

The Flemish governance model for sustainable development

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Outline

1. Sustainable development governance
2. Flemish Institutional framework for SD
3. Analysis Flemish governance model (OECD criteria)
4. Conclusions



1. Sustainable development governance


- Mainly institutional issues: horizontal integration structures, co-ordination, political leadership, legal framework, NSSD
- Strong governance is a necessary condition for an effective SD strategy
- Is it also a sufficient condition? Or a guarantee?



2. Flemish institutional framework for SD

- 1992 – 2004: mainly federal issue
- First Flemish steps taken in 2004; emphasis put on institutional efforts
- 2007: Belgian constitution: art. 7bis
- 2007: Flemish decree sustainable development
- Minister for SD
- SD cell in Flemish administration
- Interdepartmental working group (WGDO)
- Flemish strategy for SD

→ Strong institutional framework



A holistic model of inclusive governance


- Literature: multi-stakeholder approach, 'including in particular the groups most affected'
- Flanders: a policy concept of 1 department is introduced in all departments, co-ordinated by the department which has the experience.
- Flanders SD policy: minimal steering



3. More detailed analysis


→ OECD effectiveness criteria: strong points:

- Comprehensiveness
- All departments involved (WGSD)
- Minister-president= minister of SD
- Decree + constitution
- FSDS, legally anchored
- Own budget



Weak points:

- Long term vision, monitoring, capacity building
- Department involvement: maximal freedom, minimal steering and co-ordination
- Limited political leadership
- Budget very small (subsidies)
- Stakeholder participation is not structural
- Integration with local authorities is missing



4. Conclusions and recommendations

- Incremental rather than inclusive approach.
- Horizontal integration remains a challenge.
- Long term vision and capacity building is important
- Institutional structures will not automatically lead to strong department and stakeholder involvement; it is only a first step.
- Support from departments and politicians can only grow slowly and as a result of many projects and processes.

