

# BELGIUM FLANDERS

1. National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.
2. In preparation for the thirteenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, reporting on progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the selected three priority action areas since the twelfth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 20-21 April 2017).
3. Additional sub-section in this questionnaire refers to the alignment of the national strategies for ESD with the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda in terms of achieving the SDG 4.7 on education and as an instrument to achieving all 17 SDGs.
4. Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail (esd@unece.org) by **15 March 2018**.
5. The secretariat will review all the information submitted and deliver a synthesis presentation at the Steering Committee's thirteenth meeting. The presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.
6. Recognizing the importance of celebrating champions of education for sustainable development, Steering Committee members are in particular invited to indicate if there are any outstanding initiatives on the implementation of the priority action areas in their countries that they wish to share and/or present. Countries might also wish to report on how the implementation of the national strategies for ESD contributes to the achievement of the Goal 4.7 and the 2030 Agenda at the national level, and also on mainstreaming gender aspect in the national ESD policies.

## **Questionnaire for 2018 informal country<sup>1</sup> reporting on the implementation of the three “vertical” priority action areas<sup>2</sup>**

### **Advances made and challenges encountered since the twelfth Steering Committee meeting in April 2017**

#### ***I. Priority action area (a)***

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*Encouraging whole-institution approaches by establishing education for sustainable development school plans, or embedding education for sustainable development in existing school plans, for every school by 2019*

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#### **1. Has the number of schools adopting a “whole-institution approach” to sustainable development or education for sustainable development (ESD) increased?**

Yes  No

• *Please specify*

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<sup>1</sup> Countries with a federal structure are free to provide several inputs or questionnaires from different states or entities, if appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> See framework for the future implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/11), subparas. 20 (a)-(c). Available from <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/environment-for-europe/efe-conferences/batumi-conference/documents-and-materials.html>.

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*Encouraging whole-institution approaches by establishing education for sustainable development school plans, or embedding education for sustainable development in existing school plans, for every school by 2019*

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- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

*The “MOS” project ‘sustainable schools are smart schools’(Ecoschools), helps turning schools into environmentally friendly and sustainable places of living and learning, together with the pupils, the teaching staff and the broader network of the school, by providing support, tools and material. It is an initiative launched by the Flemish government (to wit, the Department of Environment & Spatial Development), the five Flemish Provinces and the Flemish Community Commission for the Brussels Capital Region. The figures indicate a clear rise in the number of participating schools. All the participating school are mapped  
(<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1KLSpeMMbT1nXnT-U9rLis2gcZmM&ll=50.96918328708199%2C4.501699291992168&z=8>)*

*20 schools are member of the Flemish ASPnet (UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network) . The introduction and implementation of the SDG’s are core to the activities of this network. Each year they work on a priority theme. In 2017 this was gender. ESD is an integral part of their work plans.  
<https://www.unesco.be/nl/onderwijs> (in Dutch)  
<https://www.facebook.com/unescoscholenvlaanderen/>*

*The MOS-project, which coaches schools in environmental care and education for sustainable development, is using the whole-institution approach in their coaching of schools.  
<https://www.lne.be/wat-is-mos>*

**2. Have any (additional) incentives and assistance measures (guidelines, award scheme, funding, training, technical support) been made available that support ESD school plans?**

Yes  No

- *Please specify*
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

*The MOS-project, which coaches schools in environmental care and education for sustainable development, is using the whole-institution approach in their coaching of schools.  
<https://www.lne.be/wat-is-mos> (in Dutch)  
<https://ecoroad.weebly.com/mos.html> (in English)*

*f.e. Project: Pimp your playground*

*Until the 18th of February 2018, schools could submit a proposal for a subsidy project, concerning their ambition to turn their playground green instead of grey. The current edition of “Pimp your playground”, by now the fourth,*

comprises 25 schools eligible for an amount of four thousand euro each. The three previous editions already allowed 67 schools to turn their playground green. A green(er) playground offers a variety of benefits...

Children spend a considerable part of their school time on the playground, which is why it's important to provide a valuable outdoor space. The playground is an interesting place where pupils learn and play games and sports. Research has proven that pupils are happier in schools with a green playground and that they are better able to concentrate in class after the break. Moreover, a richly varied playground provides a lot of opportunities for outdoor teaching.

Although ever more schools and parents are aware of these facts, there still remains a lively demand for help and guidance. This is why this year, too, saw an appeal for project proposals, with regard to schools who want to adapt their playground in a radical way, together with pupils, parents and neighbours.

The Pimp your playground initiative is coordinated by the Flemish government (to wit, the Department of Environment & Spatial Development and the Nature and Forestry Agency), together with MOS and in collaboration with GoodPlanet. Submissions are examined by a professional jury and the winners get careful accompaniment in order to arrive at a workable plan. "Inspiration Days" are organised in every Province.

Website : [www.pimpjespeelplaats.be](http://www.pimpjespeelplaats.be) (only available in Dutch).

Also the Ecocampus programme (Higher education) is focussing on the interlinkages of education, curriculum, policy and research at universities and university colleges through different approaches. Ecocampus is a program of the Government of Flanders that supports tertiary education in Flanders in its orientation towards sustainable development (SD).

<https://www.lne.be/ecocampus-english>

**3. Are staff and students in schools with ESD plans more environmentally and ecologically aware than staff and students in schools without ESD plans?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
  - Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic
- \* We suppose yes, however, we do not have clear evidence on this topic.*

**4. Are there any recently produced materials or resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?**

Yes  No

- Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the
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*language and website address*

*In the Erasmus+project Ecoroad (<https://ecoroad.weebly.com/>) the Province of Antwerp and MOS are working together with 3 other countries (Finland, Iceland, United Kingdom) to develop a roadmap to become an ESD-school, aspiring to be an ESD-centre of Excellence.*

*MOS developed in cooperation with the Province of Flemish Brabant different kamishibai-stories to help teachers in kindergarten to discuss diverse nature, environment and sustainability topics. The stories are translated in French and English, some of them also in Spanish and German.*

<https://www.lne.be/educatief-aanbod-basis-kleuter-en-lager>

*CO2-calculator: tool for schools to measure their output of CO2, with information for mitigation.*

<https://www.scholenvoorminderco2.be/>

**5. Have you implemented or are you planning to implement any assessments or evaluations that will measure the impact of the actions taken to date in this area?**

Yes  No

- *Please specify*
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

f.e. Promoting sustainability by fighting food loss : a practice-oriented research project in schools

The Department of Environment commissioned ‘VIVES Hogeschool’ in Kortrijk to carry out a practice-oriented study for the elaboration and implementation of school-based interventions on the theme of food loss. Elaboration of the project resulted in an approach in which schools could work in an integrated way towards a healthy and sustainable food policy. Use was made of existing framework methods for healthy food at school. In the first half of 2016, an initial screening was made, in six schools, with regard to the school’s general food policy. The six schools concerned were three primary and three secondary schools, including one hotel school. During the school year 2016-2017, a number of objectives were formulated for each school. For this process, the entire school community was involved as widely as possible. Later in the year, concrete interventions followed, which were drawn up and elaborated by students from different disciplines (educational science, social work, dietetics and agronomy) under the guidance of their tutors.

The evaluation in the various schools could only take place after the summer holiday. Nonetheless, effects were still being measured. Food loss measurements in the school restaurants still

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showed a decrease in the amount of food thrown away, albeit with a varying picture per school. In secondary schools, a number of behavioral determinants have also been significantly improved. In primary schools some behavioral indicators suggest an improvement, while others suggest a deterioration with regard to undesirable behavior. Most schools look back with satisfaction on the trajectory. They indicate that things have changed, that they will continue to use the material thus developed and that they will continue their work on the theme in the coming years.

Within the framework of the project, a 'KNOW' booklet, a 'DO' booklet and a guide with interventions were developed. Together with the research report, these are available on <http://www.voedselverlies.be/voor-professionals> (available only in Dutch). Brief information in English: <http://www.voedselverlies.be/en>  
Interested parties can further contact Filip Fleurbaey or Wouter Mertens, both of them civil servants working for the Department of Environment.

**6. Additional comments on implementing the UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country (please specify, if any):**

On the 17th of January 2018, Flemish Parliament approved the framework for the new final objectives. The final objectives will be based on sixteen "core competences". From now on they will include not only the classic knowledge and skills, but also subjects such as citizenship, financial literacy, sustainability, research skills, innovative thinking, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Each and every pupil, regardless of field of study, will have to be taught these skills. This can become a vehicle for the introduction of ESD in the school curricula.

In the current curriculum ESD is a cross-curricular topic, which means that schools 'only' have to make an effort, they are not obliged to obtain particular well-defined results. With the new final objectives the difference between traditional subjects like languages and maths, and cross-curricular topics will disappear. For all final objectives a particular well-defined result will have to be obtained.

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**II. Priority action area (b)**

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*Promoting the extension of education for sustainable development in teacher education and in the training of all educators*

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**1. Has there been any significant advancement made with regard introducing or extending ESD as a part of educators' initial training?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

In the thematic learning network ESD in teacher training,

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the heads of teacher training institutions are stimulated to get more involved in implementing ESD in teacher training in a sustainable way, f.i. via a policy letter. We organised a policy seminar to discuss that topic with teacher trainers and staff. We organised a meeting with the Flemish Council for Higher Education, in Dutch: de “Vlaamse Hogescholenraad”, to discuss the policy letter and we had a follow-up meeting in spring 2017. At the moment possibilities to stimulate research on ESD in teacher training is sought out.

The teacher training institutes will also have to align themselves to the requirements connected to the new curriculum – see question above.

**2. Have there been any significant advances made with regard to introducing or extending ESD as a part of educators’ in-service training?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

*In Flanders to topics are relevant to mention in relation to in-service training:*

*Greening of schoolyards and outdoor education:*

- *In the provinces MOS-café’s are organized : in an informal setting teachers are introduced to theory and practices for greening the schoolyard linked to outdoor-education.*
- *Buitenlesdag: A campaign day to motivate teachers to teach outside the classroom.*  
<http://www.buitenlesdag.be/>
- *Openschooltuinendag: A visitday to visit schoolyards and schoolgardens of neighbouring schools. F.e. in Antwerp:*  
<https://www.provincieantwerpen.be/aanbod/dlm/mos/netwerkmomenten-en-nascholingen.html>

*Climate change education:*

- *In-service training for teachers and heads of school at provincial level.*
- *Flemish Climate Change event: A lecture and workshops for teachers and heads of school and pupils to underpin the knowledge about climate change (education) and to inspire people for climate action at schools.*

**3. Are beginning teachers who have been in teacher education that has introduced ESD more likely to teach from a sustainability perspective?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

*We do not know.*

**4. Are there any recently produced materials or resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?**

Yes  No

- Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

**5. Have you implemented or are you planning to implement any assessments or evaluations that will measure the impact of the actions taken to date in this area?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

*Through a large-scale research project at the “Universiteit van Antwerpen”, the research group tries to develop agreed-upon products, in collaboration with educational partners. These products are meant to support teachers and schools in an integrated and concrete application of ESD:*

*1/ A path for professional development regarding (a) ESD in school and (b) its successful implementation;*

*2/ Materials and methods for ESD in school, and knowledge about their efficacy;*

*3/ A roadmap for successful implementation of ESD, which takes into account the initial situation of schools;*

*4/ An instrument for self-evaluation allowing schools to screen their initial situation (at the level of pupils, teachers and the school as an organisation) and to track the change;*

*5/ Quality standards for effective, concrete and integrated ESD in school;*

*6/ An inventory with examples both domestic and foreign, based on the quality standards.*

*In order to guarantee the efficiency of the various products fundamental research is undertaken. This research runs along three tracks:*

*1/ The impact of the materials and methods on the capabilities for action of (a) pupils with regard to ESD and (b) teachers with regard to both ESD and the teaching thereof (i.e. an outcome evaluation aimed at examining the efficiency of the products that have been developed).*

*2/ The context in which the implementation of the said products takes place, taking into account (a) the relation between the success and the characteristics of the social context such as family and peer group and (b) the systemic implementation (which factors impede or promote) within the school.*

*3/ Measurement issues concerning effective, concrete and integrated ESD. The key question is how to quantify the success of the interventions that have been developed. To this end, a collection of instruments is devised which tries to chart the capabilities for action of individuals (pupils and teachers) and schools, viewed as organisations.*

**6. Additional comments on implementing UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country (please specify, if any):**

Climat change has been a priority in Flemish (education) policy since 2016. Therefore a specific budget was allocated to individual schools of primary, secondary and adult education for innovative projects on STEM and climat change. Some of the projects are technologically innovative, others more pedagogically new. ESD plays an important role in many of the projects.

In april 2017, a study ordered by the Flemish Department of Environment on education for agro-ecology was finished. The aim of the study was to gain insights in whether agro-ecology, as a sustainable alternative for conventional agriculture, is being taught to future and current farmers. Part of the conclusion was that teachers that want to include this topic often meet scepticism, lack of understanding and a lack of available educational material.

In the next few years, we will address these issues.

At the same time, a network for teachers in secondary agricultural schools has been organized by the Flemish Department of Agriculture. The network's aim is to improve the position of organic farming and agroecology in these schools. Within the network, the teachers decide what topics need to be addressed, ranging from additional information on how to include it in the teaching plans, over technical insights and training for teachers, to the development of educational material.

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**III. Priority action area (c)**

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*Strengthening technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy*

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**1. Has there been advancement towards a structural reorientation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) towards ESD?**

Yes  No

- *Please specify*
- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

*In developing the vocational qualification (EQF), the basis for the vocational part of the technical and vocational training, sustainability is taken into account. This is strongly reflected in the qualifications for construction, energy, environment and agriculture.*

*These qualifications will form the basis for the vocational and technical training in the context of the planned modernization of Flemish secondary education.*

*In the actualization of the final goals (the core curriculum) the sustainability aspect will also be monitored on the basis of 'reference frameworks'. A 'reference framework' is a planning framework which links the content of specific European key competences to a particular science field. It*

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*characterizes its relevant components and makes it possible to distinguish between other key competences, frameworks or scientific fields. The framework enables development committees to define more specific 'final goals'. For the determination of the components various sources such as specific research literature, foreign curricula and the input of experts were used. Sustainability is explicitly included in a number of frameworks including technological competence, scientific competence, social awareness and citizenship.*

**2. Have any incentives and assistance measures been made available that support the reorientation of TVET towards sustainable development?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

*As mentioned before, the STEM-Climat change projects give a new impetus to school policy on ESD. Particularly TVET schools were very interested in the projects as a means to test new practices, teaching methods and learning materials.*

**3. Are students who have been in TVET oriented to sustainable development finding jobs related to sustainable development?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**4. Are there any recently produced materials or resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?**

Yes  No

- Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

**5. Have you implemented or are you planning to implement any assessments or evaluations that will measure the impact of the actions taken to date in this area?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**6. Additional comments on implementing UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country (please specify, if any):**

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**IV. Monitoring SDG 4 (Targets 4.7 and 4.a)**

*SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*

*Target 4.7: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."*

**Target 4.a:** “Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all”

(Note: According the UNESCO methodology (see report “Historical efforts to implement the UNESCO 1974 Recommendation on Education in light of 3 SDGs Targets, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002472/247275E.pdf>), the agreed global indicator measures the extent to which (i) global citizenship and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment.)

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**1. Does your country have a stand- alone "sustainable development", "global understanding", "international understanding" policy/plan/law in place, all of them using “sustainable development” language?**

Yes  No

- Please specify
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**2. Is ESD reflected in your country’s current education policy/ies and frameworks?**

Yes  No

- Please specify to what extent
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**3. Is ESD reflected in your country’s current school curricula?**

Yes  No

- Please specify to what extent
- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**4. Is ESD reflected in the curriculum of pre-service and/or in-service teacher training?**

Yes  No

- Please specify to what extent

**5. Which of the following dimensions of learning is your country planning to reinforce in student assessment/examinations in the next five years, in relation to ESD? (please tick all that apply)**

(a) Knowledge

Yes  No

- Please specify

(b) Skills and competencies

Yes  No

- Please specify

(c) Values and attitudes

Yes  No

- Please specify

(d) Behaviours

Yes  No

- Please specify
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(e) None

Yes  No  • *Please specify*

(f) No information available

Yes  No  • *Please specify*

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

**6. Are the other core elements of the Target 4.7 part of education in your country?**

– Sustainable lifestyles

Yes  No

– Human rights

Yes  No

– Gender equality

Yes  No

– Promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence

Yes  No

– Global citizenship

Yes  No

– Appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

Yes  No

Yes  No  • *Please specify*

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

**7. Additional comments on implementing SDG Goal 4.7 in your country (please specify, if any):**

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**8. Is Target 4.a (see above) part of education policy in your country?**

Yes  No  • *Please specify*

- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*

**9. Is climate change education/environmental awareness mandatory at any level of education in your country?**

Yes  No  • *Please specify*

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- *Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic*
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