Committee members involved in the preparation of the federal plan for the sectoral integration of biodiversity. The brackets refer to the category of stakeholder.

Sector	Chair	Members
Transport	Mobility and Transport	Mobility and Transport (administration) Environment (administration) National railway company (SNCB-NMBS) (agency)
Economy	Economy	Economy (several departments) (administration) Environment (administration) Finances (customs) (administration) Foreign Affairs (administration) Sustainable development (administration)

		Export credit agency (Ducroire-Deguelde) (agency) Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (scientific institution)
Development cooperation	Foreign Affairs (Development Cooperation)	Foreign Affairs (administration) Foreign Affairs / partim Development Cooperation (administration) Environment (administration) Sustainable development (administration) Belgian Technical Cooperation (agency) Federal Council for Sustainable Development (advisory body) Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (scientific institution) Royal Museum for Central Africa (scientific institution) National Botanic Garden of Belgium (scientific institution) Vrije Universiteit Brussel (university) KWIA/VODO asbl (NGO)
Scientific policy	Science Policy	Science Policy (administration) Environment (administration) Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (scientific institution) Royal Museum for Central Africa (scientific institution) National Botanic Garden of Belgium (scientific institution) Institute of Public Health (scientific institution) Veterinary and agrochemical research centre (scientific institution)

A steering committee gathering the responsible person of each sectoral committee ensured coherence of the whole process. A public consultation took place between 1 November 2008 and 3 January 2009. The adoption of the plan by the federal government is foreseen in September 2009.

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.

As far as the Belgian part of the North Sea is concerned, the policy plan for the management of the marine protected areas includes a number of actions, which target specific sectors, in particular the fishery sector and the harbours. The policy plan foresees structural agreements and cooperation with these sectors to prepare appropriate measures to restore the favourable state of conservation for threatened habitat types and species.

One cross cutting action is also identified in the plan (applying to the four sectors):

- Effective integration of biodiversity when making strategic environmental assessments. Although the action plan is not yet adopted, some actions have already been started, as highlighted below.

13. Economy

Federal level

- **Biofuels:** a study evaluating the biodiversity impact of the development of agro-fuels, including genetically modified plants, in Belgium has just 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.
- **Invasive alien species:** a legal framework aiming at preventing the introduction of IAS in Belgium is being finalised. 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).
- **Financial mechanism:** a study has been launched 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.)

14. Development cooperation

Federal level

- **Mainstreaming of biodiversity:** With regard to the mainstreaming of biodiversity, Belgium supports the development of UNEP-IUCN TEMATEA modules to promotes synergies at national and international level to ensure the coherent implementation of biodiversity-related agreements, such as the biodiversity-related conventions (UNCBD, CITES, Convention on Migratory Species, Ramsar and the World Heritage Convention), the Rio conventions (UNFCCC, UNCCD), regional agreements and others, and organizes national thematic workshops on the use of the modules.
- **Training and capacity building:** the Belgian Directorate General for Development Cooperation finances biodiversity capacity building programmes through the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and the Royal Museum for Central Africa. These programmes are specifically dedicated to the following CBD cross-cutting issues: the Clearing-House Mechanism, Global Taxonomy Initiative, Communication, Education and Public Awareness and Identification, Monitoring, Indicators and Assessments.

15. Science policy

Federal level

- **Invasive alien species:** 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>.

16. Cross cutting issues

Federal level

- **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.

The follow up of the federal plan for the integration of biodiversity in four sectors will rely on annual reporting of data (ideally based on performance indicators) during the implementation of the plan. The four committees 'economy', 'development cooperation', 'science' and 'transport' will draft an annual follow-up report identifying measures implemented. Reports will be based on the evaluation of positive and negative effects of integration measures implemented (desired or not). A mid-term review will be organised, as well as a final assessment, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of the implementation and, if relevant, address potential gaps.