

Wallonia Action Plan

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Action Plan for Wallonia (short version)

Part I – General Information

Project: Interreg BIDREX

Partner organisation: Walloon Public Service (WPS)/ DGO3 (General Directorate for Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment)

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NUTS2 region: WALLONIA

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Part II – Policy context

The Action Plan aims to impact: **Other regional development policy instrument**

Name of the policy instrument addressed: **The Regional Policy Statement for Wallonia (RPSW) 2014-2019**

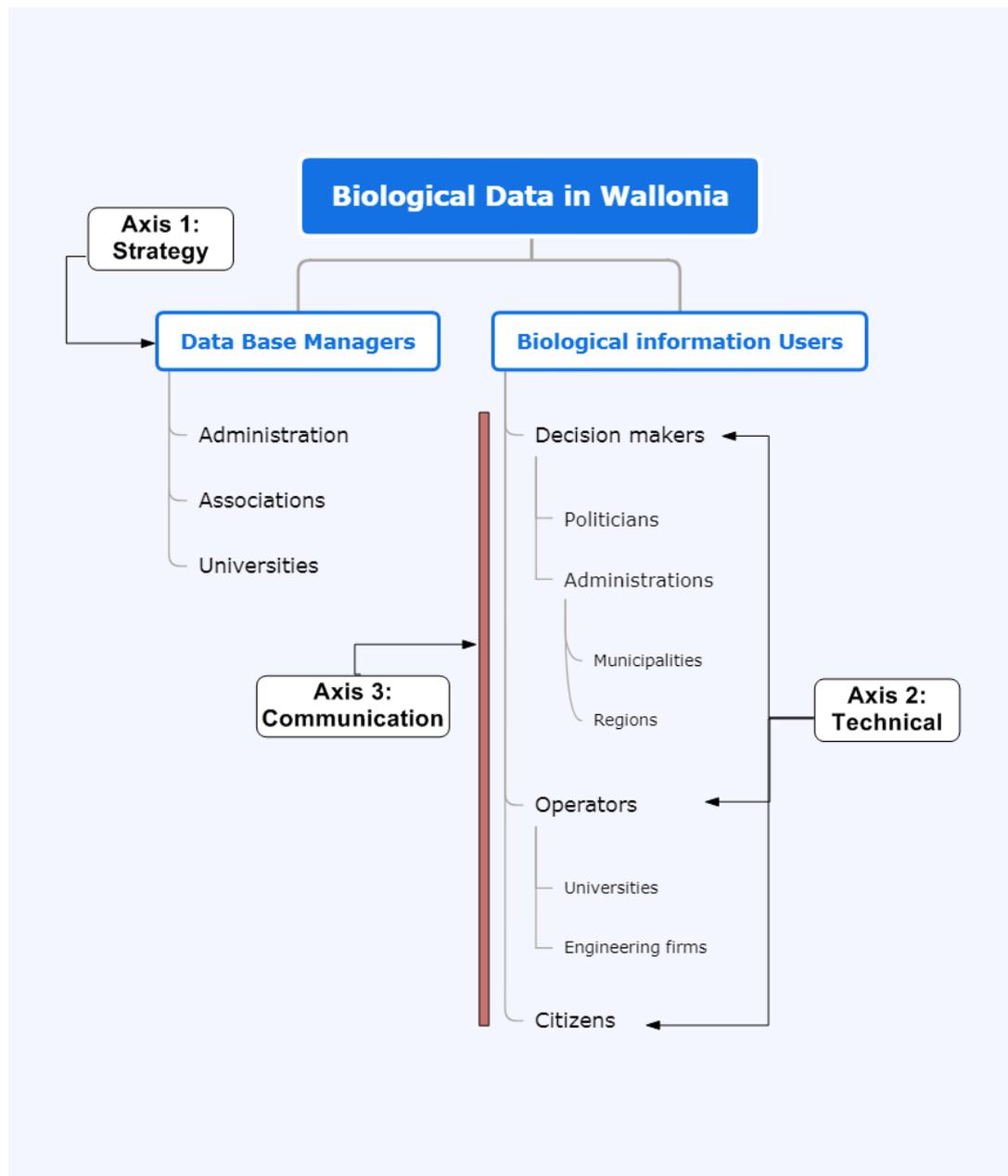
The declaration of Walloon regional Policy 2014-2019 aims clearly under the point XXI /2 the strengthening of biodiversity and nature conservation through the development of nature reserves, the Natura 2000 program and European nature restoration LIFE projects by improving the partnership dynamics between public authorities, associations, owners and managers of the sites, by evaluating management measures, simplifying procedures and adapting them to local and economic realities.

Part III – Objectives of the Walloon Action Plan

The general objective of the Action Plan is to promote the use of validated biological data matching to the needs of users for the development of projects, plans and strategies in Wallonia and more generally in all decisions that might impact biodiversity.

More specifically, Wallonia's action plan for the BIDREX project has three complementary axes:

- A strategic Axis with the establishment of the necessary conditions for effective coordination and collaborative exchanges between data managers;
- A technical axis with the development of dissemination tools to data users;
- A communication axis with a data user based approach.



Part IV : Details about actions

→ Strategy :

ACTION 1

Creation of a platform for coordination, exchange and expertise on the management of biological data.

The main theme of the BIDREX project focuses on the availability of biodiversity data for decision-makers.

The need to coordinate the management of biological data in Wallonia is due to the coexistence of numerous data flows that could benefit from the pooling of resources and expertise. Taxonomic groups are adequately monitored while others are in deficit.

The existence of a structure grouping data holders and managers from public, academic and associative tacks would allow the exchange of best practices, optimize the efficiency of operations according to the specificities of each of the actors and promote the search for solutions to shared problems (questions of data ownership, dissemination rules, validation...)

The strategic added value expected from this platform will be to guarantee the credibility of data providers, to reinforce the leverage effect on the decision-making process, to federate efforts and coordinate resources, to respond in a more consistent way to the policy makers requests of and, when appropriate, to conduct advocacy with better organized interlocutors.

→ **BIDREX inspiring elements:** Workshop 1, Database Managers Day (Wallonia), Workshop 5.

Building the platform will follow bilateral process between database managers.

This approach is suitable to gradually build trust between partners.

As this federalization process will go on, the opportunity to identify common difficulties or recurring and shared issues will increase.

In a second step, it will be proposed to provide solutions to these questions. These will eventually lead to concrete actions such as the realization of specific legal studies, the sharing of technical solutions or the improvement of skills.

Concerning partnership, collaboration will start with Natagora due to existing collaboration and the fact that they use to manage large quantity of data. Other partners will follow:

- Natagriwal
- University of Liege-Gembloux Agrobiotech
- Biodiversity Federal Platform
- University of Mons

The platform gathering hopefully several database managers will be operational by the end of the project.

The Walloon Public Service will pay costs, mainly logistic for meeting. Depending on special needs for capacity building, other funding resources could be necessary.

→ **Data Dissemination:**

ACTION 2 :

Setting up of consultation and download interfaces for biological data

The availability of validated, reliable and easily accessible data has been placed at the center of the project's stakes in order to positively influence regional policy instruments. The Walloon Policy Statement 2014-2019 targets the development of nature reserves, the implementation of the Natura 2000 program and European LIFE restoration projects.

The implementation of this regional nature conservation policy instrument goes undoubtedly through making available to stakeholders (Department of Nature and Forests, municipalities, consulting firms, project managers, landowners and managers) the real biodiversity challenges on the Walloon territory.

The missions of the Public Service and specifically those of the Directorate of Nature and Water (DNE) of the DGO3 are to organize and carry out programs of inventory and monitoring of natural heritage (species, habitats, sites of biological interest) to meet the mandatory European reporting and legal obligations, to produce validated environmental data on fauna, flora and natural habitats in Wallonia. These data will be of little use if they are not transformed into accessible and documented, interpreted and contextualized information.

The DNE is currently custodian of nearly 6 million data.

The Walloon Code of the Environment imposes to give a citizen access to this information.

The means currently available to the administration do not allow the efficient dissemination of this information. The creation of consultation interfaces and downloading platform (provision of cartographic formats) will fill this gap.

→ **BIDREX inspiring elements:** Catalanian SITxell Project, Hungarian OpenBIO Maps, NBN Atlas...

A study has been carried out within the framework of the project and made it possible to compare the technical possibilities in terms of data dissemination.

It seems indeed more efficient to specialize the type of interface so that their use specifically corresponds to the needs of users.

This is how 3 diffusion channels will coexist:

- 1 map interface with secure access by Login dedicated to administration
- 1 website with secure access by Login that will allow large audience an easy access to the species data on sites where inventories have been made.
- 1 specialized interface dedicated to nature conservation professionals for the consultation of species and habitats and the downloading of shape-file maps directly usable for scientific analysis and impact studies.

The 2 first dissemination tools will be developed in the frame of the BIDREX project. The third one will be complementary developed in the frame of the BNIP Life Project.

The partners to get involved will potentially be Natagora, Natagriwal, ULg-Gembloux Agrobiotech, the federal Platform for Biodiversity, Universities of Mons, Liège, the DGO3 and a private company specialized in TIC: Defimedia SA.

It is expected that the 2 tools will be available for the end of the project. The WPS will take the costs over.

→ **Communication :**

ACTION 3 :

Development and implementation of a communication plan targeting decision-makers and other data users

The importance of information needs was identified early in the interregional learning process of the project. It is proposed here to evaluate the demand in order to better guide the offer.

One of the key messages identified at the beginning of the project was to emphasize the knowledge of the stakeholders and their respective competencies.

→ **Regarding the actors in decision-making processes:**

The decision makers considered here are:

- the policy makers;
- the decision makers of the local (municipalities, provinces) and regional administrations.

The communication plan developed as part of the action plan will focus more on the local authorities and the administrations in charge of biodiversity (DNF, DDRCEB).

Nevertheless, it may be useful to raise the awareness of some high-level decision-makers at least about the availability of reliable biodiversity data sources.

→ **Regarding other data users:**

It is a fact that in the Walloon context, most of the information on biodiversity goes first through data operators who transform it into studies, reports and summaries in order to support decisions more effectively. The DNE plays this role but it is especially the other potential users e.g. universities and above all engineering firms making all the environmental or Natura 2000 impact assessments that the communication should focus on.

The context of data collection, the limit of their use and of course the keys to their interpretation must be explained.

→ **BIDREX inspiring elements** : Technical Paper Workshops 1 and 2, Discussions Workshop 5

The development and implementation of a communication plan will be the backbone of this action.

A survey among data users (regional administration, municipalities and consulting firms) will be conducted to better target their needs and interests for biodiversity data.

A workshop will also be organized, bringing together representatives of data users with the aims of going deeper in the data needs and of disseminating information on the data use.

All the partners will be involved (Natagora, Natagriwal, ULg-Gembloux Agrobiotech, the federal platform for Biodiversity, Mons and Liege Universities, la DNE du DEMNA, The Union of Municipalities, the DNF and the DDRCEB).

The plan will be ready for mid-2019, the survey should be carried out for the end of the year and the workshop will take place in 2020.

The costs of workshop organization will be supported by the communication plan of the DNE (CREA).

Date: 20/03/2019

Name of the organisation: **Walloon Public Service (WPS) / DGO3**

Signature of representative of the relevant institution: