

Belgium's SDG Progress (VNR 2023)



SDG 1	NO POVERTY End poverty in all its forms everywhere
1. Fourth Federal Plan for Tackling Poverty and Inequality (2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on early detection of poverty, access to sustainable work, empowerment and inclusion, and a campaign on the European social agenda. • Specific measures to strengthen access to social rights, tackle non-take-up, and foster the automation of rights.
2. Flemish Action Plan for Tackling Poverty 2020-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses poverty factors such as access to the labor market, women's employment, education, e-inclusive digitalization, inclusive entrepreneurship, social protection, public services, energy, water, and mobility.
3. Walloon Plan to End Poverty (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on three strands: social and labor inclusion, access to well-being, and access to housing, especially focusing on homelessness.
4. Child Guarantee and European Child Guarantee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium submitted its national action plan relating to the EU Child Guarantee in 2022. • Flanders and the French Community have joined the European Child Guarantee, providing guarantees such as free access to education, care, housing, health care, and at least one meal per school day for children up to age 18 in vulnerable situations.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential beneficiaries are not always aware of their rights, leading to the challenge of non-take-up. • Regional differences exist, with the Brussels-Capital Region facing the most precarious situation, followed by the Walloon Region, and the situation being least precarious in Flanders. • A significant percentage (18.7%) of the population, approximately 2,144,000 Belgians, are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROE). • 13.2% of Belgians are at risk of monetary poverty (AROP), and 11.5% live in a household with low work intensity (LWI). • 5.8% of the population faced severe material and social deprivation (SMSD) in 2022.
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SDG 2	ZERO HUNGER End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
1. Made in Ostbelgien Project (German-speaking Community)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on regional short-chain products to promote sustainable development, strengthen the economy, secure jobs, enhance regional identity, and preserve the cultural landscape.
2. Food Wallonia (Wallonia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed with a participatory approach, it aims to create an alliance between employment and the environment in the area of food. • Works around six objectives, including ensuring access to sustainable food, contributing to citizens' good health, and generating socio-economic wealth.
3. Flanders' FOOD Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings start-ups with protein innovations in contact with established players in the food industry to foster exchange and collaboration.
4. National Action Plan for Pesticide Reduction 2023-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to reduce the impact of pesticide use on human health and the environment. • Supports the EU ambition to use 50% less pesticides by 2030.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a transition of the entire food system, requiring a comprehensive approach in all links of the chain, taking socio-economic aspects into account. • Climate change poses challenges to the agriculture and food sectors, complicating the cultivation of various crops. However, the sectors also play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. • The viability of farms and access to sustainable food for all need to be considered in the transition to a more sustainable and resilient food system.
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SDG 3	GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
1. National Plan to Counter Endocrine Disruptors (NAPED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched in Belgium, the plan focuses on prevention, regulation, and scientific research with a One World One Health approach.
2. Prevention and Health Promotion Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wallonia's Prevention and Health Promotion Plan for 2030 focuses on ending poverty and provides financial support through the 'Impulseo' scheme for family doctors in areas with shortages. • Brussels Region's Health Promotion Plan 2023-2027 aims to improve well-being and address social inequalities in health.
3. Flemish Action Plan for Suicide Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on specific needs and target groups, including campaigns to destigmatize mental health problems.

4. Research Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MEMO+ project monitors exotic tiger mosquitoes in Belgium to address environmental and health concerns. Flemish Impulse Programme Care promotes innovation in personalized and digital medicine and care technology.
5. Mental Health Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Care in the City' partnership in Brussels brings together health, social, and spatial planning sectors to improve the customer experience. Flanders invests in a partner organization for promoting mental health and targets the well-being of children and young people through various policies.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The search for sufficient workers and strong profiles in the healthcare sector remains a challenge. Concerns about new cases and deaths from cancer, which are higher than the EU average. Challenges in preventing and detecting chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, or cerebrovascular diseases early. The number of premature deaths from chronic conditions is evolving unfavorably, and achieving the SDG 3 target by 2030 is at risk. Increasing rates driven by poor nutrition and low physical activity require intervention. Efforts needed to reduce avoidable hospitalizations, particularly for asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
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SDG 4	QUALITY EDUCATION Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
1. Sustainable Development in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiatives in the French Community include compulsory environmental education, civic education, and media literacy in the curriculum. Annual subsidies support projects promoting sustainable development in higher education. Wallonia supports projects, such as the Sustainable School label, incorporating the 17 SDGs in schools. The German-speaking Community emphasizes cross-curricular competencies in civic education and media literacy.
2. Equal Opportunities and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flanders focuses on equal educational opportunities, providing additional resources for socio-economically disadvantaged students. Language inclusion (NT2) is guaranteed for refugee students, and efforts are made to ensure language proficiency for newcomers.
3. Digitalization in Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The German-speaking Community uses the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility to digitize its education system sustainably. Flanders implements Digisprong, ensuring a secure ICT infrastructure, competent teachers, and digital learning tools for all schools.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite above-average indicators, studies show a decline in the quality of education in Belgium. • School dropout is a significant problem, and comprehensive approaches are implemented to ensure that no one is left behind.
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SDG 5	GENDER EQUALITY Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girl
1. LGBTQIA+ Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium ranks second on the Rainbow Europe Index 2023 by ILGA, showcasing its commitment to LGBTQIA+ rights.
2. Investment in Research and Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The federal government allocates an additional budget for research into gender equality, supporting the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men (IGVM).
3. Gender Mainstreaming:	<p>Various regions in Belgium adopt plans for gender mainstreaming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Plan on Gender Mainstreaming (2020-2024). • Wallonia's Gender Plan (2020-2024) integrates gender into public policies. • The German-speaking Community includes gender equality as an assessment criterion in its ESF+ Programme (2021-2027). • The Brussels-Capital Region incorporates gender budgeting into its budget cycle and adopts plans for gender mainstreaming and gender equality.
4. Violence Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium adopts a National Action Plan to Combat Gender-based Violence (2021-2025) with seven strategic pillars and 201 key measures. • The 2021 Act Against Violence federal campaign sees increased calls to helplines. • Care Centres after Sexual Violence are established in various cities, promoting a multidisciplinary partnership.
5. International Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is provided to multilateral organizations such as UN Women, supporting initiatives like the African Girls Can Code Initiative. • The federal development cooperation seeks ways to directly fund women's organizations on the ground.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gender pay gap is a concern, with women earning 5.3% less per hour than men on average (2020). • There is an emerging conservatism regarding gender equality and the rights of girls and women, as well as progressive policies on sexual and reproductive health and rights in some UN member states. • The fight against femicide is highlighted as a priority, and Belgium acknowledges the need for efficient tools and official statistics to assess the problem and protect victims.
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SDG 6	CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
1. Wallonia's Drought Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integral drought strategy focuses on retaining and conserving water in urban and rural areas, managing water demand, and improving water distribution. • Ongoing management plans address adaptation to the effects of drought.
2. Flemish Blue Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated program addressing water scarcity and drought. • Involves regulations and on-the-ground actions, emphasizing efficient water use, alternative water sources, wetland restoration, and green infrastructure. • European Recovery and Resilience Facility provides partial funding.
3. Circular Water Use in Flanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flanders commits to circular water use through cross-cutting cooperation, aligning with circular economy ambitions. • Re-watering streams and rivers and expanding green-blue networks are undertaken to enhance biodiversity and reduce flooding risk.
4. LEADER Project in German-speaking Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A project focused on raising awareness and finding alternatives related to water issues in municipalities.
5. International Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flanders engages in international policy dialogues on water management, contributing to projects like the OECD's Economics and Governance of Water Security in Africa. • Fluid Crew project promotes Flemish water solutions globally and addresses drought challenges.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality remains a challenge, linked to climate change effects. Climate change contributes to longer periods of drought, higher temperatures, and increased demand, requiring a comprehensive long-term strategy. • Structural changes to streambeds, often straightened and reinforced, result in increased water volume and flow speed, leading to potential flooding. These modifications reduce the ecological value and resilience of watercourses.
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SDG 7	AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
1. Climate Employment Renovation Alliance (ACER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walloon recovery plan aiming to achieve a zero-carbon building stock by 2050 through accelerated building insulation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on making environmental improvements a source of economic opportunity and employment.
2. French Community's Ecological Transition Plan (PTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on improving the energy performance of public buildings and infrastructure. • Implements a 10-year strategic renovation plan for school infrastructure.
3. Brussels-Capital Region's Air-Climate-Energy Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets a 47% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. • Aims to end Brussels' dependence on fossil fuels and transition to a greener and more resilient city.
4. Flemish Region's Thematic Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat Plan 2025, Solar Plan 2025, Wind Plan 2025, and Flexibility Plan 2025 aim to achieve renewable energy goals. • Measures include greening of heating, solar energy initiatives, wind energy objectives, and flexibility optimization.
5. Brussels-Capital Region's 'Renolution' Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets mandatory renovation of non-energy-efficient housing by 2033. • Aims for an average energy performance level of C+ for residential buildings by 2050.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The war in Ukraine has introduced new challenges, emphasizing the need to phase out fossil fuel dependence, ensure security of supply, and push for sustainable and affordable energy. • Challenges include decarbonizing the energy supply, electrification, demand and supply flexibility, affordability, an equitable and inclusive transition, expanding renewable energy, transitioning to a hydrogen economy, and improving energy efficiency. • In 2020, fossil fuels accounted for 71% of energy supply, with challenges in reducing emissions, especially in non-ETS sectors like buildings and transport. • Decommissioning of nuclear reactors may temporarily increase dependence on natural gas and carbon intensity of electricity generation.
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SDG 8	<p style="text-align: center;">DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p>
1. Flemish Lifelong Learning and Reactivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "All hands-on deck" plan focuses on lifelong learning, digitalization, and sustainable employment. • The employment agreement addresses activation policy, training, workable work, and interregional mobility.
2. Lifelong Learning Partnership in Flanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to turn Flanders into a learning society. • Lifelong Learning Action Plan promotes better access to employment opportunities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed individuals engage in community service to develop skills and build work rhythm.
3. Youth Reactivation Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wallonia's 'Coup de Boost' project reactivates and supports young people aged 18 to 25, showing positive results. Brussels-Capital Region implements actions under the Youth Guarantee to boost confidence in abilities.
4. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal government funds EITI to make the mining sector more sustainable and ensure community contributions from mining revenues.
5. Decent Work Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common Strategic Framework (CSF) Decent Work (2021) focuses on social protection and decent work in Central Africa. Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries (BIO) develops a new Decent Work Strategy.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falling unemployment and a rise in employment pose challenges like a mismatch in skills, an ageing population, and changes due to technology and digitalization. Constant upskilling and retraining are crucial for flexibility in responding to changes in the labor market. Policy efforts are needed for a culture of continuous learning. New challenges include absorbing and assisting lower-skilled war refugees and addressing the impact on companies shutting down production.
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SDG 9	INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation
1. Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) in Wallonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S3 provides a strategic framework for research, innovation, and industrial policy, allowing regions to develop competitive advantages based on strengths.
2. Federal Government's Just-on-web Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims to provide a faster, more modern, and digital justice system. Introduces a unique portal for citizens and businesses, similar to Tax-on-web.
3. Fiber Optic Network in German-speaking Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project to build a fiber optic network and sustainable digital infrastructure funded by the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility. Aims to make the region more attractive and provide a foundation for digitization.

4. Digilab for Digital Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government creates Digilab to manage projects for digital inclusion of vulnerable populations. • Investments of €30 million from the incubation fund to finance projects addressing digital inequalities.
5. Enabel's Role in Digitalization for Development (D4D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabel plays a pioneering role through its D4D-Hub, fostering exchange and cooperation for a human-centric digital transformation. • Wehubit project focuses on social innovation through digital solutions.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for additional measures, including new business models and a shift towards positive impacts rather than just reducing negative ones.
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SDG 10	REDUCED INEQUALITIES Reduce inequality within and among countries
1. Discrimination on the Labor Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Plan for Recovery and Resilience monitors diversity and discrimination in the labor market. • Draft law involves sectors in monitoring and establishes a Diversity Service to address discrimination.
2. Equal Opportunities Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government adopts action plans for Anti-Racism, LGBTQI+ rights, rights for persons with disabilities, and for the Roma community. • Focus on intersectional discrimination with revised anti-discrimination laws.
3. Flanders' Approach - Vizier 2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translates SDG 10 into proportional participation, reducing social inequalities, and ensuring proficiency in Dutch. • Horizontal Integration and Equal Opportunities Policy Plan focuses on societal participation, reducing segregation, and enhancing understanding.
4. Accessible Social Security Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal government's plan includes reforms for artists' status, improvements for sex workers, and social protection for platform economy workers. • Focuses on evaluating and improving access to transparent and effective social security.
5. Wallonia's Measures Against Discrimination in Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces mystery checks, a practical guide for the public, and discrimination law training for real estate agents. • Aims to combat discrimination in access to housing.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in the context of rising energy and food prices. • Emphasis on social cohesion for policies toward sustainable development with an equitable transition in mind.
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SDG 11	SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
1. Quartiersapaises.brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to create peaceful neighborhoods, enhance quality of life, prioritize residential functions, and improve air quality. • Focus on universal accessibility, traffic safety, and health.
2. Emergency Housing Plan - Brussels-Capital Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to increase social housing supply, improve public action on housing, support tenants, guarantee the right to housing, and access to property. • Be Sustainable framework boosts sustainability ambitions in urban projects.
3. Walloon Government's FAST 2030 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims for the transformation of mobility in Wallonia by 2030 through Modal Shift. • Focuses on flow, accessibility, health, and safety for individuals and goods.
4. Flemish Mobility Vision 2040	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims for safe and zero-emission transport, contributing to sustainable and urban mobility. • Focus on low-carbon multimodality and cycling region.
5. Beliris Projects - Brussels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to infrastructure projects improving mobility, including pedestrian avenues, new Metro North line, vélo-plus network, and Promenade Verte.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a small, densely populated country like Belgium, spatial planning is an economic, social, and environmental challenge. The challenge is to make better use of land-take and address the issue of access to quality housing. • Climate change and concentrated activities in dense spaces present cities with stressors like heat stress, air pollution, and noise. The challenge is to counteract adverse health effects within existing city boundaries. • Mobility is a crucial sector to overcome climate challenges and achieve sustainability. The emphasis is on achieving a modal shift, reducing kilometers traveled within urban transport sustainably.
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SDG 12	RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
1. Asbestos Removal and Circular Construction in Flanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan for Asbestos Removal and €40 million from Flemish Resilience for asbestos removal. Circular Construction 2022-2030 aims to reduce the carbon footprint in collaboration with the construction sector.
2. Brussels Good Food 2 Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aims for a structurally more sustainable food system by 2030. Focus on transforming the entire food system from production to consumption.
3. Flemish Circular Economy Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circular Construction 2022-2030 for circular construction. Flemish Resilience allocates €30 million for innovative recycling processes and €25 million for circular building and manufacturing.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in transitioning to frugal models of production and consumption that consume fewer natural resources. Inherent contradiction in the climate transition, where the increasing demand for resources, e.g., for making transport electric, may cause negative environmental and social impacts.
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SDG 13	CLIMATE ACTION Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
1. Flanders' Focus on CCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning to focus on Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS). Developing a regulatory framework for CO₂ transport and expanding cooperation with pioneering countries.
2. Belgium's Commitment to International Climate Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum contribution of €531.5 million for 2021-2024, focusing on strengthening climate policy and adaptation in partner countries. Priority themes: climate action in service of biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable urban development.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for large-scale expansion of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. Aging building stock awaits a renovation wave, requiring specific incentives. Energy-intensive industry faces a challenge in replacing fossil fuels with renewable electricity and gases.
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SDG 14	LIFE BELOW WATER Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
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1. International Fund and Clyde Bank Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium involved in an international fund to support Small Island Developing States. • Active participation in the Clyde Bank Declaration, focusing on projects like Green Shipping Corridors.
2. Stricter Sulphur Content Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring compliance with stricter sulphur content regulations through administrative fines, SOx measurements, and sniffer aircraft. • Scrubber installations as an alternative for high-sulphur fuel, with a study on the impact of scrubber wash water on water acidification.
3. Modernization of Shipping and Digitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Belgian Shipping Code (2021) reflects modernization, including a regulatory framework for unmanned vessels. • Embracing digitization for merchant vessel certificates and seafarers' certificates of competency and medical certificates.
4. Sustainable Flemish Fisheries Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third Social Covenant (2021-2025) aims for a sustainable Flemish fisheries sector, aligning with the European Green Deal. • GEOFISH online tool provides spatial visualization of fisheries-related data and marine spatial planning.
5. Blue Leaders Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium leads the Blue Leaders Initiative to address climate crisis, overfishing, pollution, and other threats to the ocean. • Commitment to protect at least 30% of the global ocean and support the High Seas Treaty.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in the fishing industry due to economic uncertainty and the risk of occupational accidents. Shift of maritime jobs to other sub-areas within the sector affecting workforce flow. • Negative impact of climate change and pollution in the North Sea on fish stocks and the fishing industry. • Complex market access and difficulties in obtaining fair prices pose challenges for the fishing industry.
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SDG 15	<p style="text-align: center;">LIFE ON LAND</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p>
1. National Biodiversity Strategy (NBS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium's NBS, drafted in 2006 and revised, aligns with Aichi Targets and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted at CBD COP15. • Focus on translating global biodiversity agreements into national plans and updating strategies by COP16 (2024).
2. Belgian Biodiversity Alliance (BBA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BBA, an inclusive public-private partnership, unites private and public actors for biodiversity protection.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BiodiversiTree online tool aids companies in protecting biodiversity through land, infrastructure, procurement, and processes.
3. Forest Expansion Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flanders aims to bring 20,000 hectares of additional nature under management and 10,000 hectares of new forest by 2030. • The Forest Alliance raises awareness and partners with governments, nature organizations, businesses, and individuals for forest expansion.
4. Action Plans Against Invasive Alien Species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan addresses unintentional introduction and spread of 53 invasive alien species. • Flanders employs a coordinated approach involving private owners, land users, and land management organizations. • Moreover, Flanders emphasizes soil restoration and care through agencies like the Public Waste Agency, OVAM.
5. Global Forest Pledge and Congo Basin Forest Pledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium endorses Global Forest Pledge and Congo Basin Forest Pledge, contributing to initiatives like the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI). • Active participation in global efforts through funding to multilateral funds and partnerships with organizations like UNEP.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to Belgium's specificity with dense population density, political courage is needed for structural steps to combat biodiversity erosion.
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SDG 16	<p align="center">PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p> <p align="center">Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</p>
1. STAR Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belgium responds to evolving security challenges with the STAR plan, providing long-term capabilities for the Ministry of Defense. • Revision of the military program law complements the STAR plan to address current challenges.
2. Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) Knowledge Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DNSH knowledge center aids in complying with the European principle of not causing significant harm to environmental objectives. • Federal government plans to participate in a European project integrating the 'do no harm' principle into public funding programs.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sharp decline in Belgians' trust in government between 2007 and 2020 poses a challenge for democracy and social cohesion. Maximizing citizens' trust in institutions is crucial for effective governance. • Ongoing task to shape effective and transparent institutions with participatory and representative decision-making. • Ensuring digitalization is inclusive and accessible is crucial to keep pace with a rapidly developing digital society.
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SDG 17	PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development
1. BELINCOSOC Service Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses the lack of technical expertise in partner countries and development agencies. • Supports universal social protection, contributing to the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection 2030.
2. SOCIEUX+ European Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar approach to BELINCOSOC for removing technical expertise barriers in partner countries.
3. Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) Chapters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for effective implementation of TSD commitments in EU trade agreements. • Emphasis on right to work, social rights, gender, and environment in trade relations.

Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising external debt in low- and middle-income countries poses a threat to achieving the SDGs. Debt crisis potential due to increasing interest rates and slowing growth. • Challenges in achieving policy coherence at the multilateral level, especially in areas like sexual and reproductive health and rights. • Lack of coherence in monitoring the implementation of SDGs across different policy levels.
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