

DRAFT ANNUAL TOURISM REPORTING TEMPLATE

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that “each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States”.

With the publication of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”, the Commission announced that “in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism”.

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism” by Member States;
- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

FLANDERS

At the administrative level the two main actors are the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs ("Departement internationaal Vlaanderen"; policy division) and Toerisme Vlaanderen, whose main responsibilities can be described as follows:

A. Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs (Policy Division – Tourism Unit)

1. Policy support, preparation, monitoring and evaluation

keeping track of trends, developing new regulations, issuing policy opinions to the Minister and the Government; monitoring the execution of the management agreement between the Flemish government and Toerisme Vlaanderen; overseeing the implementation of the policy and making an assessment of the approach; follow-up of international organisations e.g. EU, UNWTO, OECD; steering the research institution Steunpunt Toerisme en Recreatie

2. Subsidy lines

subsidies for events with touristic importance and/or an international character; subsidies within the framework of the 'Art Cities Action Plan'

B. Toerisme Vlaanderen

1. Policy execution

2. Marketing and promotion of Flanders as a destination

3. Providing support to and coordination of the tourist industry in Flanders

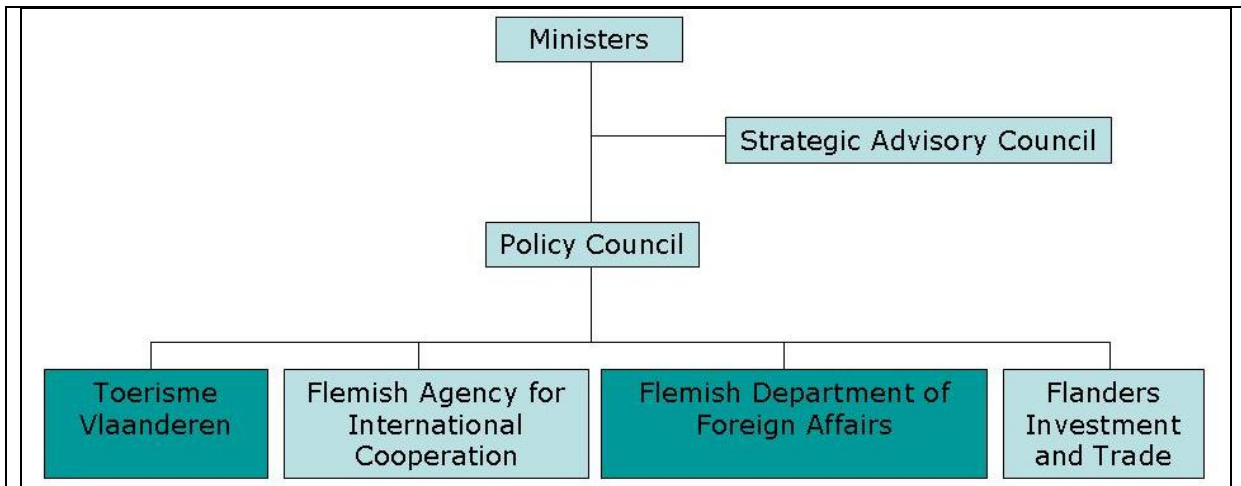
coordinating and supporting provinces and local authorities (in developing strategic plans/ product development/ touristic welcoming services,...); gathering and dissemination of information and knowledge; research; communication; cooperation; product development; encouraging quality control in the sector; funding for tourist-related investments/ touristic-recreational projects/ tourism employment/ coastal area; training for the tourist industry; promoting sustainable tourism; licences for and inspections of tourist infrastructure; consultation with other policy areas e.g. mobility, environmental planning, culture,...

4. Increasing holiday participation

(Note: Toerisme Vlaanderen has information centres in The Hague, Cologne, Paris, London, Copenhagen, Milan, Vienna, Prague, Barcelona, New York, Beijing and Tokyo.)

The Authorities of Flanders contain 13 policy areas in total. Tourism is part of the **Flemish Foreign Affairs Policy Area**, which can be presented as follows:

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008



GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Ministry of German speaking Community, responsible for regulation and control of all means related to Tourism. Relationship to other bodies thru agreements. Not competent for access to profession.

WALLONIA

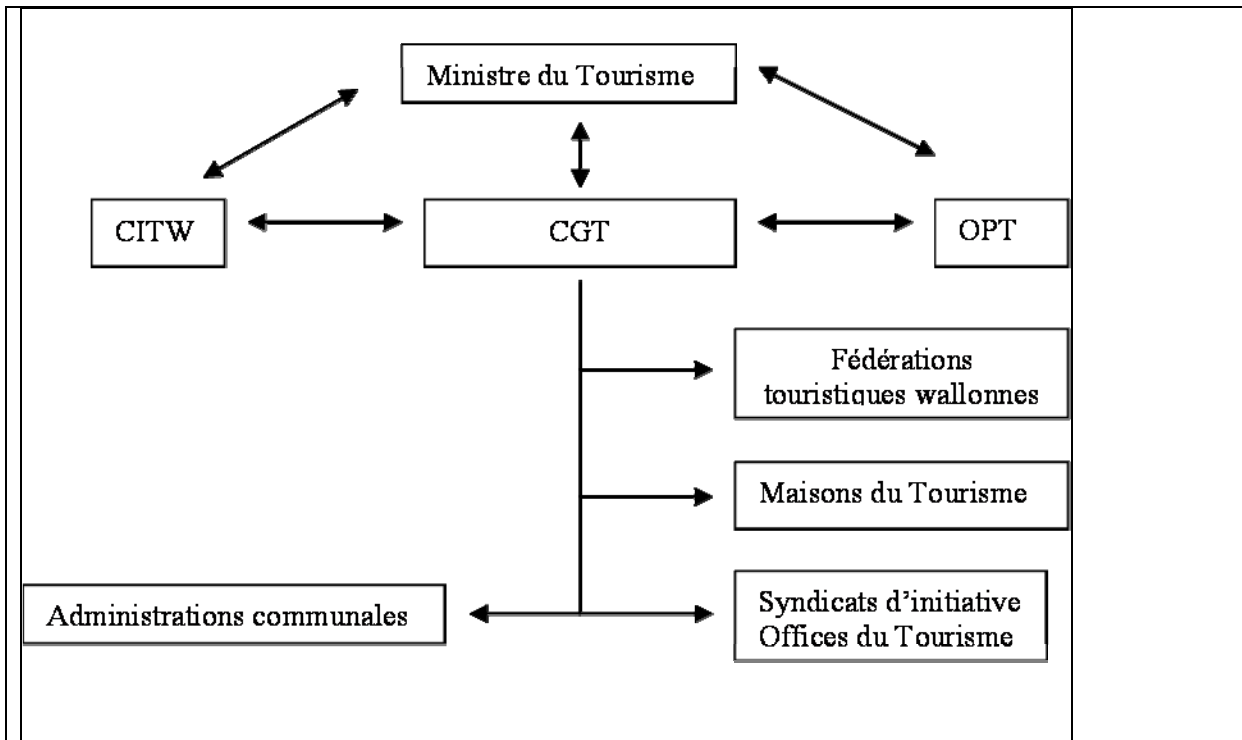
The 3 actors are the Ministry for Tourism, the “Commissariat général au Tourisme” and the “Office de promotion du Tourisme”.

A. The Ministry for Tourism is in charge of the conception of the touristic policy.

B. The “Commissariat général au Tourisme » was reshaped in 2008. It used to be part of the Walloon administration; it is now an association of public interest. It falls under the responsibility of the Minister for Tourism. Its missions are executing touristic policy, managing touristic equipment which belongs to the Walloon Region and organising and promoting tourism on the Walloon territory. To do so, the “Commissariat” is in charge of classification and subsidy lines, promotion actions in Wallonia, conception and content of the image, official brochures, touristic data, products conception, fair participation.

C. « Office de Promotion du Tourisme »

It is the francophone Belgian Tourist Board whose main mission is to promote Wallonia on foreign markets, Flanders included. Thematic promotion clubs (PPPs) were put into place in 2008.



BRUSSELS

Tourism services of the French Community Commission of The Brussels Capital Region is responsible for implementing tourist policy decided by the authority, applying rules and regulations in force or the tourist sector, investing in equipment by subsidies, subsidizing promotion relating to the image of Brussels as well as organisation of thematic visits and promotion of regional-scale tourist activities, supporting promotion of Brussels in the rest of the world along the line of the "Office de Promotion du Tourisme" policies, making studies and survey about tourist demand.

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (maximum 800 characters)

FLANDERS

1. Toerisme Vlaanderen

(general information: see question 2.1.)

1.1. Infopunt Toegankelijk Reizen

stimulates efforts in the tourism sector to give people with a (fysical) disability a pleasant holiday; gives information on the accessibility of accommodation, transport, attractions and musea at the destination
service of Toerisme Vlaanderen

1.2. Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie

develops a travel offer for people with a limited income
service of Toerisme Vlaanderen

2. Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs (see question 2.1.)

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

3. Strategic Advisory Council Flemish Foreign Affairs

The Strategic Advisory Council Flemish Foreign Affairs advises the Flemish government in its international policy, including tourism. It formulates advises on its own initiative or on request about draft cooperation agreements, regulation proposals, policy intentions, ...The Council comprises representatives from the community-based organisations and independent experts.

4. Steunpunt Toerisme en Recreatie

Conducts scientific research with a strong policy supporting value financed by the Flemish Government (Flemish Departement of Foreign Affairs and Flemish Department of Economy, Science and Innovation) for the period 2007-2011

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Tourism service for East Belgium: advertising and promotion of Tourism in East Belgium. A near cooperation with business promotion and economic development is prepared. Common work with other external bodies in view of a better use of EU funds such as EFRE and Interreg. Prospection of new markets, near or far. Facilitating cooperation with other bodies by making up treaties in PPP

WALLONIA

The "Commissariat général au Tourisme" employs 87 persons and is structured into 5 directions: Tourist Bureaus (in Wallonia), Attractions and equipment, Accommodation, Products and Strategy. An essential mission consists of putting together 3 main tools (see 3.1.) which are the Strategic Plan of Touristic Offer ("Office de Promotion du Tourisme"), the Valorisation and Structuring Plan of the Touristic Offer and the Quality Plan.

BRUSSELS

Partners are :

- Brussels International – Tourism & Congresses (BI-TC) which associates Brussels tourist actors, works concretely on city image, deals with welcome service, supports private and public operators for business tourism
- "Office de Promotion du Tourisme" which is in charge of the promotion of the city on the foreign markets
- "Horeca" for the hotels, restaurants and pubs sector
- "Loger jeune" for youth accomodation

2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (maximum 800 characters)

FLANDERS

The Economic Inspection is responsible for the supervision and inspection of consumer protection matters.

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

WALLONIA

1. « Office de Promotion du Tourisme » (see 2.1.)
2. Walloon Tourist Engineering Centre (CITW) is an economic interest group made of 5 supramunicipal bodies (Bep, Idelux, Spi+, Ideta and Igretec). Its mission is to implement operational schemes described in the Valorisation and Structuring Plan of the Touristic Offer.

BRUSSELS

see 2.2

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organogram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (maximum of 2.000 characters)

FLANDERS

1. Flemish Level

a) See under 2.1-2.3

b) Unizo

represents employers, the self-employed; SME's and liberal professions

Cooperation agreement 'Tourism and entrepreneurship' between Unizo and Toerisme Vlaanderen (lobbying, networking, advise, information gathering and dissemination,... for employers on Flemish, regional and local level)

c) Guidea Kenniscentrum voor Toerisme en Horeca vzw

conducts research; collects and disseminates knowledge to employees, employers, professional organisations; advises policy makers on tourism and horeca financed by the social partners of the Horeca-sector and Toerisme Vlaanderen

2. Provinces

a) Main responsibilities: giving information and promotion on the domestic market, data collection for Flemish cyclical research, ad hoc research on provincial level, exploitation of tourism products

b) Additional responsibility: promotion abroad, mostly in cooperation with Toerisme Vlaanderen

3. Municipalities and cities

a) Main responsibility: giving information to the public (welcoming service)

b) Some municipalities and cities have a 'Flanders information office' or 'Regional information office', which means that they also give information about other Flemish provinces and

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

municipalities

c) Some municipalities and cities (which can or cannot be situated in the same province) join forces in regional cooperation structures.

d) The municipalities and cities of the coastal area join forces within the framework of the 'Coast Action Plan'.

e) The art cities Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Leuven and Mechelen join forces within the framework of the 'Art Cities Action Plan'.

f) VVSG (Vlaamse Vereniging van Steden en Gemeenten)

represents the local authorities in Flanders

cooperation agreement between VVSG and Toerisme Vlaanderen on tourism and local authorities (information, advise, support in local tourism policy; lobbying; developing a vision on local tourism policy) for the period 2007-2010

WALLONIA

1. Walloon level : "Commissariat général au Tourisme", "Office de Promotion du Tourisme" and "CITW".

2. Provinces : 1 touristic federation per province

3. Supra municipal level : 42 Tourist Houses ("Maisons du Tourisme") in charge of welcoming service and local promotion

4. Municipalities :

a) Some municipalities have a Tourist Office which works together with the local Tourist House.

b) An "Art Cities Network" has been put into place in 2008 and is going to be effective in 2009.

c) Some municipalities are involved in an urban renovation programme named "Heart of Cities, Heart of Villages". Once complete, a territorial quality plan specific to tourism will be implemented.

2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend/budget on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend/budget, the level of national funding support for tourism marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SMEs and Destinations. (500 characters)

FLANDERS

- budget on tourism as a percentage of overall Flemish government budget : 0,4%

- funding support for tourism marketing: 14,04 million Euro

- the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism: 2,93 million euro

(figures 2008)

WALLONIA

The provisional budget for the year 2009 is 53,00 million Euro, the breakdown would be 87% for policy execution and the rest for functioning costs.

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

BRUSSELS

7,415 million Euro for 2009

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism? Yes No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In preparing the tourism strategy, explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 1.000 characters)

FLANDERS

Six strategic objectives have been formulated by the 2004-2009 Flemish Government:

1. Active marketing of Flemish tourist assets at home and abroad to maximize the tourist return and to contribute to a positive image of Flanders
2. Developing the tourist products in a qualitative, sustainable and market-oriented way, in order to increase both the number of tourists and their level of satisfaction
3. Creating favourable conditions for an efficient and productive development of the tourism sector
4. Making tourism in Flanders accessible to all segments of the population (inclusive tourism)
5. Raising awareness on the importance of tourism for Flanders to ensure an extended public support for tourism
6. Profiling Brussels in the development and the promotion of Flemish tourism products

WALLONIA

Wallonia has decided to use tourism as a means of socio-economical development on a long term. The whole process must follow the principles of sustainability along its 3 aspects : economical (competitiveness), environmental (natural resources) and social (cultural resources and quality employment). The "Commissariat général au Tourisme" has opted for 4 strategic axes of development : optimal positioning of the demand, enhancing the quality of this demand, consolidating the existing demand and applying the principles of sustainability (see above). The 3 tools to reach this aim are the 3 plans mentioned in point 2.2. Concretely 4 themes for promotion are put into place along the lines of the 3 axes and 3 tools by the "Office de Promotion du Tourisme" : "Relaxing", "Discovering", "Wild Nature Activities" and "MICE" (i.e Meeting, Incentive, Congresses and Events) by the Promotion Clubs (PPPs).

BRUSSELS

In 2006 Sitings for Tourism were organised by the authority integration de recommendations listed in the Strategic Plan 2006-2016. As a traversal competence the conclusions were drawn as follows, Brussels has 3 touristic pillars: Culture, Art of Living and Europe. The principles of sustainability were integrated such as economic viability, adapted schooling, PPPs, eco-labialising, integration of

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

multiculturalism.

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

The Flemish Minister responsible for tourism initiated these strategic goals and Toerisme Vlaanderen is responsible for its implementation (according to the management agreement with Toerisme Vlaanderen, the agency is responsible for policy execution).

WALLONIA

The Walloon Minister for tourism and his administration is responsible for the initiation of the policies. The "Commissariat général au Tourisme" is responsible for their implementation in Wallonia and the "Office de Promotion du Tourisme" is responsible for their promotion in the rest of the world.

BRUSSELS

The Brussels Minister for Tourism is responsible for the implementation of tourist policies;

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (maximum 500 characters)

FLANDERS

The strategy is monitored twice per year. Toerisme Vlaanderen reports to the minister and the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs about the activities it has undertaken during the past 6 months. Each year, the minister presents in the parliament his policy letter, where he reports on the policy execution to the parliament.

WALLONIA

Early 2009 the Walloon government is taking an official position on the touristic strategic lines. Once it is done, an evaluation model will be put into place and indicators will be defined.

3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (maximum 500 characters)

FLANDERS

The most important Flemish tourism legislation include:

1. The 'Tourism for all' decree, the aim of which is to make tourism accessible to all segments of the Flemish population
2. The 'Accommodation' decree, which classifies and defines the minimum licencing standards for Flemish tourist accommodation (at this moment, the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs is working on the new implementing orders)
3. The 'Travel agencies' decree, which regulates the activities of travel agents and travel organizers
4. 'Touristic Cooperation Structures' decree: currently the implementing orders are drawn up

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Decrees related to regulation of all kinds of Tourist accommodations such as hotels, campsites, holiday apartments and youth hostels.

Help in investments for above mentioned accommodations

WALLONIA

A Walloon code for tourism is being elaborated. It will gather rules and regulations which are linked to the missions of the "Commissariat général au Tourisme" i.e. accommodation, attractions, travel agencies, equipment, etc.

BRUSSELS

Touristic legislation relates to bed & breakfast, equipment, travel agencies and social tourism.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

1 Economic prosperity

- a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.
- b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

- a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
- b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

- a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
- b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- within the Action Plan for the Coastal Area, seasonality is one of the topics being discussed
- providing research and data
- the activities undertaken to offer people with a limited income travel experiences, reduce seasonality

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Making up niches offers for target groups such as “gourmet tours” related to specific and season related natural events such as spring awakening, hunting time, first snow, ...

Good use of local habitudes such as carnival

WALLONIA

Specific actions have been initiated in the frame of the Valorisation and Structuration Plans to attract visitors during low seasons such as the participation to the EDEN project or the creation of the “Art Cities Network” amongst other things.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- mobility study within the framework of the ‘Art Cities Action Plan’
- STREAM-project: 16 Flemish attractions received support in making the mobility that they generate, more sustainable + awareness campaign “the nicest way” to the Flemish public. Toerisme Vlaanderen is now starting to develop a guideline for tourist attractions that must enable them to set up their own sustainable mobility plan, based on the STREAM experiences
- active support of cycle and walking tourism with specific action plans
- ‘Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie’ (centre for travel participation) recently reached an agreement with the national railways NMBS to introduce a social train rate for the underprivileged

WALLONIA

The national Railway Company (SNCB) sells combined tickets which includes the attraction entrance and transportation fees, they are called B-excursions.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- subsidies to touristic associations for employment (e.g. projects with employers association Unizo and VVSG, association representing the Flemish local authorities)
- providing and supporting touristic education and training (e.g. language trainings, marketing, communication, subsidies for the ‘Master in Tourism’ at the K.U.Leuven university, training for travel and tour guides)

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

- providing research and data (e.g. 'Tourism in Figures'; tourism databases)

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

An initiative of Quality management of Tourist offer by the Government should, on a long term, assure a better quality of offer and jobs

WALLONIA

The competence centre for tourism within the FOREM (the Walloon employment institution) gives specific trainings in tourism e.g. accessibility and languages.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- subsidies to VVSG (association representing the Flemish local authorities) for employment
- Toerisme Vlaanderen will develop a manual in 2009 to determine the impact of tourism on the quality of life in outskirts
- in 2009 Toerisme Vlaanderen will launch a radio campaign to make the consumer more aware of the impact tourism can have on the environment, local economy, culture and nature
- study of 'Steunpunt Toerisme en Recreatie' on 'Tourism and the battle for the urban public space' starting in 2009

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

A new view on business such as enhancing quality of life for the inhabitant will have as a logic consequence, that the quality of life for Tourists will be better automatically. Added to this, Tourist specific offers are adapted to inhabitant needs.

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- 'De Groene Sleutel' label (ecolabel for camping sites, youth accommodation who are environmentally conscious about energy, water and waste) awarded to 9 camping sites and 11 youth accommodations in 2008; since the end of 2008 also open to hotels, guest rooms and holiday residences; possibly also open to attractions in 2009
- outdoor recreational establishments can receive a subsidy for water treatment installations and installations for collecting and sorting waste

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Research will be done in view of CO² free or CO² neutral Tourism. A no more used railway track is transformed into a cross border bicycle track with a length of about 150 km.

All restoration and hotel offers use local or regional products to make live local agriculture. More

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

over, the use of local products make a serious contribution in the enhancing of Tourist offers.

BRUSSELS

- Study was made to produce recommendations for the development of an eco-label for the hotels sector
- Subsidies for a promotion campaign of environmental awareness in the youth hostels sector

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- Implementation of the action plan 'Heritage and Culture tourism'
- Integration of Toerisme Vlaanderen and CultuurNet Vlaanderen databases
- Implementation of the action plans for the Flemish Art Cities; water tourism; walking tourism; cycling tourism; coastal area

WALLONIA

- Wallonia takes part of the Eden project aiming at enhancing touristic identity, putting the Region into a European prospective and applying the principles of sustainability
- Putting a "Bistrot de terroir" (Local quality pub) label into place

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 200 characters)

FLANDERS

- amendment of the 'Tourism for All' regulation in 2008
- further development of the 'Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie' services with extra fundings
- study Steunpunt Toerisme en Recreatie on Travel Participation by the underprivileged (analysis + policy recommendations; study to be completed in April 2009)

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

The authority invests in several kinds of natural attractions such as bicycle tracks and natural trails, making no additional cost for the user. Outdoor pastime in free nature will bring no additional cost for Tourists, while the offer is interesting. Investments by the Authority in pool or sport accommodations f. inst. help keep income prices on a low level.

WALLONIA

Subsidies are given to social tourism centres.

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (maximum 600 characters)

FLANDERS

For the Flemish community, a current key challenge is the development of youth tourism. An International Youth Action Plan sets the guidelines for product development, welcoming services, international marketing and (inter)national cooperation. In 2008, the Flemish community started to make an inventory of all existing youth accommodation. A specific task force is currently setting out an assessment framework for youth accommodations that do not belong in the area it was destined for according to the regional zoning plan. The framework will be finished and ratified by the Flemish government in 2009. Besides this, the Flemish community wishes to increase youth accommodation centres through public-private partnerships. The PPP-announcement was published in the European tender publication, but there were no subscriptions. The reasons for this are currently being investigated. After the evaluation, the project will be offered on the market again.

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

The need of narrow given statistics for a better react on external events appears more and more. There behind, a participation in a national program of Travelsat competitive index will help to identify new challenges on time

WALLONIA

- the success of developing the networks mentioned above
- touristic valorisation of Walloon forests
- the success of the PPPs (Promotion clubs)

BRUSSELS

- developing youth tourism (promotion and infrastructure)
- creating accommodation for trainees in the European institutions

4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 2.000 characters)

FLANDERS

Social tourism - 'Tourism for All' – is a very successful initiative in the Flemish community. 'Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie' (centre for travel participation) is a service of Toerisme Vlaanderen that develops a travel offer for people with a limited income. It contains day trips, trips of several days or longer, individual trips, organised trips and group arrangements. Steunpunt Vakantieparticipatie continuously looks for new tourism supplying partners. Recently, it reached an agreement with the national railways NMBS to introduce a social train rate for the underprivileged. End 2007, a satisfaction survey was

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

conducted by both the tourism partners and the tourists. The level of satisfaction of the tourism partners, was 93,2% as for attractions and 92,6% for accommodation. 92,6% of the travellers were satisfied or very satisfied. 91% of the social partners were satisfied about the new online reservation system.

WALLONIA

The development of a quality approach to tourism along the lines of the principles of sustainability. Tourism actors will sign a reference document.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the "Agenda": sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/ destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

FLANDERS

- subsidies to VVSG (association representing the Flemish local authorities) for employment
- the Flemish government agreed in 2008 with the draft decree on touristic cooperation structures, which allows provinces, cities, municipalities and the private sector to group together in cooperation structures. In 2009 the decree will be implemented.
- cooperation agreement between Toerisme Vlaanderen and the provinces for the period 2008-2012 (cooperation on product development, investment, marketing, quality management, training, knowledge and information)
- cooperation agreement between Toerisme Vlaanderen and the Flemish Art Cities
- providing and supporting touristic education and training (e.g. language trainings, marketing, communication, subsidies for the 'Master in Tourism' at the K.U.Leuven university, training for travel and tour guides)

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

A system of quality management is to be installed.

Certification of attractions and development of standards for walking trails and wellness offers are to be developed.

WALLONIA

An EDEN+ network will be implemented as a 2nd phase to the EDEN project.

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

FLANDERS

- signature of cooperation agreement between Toerisme Vlaanderen and the Federation of the Touristic Industry in 2008 (cooperation on knowledge and research; quality management; training; communication,...)
- subsidies for sustainable events with touristic importance and/or international character + sustainable touristic-recreational projects
- UNWTO Global Code of Ethics in Tourism added to the travel agency regulation in 2008
- Stimulating 'Travelife' training programme for travel agents
- 'Travel Award' for the most sustainable touroperator in Flanders

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Learning areas for people were in information centres and Horeca sector will start up in the course of this year.

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 600 characters)

FLANDERS

- awareness campaign "the nicest way" to the Flemish public in 2008 within the STREAM-project (see 4.1.2.)
- in 2009 Toerisme Vlaanderen will launch a radio campaign to make the consumer more aware of the impact tourism can have on the environment, local economy, culture and nature
- distribution of a manual to colleges with a tourism educational programme that stipulates how sustainability criteria can be integrated into the curriculum

GERMAN SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Learning and educational programs in Nature centres and continue development of nature trails along with distribution of fliers help enhancing local and tourist behaviour.

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

WALLONIA

Since 2000 the Walloon observatory of tourism has been cater for statistics. Surveys are being made on a regular bases.

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

8. SPECIFIC CHAPTER INCLUDED IN THE 2008 REPORT :

IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIAL MEASURES TAKEN IN TOURISM TO REDUCE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS.

FLANDERS

The Flemish government launched a number of initiatives to restore the confidence of citizens and enterprises in the financial-economic system. On Friday 14 November 2008 the Flemish government gave its approval to the Flemish revival plan 'Restore the confidence'. The 3 main goals of the plan can be described as follows:

1. Strengthening the granting of credits to companies
2. Strengthening the activating labour market policy
3. Accelerating and strengthening public and private investments

Besides this, the Flemish government approved on 23 January 2009 a number of initiatives to improve company financing in the current financial crisis.

The tourism industry can, just like any other sector, make use of these measures. The horeca sector is one of the sectors that make most use of the guarantee regulation at the Flemish holding company. The horeca sector will benefit from the increase of the guaranteed amounts and the ease of demanded certitudes, that are covered in the revival plan.

In addition, the social partners of the horeca sector are invited to work together with the Flemish government on an annex to the covenant of 16 December 2005 to support a number of policy areas of the revival plan, more specifically concerning training and education.

WALLONIA

The tourist sector is impacted by an Anti-crisis Plan launched by the Walloon Government on 05 December 2008, its 5 main topics are:

- accelerating investments
- access to loans

BELGIUM TOURISM REPORT 2008

- employment and schooling
- coupling employment with environment
- simplification and acceleration of administrative procedures.

APPENDIX

Principles of sustainable tourism:

- **Taking a holistic and integrated approach**

All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

- **Planning for the long term**

Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

- **Achieving an appropriate pace and rhythm of development**

The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

- **Involving all stakeholders**

A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

- **Using best available knowledge**

Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

- **Minimising and managing risk – the precautionary principle**

Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

- **Reflecting impacts in costs – user and polluter pays**

Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

- **Setting and respecting limits, where appropriate**

The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

- **Undertaking continuous monitoring**

Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.