BELGIUM

PLAN STRATEGIQUE POUR LA BELGIQUE
STRATEGIE VOOR BELGIE
(*National Strategy Plan for Rural Development together with two Rural Development Programmes*)[1]

(The text of this summary sheet was finalised in September 2010 in accordance with the version of the RDP that was current at this time)

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Climate Change and Renewable Energy issues in 2007-2013 RDP

Agriculture and related policy areas are fundamental to the mitigation of climate change (CC). EU agriculture must play an important role in mitigating this phenomenon by curbing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. At the same time it needs to adapt to the expected climatic adversities, likely to have serious consequences for production processes. Rural development offers a range of possibilities to support farming practices and investments, which can contribute to climate change *mitigation* efforts (including the increase in the use of *Renewable Energy* [RE] resources) and additionally *adaptation* benefits. CC challenges have been well recognised in the baseline analysis of the 2007-20013 EU Rural Development Programmes (RDP) and addressed in their strategies. Following the Health Check (HC) of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the 'new challenges' of RD policy include 'climate change' and 'renewable energy', for which an additional budget of approximately €1 billion(2) has been made available to Member States (MS)(3). As a consequence, operations related to these newly introduced EU priorities have been further strengthened in the RDPs.

Introduction - Overview of Belgium Strategy

According to the Belgium National Strategic Plan, the production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry is still marginal. Although this plan doesn't clearly identify the actual weakness and threats relating to CC-related impacts on agriculture and rural areas, it explains the environmental situation at national level.

The total emissions for greenhouse gases (GHG) in 2002 were equivalent to those of 1990, but Belgium still appears to be on track to meet its Kyoto target (7.5% below the 1990 levels). The

(1) The Belgium regions include: Wallonia (WL) and Flandres (FL)
(2) 19.8% of the total additional funds released.
(3) The budget allocated to the 'new challenges' includes the funds released by the HC of the CAP (including voluntary modulation and transfers according to Art. 136 of Regulation (EC) No. 73/2009) and the European Economic Recovery Package (EERP).

results in terms of GHG emissions for 1990-2002 differ from one region to another – e.g. increasing by 3.1% in Flanders, decreasing by 7.3% in Wallonia and increasing by 9.6% in the region of Brussels-Capital. In Flanders, the trend relating to GHG emissions over the 1990-2002 period, showed an increase of 26% of emissions from transport, but also a reduction in emissions from industry (-11%) and agriculture (-10%).

Flanders recorded improvements in energy intensity due to efforts made in the sectors of industry and energy since 1998. The Walloon Region announced an increase of 7.6% of final energy consumption (1990-2002). By 2010, Flanders hoped to have reduced household energy consumption by 7.5% as compared with 1999 levels, (despite an increase of 37% between 1990 and 2002), thanks to several measures to encourage the more rational use of energy.

In the absence of new measures, Belgium will miss the target related to ozone emissions. In Flanders, the emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) decreased by 43% during the period 1990-2003 and those of nitrogen oxide (NOX) decreased by 12%. The Walloon Plan gives priority to reducing VOC emissions. In the region of Brussels-Capital, emissions of VOCs and NOX showed a decrease of 25% (1990-2003).

Renewable energy consumption almost tripled in 2002, but the overall share of renewable energy represented only 2%. The share of renewable energy in electricity production in Flanders increased (0.75% in 2003). In Wallonia, this amount increased to 2.3% in 2003: the use of hydropower declined in 2003 due to adverse weather conditions and wind energy is growing rapidly, but is less than 2% of the total energy used. To stimulate demand for renewables, the Brussels-Capital and Walloon Region use "green certificates", which support the production of renewable energy in the two regions.

Although the baseline analysis takes both climate change mitigation and renewable energy into account, rural development strategies in Belgium are more focused on renewable energy with less attention paid to adaptation, in both the baseline analyses and the strategies. That priority attention is given to renewable energy, can be explained by the fact that Belgium has not yet developed the valorisation of renewable energy sources; this represents for instance in Wallonia 2% of the gross domestic consumption of total energy, as compared to 6% at EU level. Mitigation is also given particular attention in the RDP, and this can be explained by the intensive nature of agriculture in Belgium which contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions (10% of total national emissions of GHG, 65% of N_20 and 46% of CH_4). Promoting more extensive agriculture and husbandry is thus a key-issue in order for agriculture to contribute to a significant decrease of GHG emissions, especially for N_20 through a more rationale use of fertilisers, and CH_4 through more extensive livestock breeding and grazing practices.

The strategy chosen in the Walloon RDP concerning CC issues, is related to the following topics:

- The financial resources from both the Health Check of the CAP and the economic recovery plan are dedicated exclusively to **Measure 214** (Agri-environment payments) of this RDP. This results from the strategic directions of the Community and the necessity to meet new challenges. For the Walloon region, support for organic agriculture is considered the most effective way to meet the challenge of climate change (reduction of inputs and livestock carrying), water management (reducing the use and of nitrates and pesticides), biodiversity (flora and diverse grassland crop rotation with long pulses) and the reorientation of dairy farms.
- The Walloon Region has decided not to mobilise resources from the recovery plan to infrastructure for broadband connections, due to the fact that the Walloon region is already well supplied in this regard. In 2008, almost 99% of the population of Wallonia had broadband coverage.

The strategy chosen under the Flemish RDP concerning CC issues relates to the following topics:

- Flanders has chosen to strengthen existing measures related to new challenges in areas 1, 2 and 3; namely through the following measures:
    - Measure 121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings;
    - Measure 311 - Diversification into non-agricultural activities;
    - Measure 123 - Adding value to agricultural and forestry products;
    - Measure 214 - Agri-environment payments
- As the Flemish territory is almost completely covered by broadband, Flanders does not propose measures relating to that issue.

The main objective set out by the NSP in relation to the issues of climate change is to "improve the environment". The achievement of this goal involves:

- Strengthening synergies between environmental protection and growth;
- Achieving the emission targets of the Kyoto Protocol of -7.5% for the period between 2008-2012 compared to GHG emissions in 1990;
- Increasing energy efficiency by 1% per year;
- Reducing GHG by encouraging the production and use of renewable energy sources and agricultural practices (agri-environment measures, organic farming);
- Working to maintain biodiversity through agri-environment measures, production and biological measures for Natura 2000;
- Reducing water pollution by nitrates, through agri-environment measures, support for organic production and the nurturing of investments made by farmers to comply with new standards in the field, or exceeding current standards.

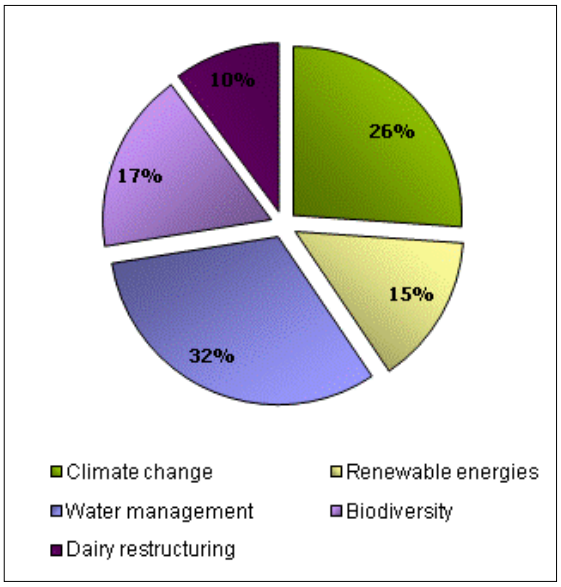
The specific actions set out by Walloon RDP to address the objectives related to CC/RE are:

- Improving organic agriculture;
- Reducing emissions of methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide;
- Reducing leaching of various substances;
- Species conservation the and maintenance of grasslands;
- Improving the effects of the dairy sector on the environment.

The specific actions set out by Flemish RDP to address the objectives related to CC/RE are:

- Improving energy efficiency;
- Improving the effectiveness of the use of nitrogen fertilisers;
- The use of plants to reduce emissions;
- The conversion of biomass to renewable energy production;
- The treatment of water used in the agricultural sector;
- The use of technologies to save water;
- Improving energy efficiency;
- Reducing the use of pesticides;
- Creating food sources, reproduction areas and nests in fields and meadows;
- Establishing semi-natural water bodies;
- Tackling erosion through efforts including the protection of downstream areas.

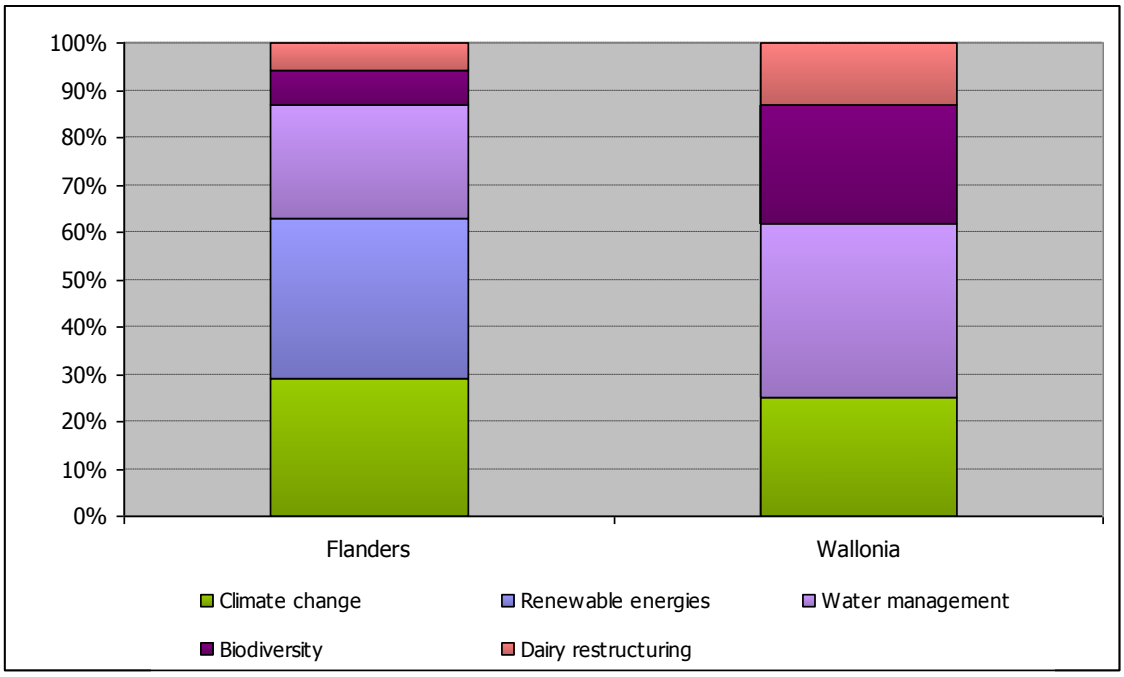
Allocation of the additional resources per type of priority – BELGIUM



The total public expenditure allocated to this Member State amounts to €1 268 820 162.67 of which €487 484 306 corresponds to EAFRD contribution.

This includes an additional allocation of €68 474 000 (EAFRD contribution) as a result of the new challenges raised by the HC and the adoption of the European Economic Recovery Plan (EERP).

Allocation of additional resources per type of priority – RDP detail



Additional RDP allocations per type of priority vary for each RDP. Wallonia mainly allocates resources for 'water management' (37%). 'Climate change' and 'biodiversity' represent 50% (25% each) of the total additional resources, while the 'dairy sector' receives 13% of additional funds. Flanders mainly allocates resources for 'renewable energy' (34%), 'climate change' (29%) and 'water management' (24%), while 'biodiversity' receives 7% and the 'dairy sector' - 6%.

Mitigation

Activities aimed at reducing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions

The most important operation considered for mitigation relates to:

- Energy saving, especially in Flanders;
- Manure storage facilities, especially in Wallonia;
- Reducing the use of fertilisers, soil conservation techniques, extensification of pasture management, on an equal basis in Flanders and Wallonia;
- Conversion of arable land to pastures in Flanders.

Actions related to energy saving and the improvement of manure storage capacities are principally connected to the modernisation of agricultural holdings (**Measure 121**). All other actions are connected to agri-environmental schemes, which are particularly well developed in Flanders and Wallonia. In terms of energy saving, there are important incentives in both regions, especially for the insulation of stables and greenhouses in Flanders. Several operations contribute to the objective of reducing the use of fertilisers, both in Flanders and Wallonia. These include support for more sustainable practices, organic farming, and integrated production (**Measure 214**). The most original measure for integrated production is probably provided by the "Agri-environmental plan" in Belgium, in the form of a comprehensive approach at farm level, to develop an integrated action plan based on an environmental assessment. Other important operations concern a drive towards more extensive livestock grazing and pasture management, for which well-targeted agri-environmental sub-measures are also planned (Measure 214).

Adaptation

Prevention of, and coping with, potential impacts of climate change on agriculture

The most significant operations contributing to the adaptation to climate change concern the protection of wetlands (**Measure 214**), and also installations for waste water treatment (**Measure 121**), integrated pest management, improvement of animal rearing conditions and the conservation of genetic resources (all under **Measure 214**).

Measure 111 (Vocational training and information actions) and **Measure 123** (Adding value to agricultural and forestry products) also aims to contribute to the prevention of climate change.

Main RDP measures which contribute to addressing CC mitigation/adaptation issues

Axis/ Measure	Description	Type of operation	Potential effects	Frequency
Axis 1				
111	Vocational training and information actions	Agriculture training/ awareness campaigns on sustainable agriculture/ setting-up of young farmers	*No data available*	Flanders
121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings	Promoting the establishment of young farmers and to make farms profitable and modern	Enhancing environmental performance of agricultural enterprises.	Wallonia
		Improving the effectiveness of the use of nitrogenous fertilisers	Reduction of CH_4 and N_2O emissions	Flanders Wallonia
		Use of plants to reduce emissions	Reduction of CH_4, CO_2 and N_2O emissions	
		Treatment of water used in agricultural explorations	Improving the ability to use water more efficiently	
		Use of technologies to save water	Improving the ability to use and store water more efficiently	
123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	Use of technologies to save water	Use of technologies to save water	Flanders
		Treatment of water used in the agriculture explorations	Improving the ability to use water more efficiently	
		Improving the dairy sector	Improving dairy sector competitiveness	

Axis 2				
214	Agri-environment payments	Agri-environmental grants awarded to producers who undertake to implement the production of one or more of the following: - elements of the ecological network and landscape; - natural grasslands; - extensive grassy borders/ cover the ground in winter before spring crops; - extensive cereal crops; - possession of species in danger of extinction; - grasslands of high biological value; - organic farming.	Positive impact on the environment	Flanders Wallonia
		Improving organic agriculture	Reducing emissions of methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide	Wallonia
			Conservation of species and maintenance of grasslands	
			Strengthening the effects of the dairy sector on the environment	
214 A **214 N**		Reducing the use of pesticides	Protecting and improving water quality	Flanders
214 D		Improving the effectiveness of the use of fertilisers	Protecting and improving water quality	
		Diversification of forage crops	Improving dairy sector competitiveness	
214 B		Reducing the use of pesticides	Protecting and improving water quality; reducing the penetration of harmful substances in bordering habitats.	

214 H		Creation of food sources, reproduction areas and nests in fields and meadows	Protection of birds and other flora and fauna, improving the network of habitats, reductng the penetration of harmful substances in bordering habitats, conserving protected fauna and flora	Flanders
214 G		Creation of food sources, reproduction areas and nests in fields and meadows	Reducing leaching of various substances; protecting birds and other flora and fauna, improving the network of habitats, reducing the penetration of harmful substances in bordering habitats, conserving protected fauna and flora	
214 K		Establishment of semi-natural water bodies	Preservation of high value water bodies	
		Creation of field borders, riparian perennial strips	Reducing leaching of various substances; protecting birds and other flora and fauna, improving the network of habitats, reducing the penetration of harmful substances in bordering habitats, conserving protected fauna and flora	
214 J		Improving the effectiveness of the use of fertilisers	Reduction of CH4 and N2O emissions Preservation of high value water bodies Reducing leaching of various substances	
214 I		Tackling erosion, including the protection of downstream areas	Preservation of high value water bodies	

Renewable Energy

Electricity, heating and transport fuels produced from biomass (such as biofuels, biogas) and other renewable sources (solar, wind, geothermal).

The most important operation involves supporting investments for on-farm production and the use of renewable energy (**Measure 121** - *Modernisation of agricultural holdings*), and also for local energy supply (**Measure 312** - *Support for business creation and development*). Wood biomass constitutes the main type of renewable energy used in Belgium, contributing to 79.3% of the total consumption of renewable energy at national level. The objective of the RDP is to consolidate this position, in relation to sustainable forest management and the improvement of the environmental role of forests. On-farm use and the production of biogas is also given particular attention, both in Flanders and Wallonia, in relation to the importance of husbandry in the country and the relating margin of progress in this sector (also Measure 121). Finally, it must be stressed that although training does not specifically prioritise mitigation or adaptation to climate change, information and training on renewable energy *are* given high priority at national level.

Measure 123 - *Adding value to agricultural and forestry products* - and **Measure 311** - *Diversification into non-agricultural activities* – also aim to contribute to renewable energy issues.

Main implemented RDP measures related to the development of RE sources

Axis/Measure	Description	Type of operation	Potential effects	Frequency
Axis 1				
121	Modernisation of agricultural holdings	Improving energy efficiency	Reduction of CO_2 emissions through energy savings	Flanders Wallonia
		Conversion of biomass to renewable energy production	Replacement of fossil fuel	
123	Adding value to agricultural and forestry products	Improving energy efficiency	Reduction of CO_2 emissions through energy savings	Flanders
		Conversion of biomass to renewable energy production	Replacement of fossils fuel	
		Implementing facilities to produce renewable energy from biomass and other renewable energy sources	Replacement of fossil fuels	
Axis 3				

312	Support for business creation and development	Investment support Financial Engineering		Wallonia
311 A	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Implementing facilities to produce renewable energy from biomass and other renewable energy sources	Replacement of fossils fuel	Flanders