



Belgium

1 Which bioeconomy-related policy strategies exist?

Belgium as a whole has not yet developed a national bioeconomy strategy. Instead, bioeconomy policies in Belgium vary by region.

Although bioeconomy is treated within the wider context of green economy in the Walloon region, no bioeconomy-related strategies have been established yet.

The situation is different in Flanders, where the Flemish government published its first memo of a bioeconomy strategy, **“Bioeconomy in Flanders”**,

in 2014. In this memo, the Flemish government describes its vision and strategy for a sustainable transition to bioeconomy in Flanders.

The Flemish government has additionally adopted several initiatives for bioeconomy development. This includes, the “New Industry Policy” of 2011, embedding the program “New Factory of the Future” in the Flanders Innovation Hub for Sustainable Chemistry. Bioeconomy was also addressed in the “Flemish Materials Program” of 2012 as part of Flanders’ sustainable materials management.

2 Is the term “bioeconomy” or “biobased economy” used in the strategy documents?

Yes No

X

Bioeconomy encompasses “all activities associated with the production of biomass and the various ways in which this biomass and its residual streams are subsequently used”¹⁶. In this respect, bioeconomy includes both the traditional sectors and also the more technology-oriented areas in ad-

dition to the end-user/consumer and the logistics sector. The Flemish definition of “biobased economy” refers more to the conversion and processing of biomass than to biomass production.

¹⁶ Flanders. Department of Environment, Nature and Energy, 2014, p. 9.

3 Who is the author of the strategies?

The “Bioeconomy in Flanders” memo was developed by the Interdepartmental Working Group for the Bioeconomy (IWG) which was set up to develop a Flemish strategy for bioeconomy. The IWG is composed of various ministries and government agencies, such as the Flemish Institute for Tech-

nological Research (VITO) and the Public Waste Agency of Flanders (OVAM). The memo of 2014 represents the initial outcome of the IWG’s work which is based on various consultations with stakeholders from business, civil society and research institutions.

4 What are the key goals of the strategies?

The Flemish government’s aim with the memo of 2014 is to contribute to developing a long-term strategy for bioeconomy in Flanders by 2030. The Flemish bioeconomy is seen as a contribution to green growth, job creation and further development

of a circular economy. In this respect, Flanders seeks to become one of the most competitive bioeconomy regions in Europe by 2030. It should be characterized by a top innovation and research landscape.

5 What are the priority areas of the strategies?

The memo focuses mainly on promoting bioeconomy-related innovations in Flanders. In order to create an enabling framework, the IWG identified five priority areas. Firstly, the memo seeks to foster policy coherence, e.g. by removing regulatory barriers and promoting cooperation and coordination in all relevant policy areas. Secondly, the strategy paper highlights capacity building, research and innovation as cornerstones for further bioeconomy development. In this context, it focuses on the training of experts, on valorization and demonstration projects, and on business model innovation. Furthermore, scientific research on op-

timum resource allocation for food, materials and energy should be promoted to avoid conflicting goals in the future. Thirdly, the efficient and sustainable use of biomass should be encouraged, e.g. by developing sustainability criteria, implementing regular assessments of biomass demand and supply for the bioeconomy, and focusing on locally produced biomass. Fourthly, the document emphasizes market development and awareness creation to further strengthen the region’s competitiveness. Lastly, international and interregional cooperation should be fostered to encourage knowledge and technology transfer.

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