

Food and Nutrition Security in Belgium.

Feedback on the qualitative mapping.

Ambitions

- Food safety is of a big concern (federal level)
- Improvements in agricultural production – efficiency – sustainability – animal welfare (regional)
- Improve durability, promote short valorization chain, label policy (regional)
- Encourage organic farming (regional)
- Innovation in agriculture and food industry: resources, technology, products (regional)
- Increase of added value throughout the value chain (regional)
- New technology, digitization, precision agriculture (regional)
- Use of new bio-resources in food production (regional)
- Sustainable and efficient food production, reduced carbon foot print (regional)
- Reduce food waste and improve circularity (regional)

Gaps

- Considering FNS as a whole (Federal vs. Regional, within each government the competences are spread between different ministers).
- Environmental and climate impact of agriculture and food production + climate change impact on agriculture: plant resilience/adaptation, long term effects on soil is... becoming increasingly important.

Specific situation

- Climate changes (mild winters, wet summers)
- The value chain is separated: example of cereals: the primary production is done in Wallonia and most of the transformation occurs in Flanders and politics are decided at each of the regional levels.
- Flanders/Belgium is an open economy. The agricultural and food sector imports huge amounts of raw resources for manufacturing into food products. BE/Flanders is a top agrofood-exporter in EU helping our country to have a positive trade balance. 50% of food industry turnover is made by export. Sectors therefore use an European perspective on sustainability issues (e.g. level playing field).

How integrated are the strategies and R&I policies on the scope of food and Nutrition security in your country?

Because of the particularity of Belgium's government structure and distribution of competences, there is no global national strategy regarding FNS.

Food health issues and consumer policies are handled at the federal level (AFSCA, Federal Public Service Health/food chain safety/environment). Agriculture, food (as an industry/sector), environment and health (e.g. healthy nutrition) are competences of the regional level (Flanders and Wallonia) and are shared by different ministers. There is little or no coordination between federal and regional policy makers on the issue of food (system).

Also at the regional level there is no coherent FNS regional strategy of policy, integrating the different food related aspects of regional competences. At the level of the Brussel Capital Region a Brussels food strategy has been developed, but agriculture and industry is only a small part of that strategy (little share of agrofood sector lies within Brussels borders).

In recent years there have been some initiatives/experiments at both Belgian and Flemish level who use a holistic/integral approach for (research on) improving the sustainability of the entire food system/chain.

Recent initiatives with a more holistic/integral approach on FNS

- Flanders' FOOD, the strategy-driven platform for the facilitation of innovation, contributing to a more competitive, innovative and sustainable agrifood industry, will as "spearhead cluster agrifood" broaden the scope in which it has operated for the past 10 years. Collaboration will become more important than ever. The spearhead cluster agrifood will put effort into collaboration across the value chain, cross-border and cross-sectoral. (<http://www.flandersfood.com/about-us>)
- The different partners of the supply chain work together in a '[Transformation project](#)', in which they formulated a common vision and strategy to transform the food system in to a more sustainable system. Focus lies on incremental changes: transformation no transition. Private sectors are steering this project, the funding comes from the Flemish Government, Research Institute ILVO is coordinating the project. Within the project concrete innovations projects (food action labs) are being supported (e.g. producing sustainable soy in Flanders).
- Within the [ILVO 2020 vision](#), the Flanders research institute for agriculture, fisheries and food puts emphasis on systems thinking: the complexity of the entire issue is taken into account instead of providing isolated solutions for unraveled parts of the problem. In order to make cost-effective production systems and added value possible, ILVO focuses on chain transitions. With action labs, participatory research, learning research networks and agricultural economic analyzes, ILVO develops methodologies and trajectories that guide agricultural, fishery and food companies to other tracks.
- A public-private partnership on the reduction of food waste is being launched in Flanders in 2015 using a farm to fork approach, and established a common goal. The Food supply chain roadmap for food waste reduction is the Flemish answer to the call for a more circular food economy (EU CE package) and the SDG 12.3 on food waste reduction (<http://www.voedselverlies.be/en>).
- The sixth edition of the Flemish Agriculture and Fisheries Report (LARA / VIRA) was published in 2016. As the central theme is food, the report is entitled 'Food for thought'. The report is a description of the whole Flemish food system and its challenges. To meet the challenges of the

Flemish food system the report recommends i.a. a common strategy for public authorities, the private sector and research focused on Flanders agrofood valley and a coherent food policy with regard to food production, food consumption and food flows.

The LARA /VIRA 2016 Food for Thought report can be downloaded at https://lv.vlaanderen.be/sites/default/files/attachments/lara2016_sam_eng-website_def_0.pdf

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