The investment

For the 2007-13 period, Belgium will benefit from European regional aid funds in the amount of €2,258 billion, with €638 million going towards the Convergence objective, €1,425 billion towards the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective and €194 million towards the European Territorial Cooperation objective.

Regions to receive investment

The Walloon province of Hainaut will benefit from the Convergence objective. The remainder of Belgium is covered by the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective.

In comparison to the 2000-06 period, Hainaut province will – due to statistical results – continue to benefit from the Phasing-out objective (as it is a region that would have been eligible for the Convergence objective if the threshold had remained at 75% of the average GDP of the EU-15 instead of the EU-25). The entire country (excluding Hainaut) will benefit from the Competitiveness and Employment objective. Previously, only certain provinces received Objective 2 subsidies (Meuse-Vesdres, Antwerp, part of the Namur province, the entire province of Luxembourg, West Flanders, East Flanders, etc.).

Strategic objectives

Taking into consideration Belgium’s institutional structure, each region has developed a strategy adapted to its own socio-economic characteristics.

ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) financing will benefit:

- **Brussels-Capital Region** – to strengthen territorial cohesion and maintain territorial competitiveness.
- **Flemish Region** – to promote the knowledge economy and innovation, stimulate entrepreneurship, use regional features that attract economic interest, and promote urban development.
- **Walloon Region** – to boost business and job creation, develop human capital, knowledge, know-how and research, and ensure balanced and sustainable territorial development.

In the ESF (European Social Fund) financed area, the strategic objectives are as follows:

- Strengthening the adaptation capabilities of workers and businesses.
- Creating jobs for young and old people, and for immigrants with low-level qualifications.
- Preventing unemployment.
- Developing diversity and fighting discrimination in access to the labour market.
- Strengthening the social integration of targeted groups and the disadvantaged.
- Investing in human capital.
- Implementing measures aimed at encouraging equal opportunity in access to training and the labour market.
• Promoting and integrating innovative measures.

The expected impact of the new Cohesion Policy

The country requires a strategy for encouraging investment in innovation and the marketing of high-tech products and services, and for providing optimal incentives for research and development in line with the Lisbon objective, whereby 3% of GDP is to be dedicated to R&D by 2010.

The authorities have adopted the Lisbon objectives: the employment rate should approach 70% for the total population, 60% for women and 50% for 55-64 year-old workers.

The programme should help establish tighter cooperation links between public and private research units, an attractive work environment for the highly qualified, financing channels suitable for venture capital, an efficient and coherent regulatory framework, reduced administrative procedures and a non-distorting tax system conducive to business activity.

An investment for growth and jobs

In line with Community goals, expenditure will be concentrated on the Lisbon Strategy and cohesion objectives. 60% of Convergence subsidies and 75% of Regional Competitiveness and Employment subsidies will go towards Lisbon priorities.

Operational programmes

Cohesion policy in Belgium will be implemented via 10 operational programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Programmes for the Convergence objective:
• Operational programme ‘Convergence’ Hainaut – ESF.
• Operational programme ‘Convergence’ Hainaut – ERDF.

Programmes for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective:
• ESF 2007-13, Belgium’s German-speaking community.
• ESF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ – Troïka Wallonia (excluding Hainaut) Brussels (COCOF).
• ESF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of the Federal State.
• ESF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of the Brussels-Capital Region: ‘Cohesion and Territorial Competitiveness’.
• ESF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of Flanders.
• ERDF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of the Brussels-Capital Region: ‘Cohesion and Territorial Competitiveness’.
• ERDF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of Flanders.
• ERDF operational programme ‘Regional Competitiveness and Employment’ of Wallonia (excluding Hainaut).

NSRF Financial Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Programme</th>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Convergence Objective</strong></td>
<td>Community Contribution</td>
<td>638 326 154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP ERDF Hainaut</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
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<tr>
<td>OP ESF Hainaut</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>189 096 619</td>
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<td><strong>Competitiveness Objective</strong></td>
<td>Community Contribution</td>
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<td>OP ERDF Brussels-Capital</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
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<td>OP ESF Federal State</td>
<td>ESF</td>
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<td>ERDF</td>
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<td>OP ESF Flanders Region</td>
<td>ESF</td>
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<td>OP ESF German-speaking community</td>
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<td>OP ERDF Wallonia</td>
<td>ERDF</td>
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<td>OP ESF Troïka Wallonia-Brussels</td>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>328 833 980</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Breakdown by theme as proposed by Belgium in its draft operational programmes

The National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) does not include programmes relating to the European Territorial Cooperation objective.
Contact points in Belgium

Belgian authorities with overall responsibility for Cohesion policy 2007-13:

Ministry of Wallonia – Directorate-General for economy and employment
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The NSRF text is available at: