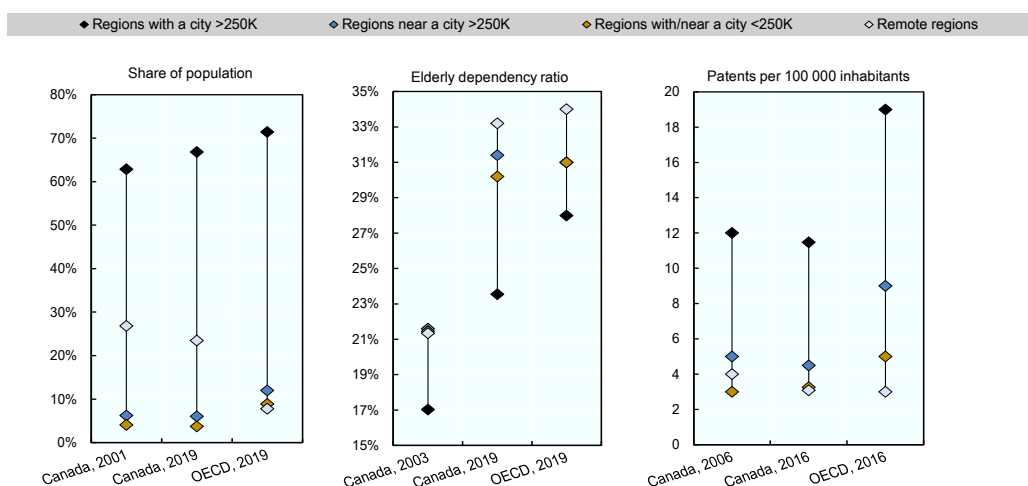


Belgium

Statistical profile

Figure 1. Statistical profile



	Population growth 2008-2019 (%)	GVA per worker (1 000 USD ppp)	GVA manufacturing (%)	Employment rate growth, (%)	Hospital beds per 1 000 inhabitants
Regions with a city >250K	1.7 (0.7)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Regions near a city >250K	1.1 (0.4)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Regions with/near a city <250K	1.1 (0.4)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Remote regions	0.5 (0.6)	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note: OECD average is presented in parenthesis. Data for GVA per worker, GVA by sector and unemployment rate are from 2017. GVA and GDP are measured in USD PPP (2015). The OECD average by order in the table has been made with 33, 25, 26, 25 countries with available data. Employment growth measured as employment in the workplace.

Source: (OECD, 2020^[1]) OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-e>.

Policy framework and Institutional setting of rural development

Rural Definition

- ❖ Belgium has different definition of rural areas in each of the two regions.
 - In Flanders a village is considered to be “rural” when the population density is below 350 inh/km² or the built up area is lower than 15%.

- In Wallonia, the regional administration defines a “rural territory” as a statistical area where population density is below 50 people per km² or where “rural areas” cover more than 80% of its surface. “Rural areas” cover the classifications “2. Agricultural areas”, “3. Forest and semi-natural areas” and “4. Humid areas” as defined by the land cover map of Wallonia. A commune as “rural” if more than 85% of its surface is composed by “rural territories” and as “semi-rural” if 60% to 85% of its surface is composed by “rural territories”. This classification is not generalized in policy design. Walloon region acknowledges the existence of mixed rural/urban areas rural areas close to cities and remote rural areas. In Flemish region, only the latter two types of areas are considered.

National rural policy

- ❖ In Belgium, the regions are responsible for rural development - the Flemish Region and the Walloon Region. Rural development is not necessarily managed in the same way by these two regions and Brussels-Capital Region is not in charge of this matter.
 - The Flemish region has a rural policy defined by the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2014-2020. This plan is renewed each seven years.
 - The Walloon Region has a rural policy defined by the Communal Rural Development Program (PCDR) issued in 1991 with a last update in 2014. The programme is valid for 10 years. The communes decide to elaborate a new PCDR or not. The time interval is not regular and is superior to 10 years.

Lead ministry(ies) and other co-ordination bodies in charge

Table 1. Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the national level

Ministries/Committees (most important first)	Role
Flemish Region: Flemish Land Agency	Regional rural policy, containing the planning, funding, implementation, evaluation
Flemish Region: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries	Coordination of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Managing Authority and Paying Agency of the Flemish Rural Development Programme.
Walloon Region: Gouvernement wallon	Managing authority for the Walloon Rural Development Programme
Walloon Region: Cabinet de la Ministre Céline Tellier, en charge de l'Environnement, de la Nature, de la Forêt, de la Ruralité et du Bien-être animal	Regional rural policy containing political decision, planning and funding.
Walloon Region: Département du Développement, de la Ruralité, des Cours d'eau et du Bien-être animal (DDRCB)	Regional rural policy implementation by administrative and accounting management of projects and by accompanying the beneficiaries - Regional rural policy evaluation - Transversality with other sectoral policies.

Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the **sub-national level** are the Autonomous regional agencies.

Key objectives in rural policy and delivery mechanisms

- ❖ Belgium’s rural development allocates a high degree of importance to economic areas (Table 2). Table 3 shows the main priorities of rural policy.

- ❖ The main delivery mechanisms of the rural development policy in Belgium are dedicated grants programs (Flemish and Walloon Region), contracts, and agreements with local communities – the local commission for rural development (CLDR) composed by citizens has to approve all the rural policies (Walloon Region).

Table 2. Relevance of sectors in rural development policy

Policy areas	Belgium: <i>Flemish Region</i>	Belgium: <i>Walloon Region</i>	Average OECD
Economic	50%	20%	40%
Social	20%	40%	30%
Environment	30%	40%	30%

Note: Self-reported responses from country delegate to the question: “Please grade from 1 to 10 the importance rural development policies in your country assigns to economic, social and environmental areas”.

Source: OECD (2018), “Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries”.

Table 3. Relevant objectives in rural development policy

Top objectives (Order does not imply ranking)	Programmes	Main financial mechanisms to support the strategy
Agricultural production	RDP, Investment support	Subsidies
Environmental sustainability	RDP, Agri environmental measures	Subsidies
Service delivery (important for Flemish Region)	RDP, LEADER	Subsidies
Rural-urban linkages (important for Flemish Region)	RDP, Collaboration between cities and rural areas	Subsidies
Accessibility- via transport/ broadband (important for Walloon Region)	Managed by another sectoral policy than Walloon rural development. The mobility policy treated specifically of rural mobility more by coordination and networking than by funding.	Subsidies
Quality of life/well-being of rural residents	RDP	Subsidies
Innovation support to “rural” sectors	Flemish Region: RDP, European Innovation Partnership Farmers education. Walloon Region: Partly managed by several independent organisms financed by Wallonia (FRW, GREOVA, WFG) Also, by Local Action Group (GAL) (PwDR)	Subsidies and grants

Note: Objectives presented are the ones with higher scores in the survey responses.

Source: OECD (2018), “Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries”.