Institutionalized approaches of policy making, monitoring and evaluation: developments and challenges in the region of Flanders-Belgium

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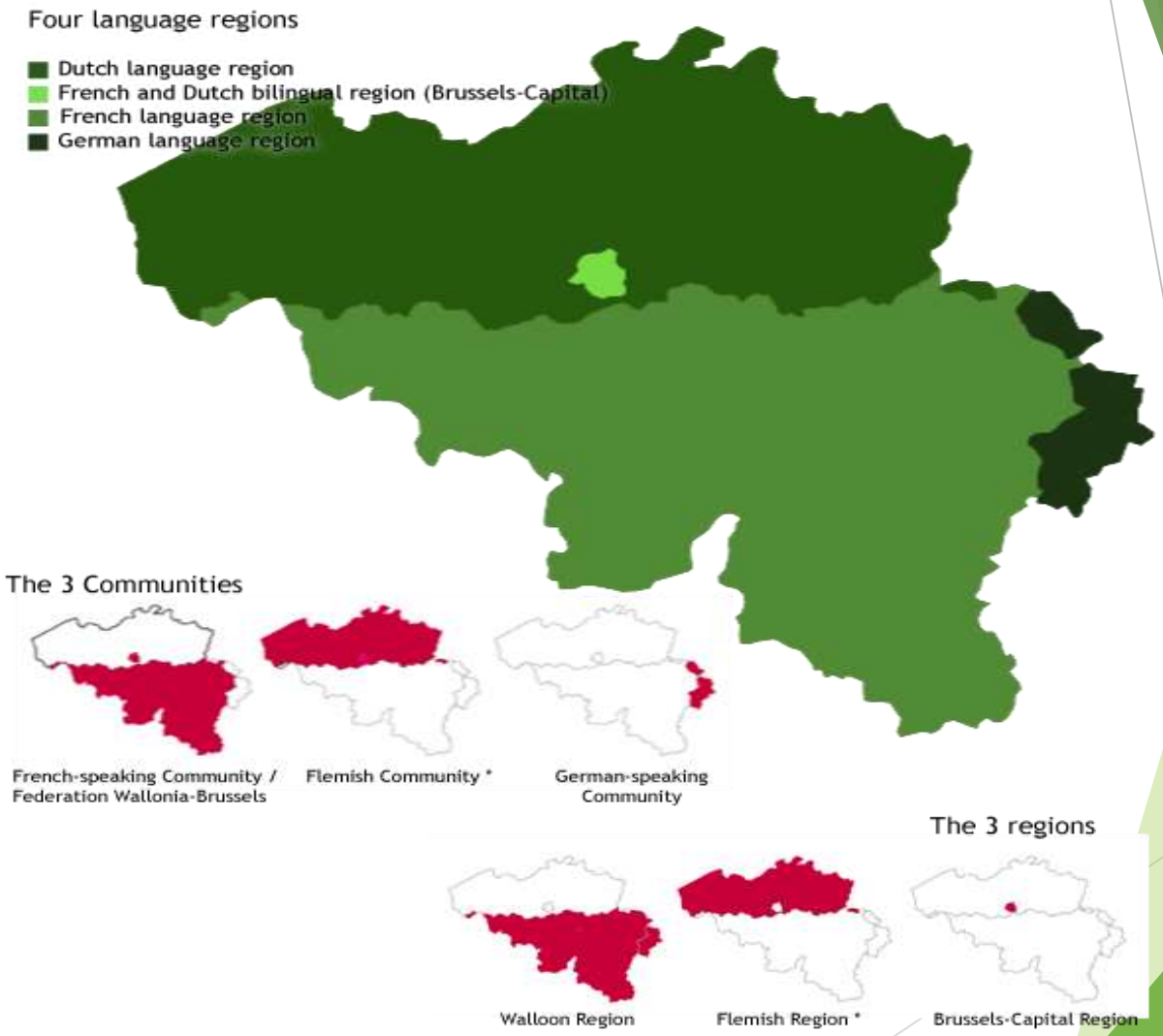
Outline

- Belgium: Governance features
- Flanders: Particularities? Lessons learned?
- Policy making
- Monitoring
- Evaluation
- Institutionalized?

Flanders/Belgium/European Union: multilevel governance





Belgian governance features: devolution



The territory of Belgium has always been subject to the influence of both the German and Latin world. That brings a cultural pluralism in its wake. So when Belgium was created in 1830-31, that pluralism was already there. It is precisely those differences in language, culture and so on between the various parts of the country that led to the **reform of the State, apart from the (now) existing 10 provinces and 589 municipalities.**

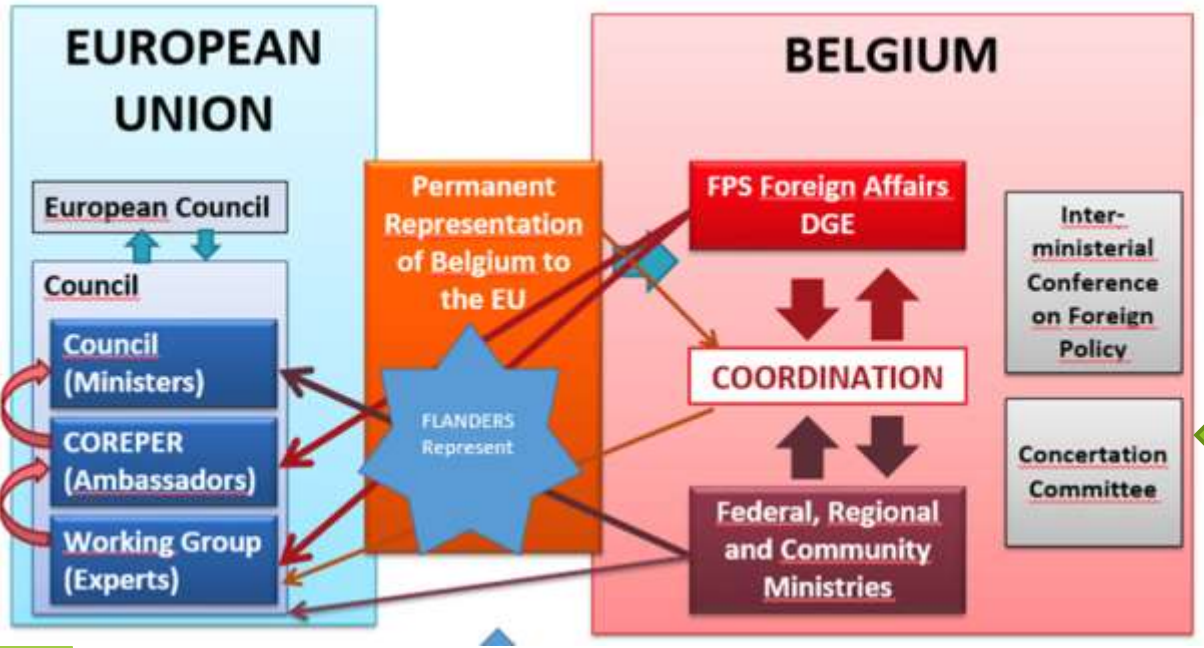


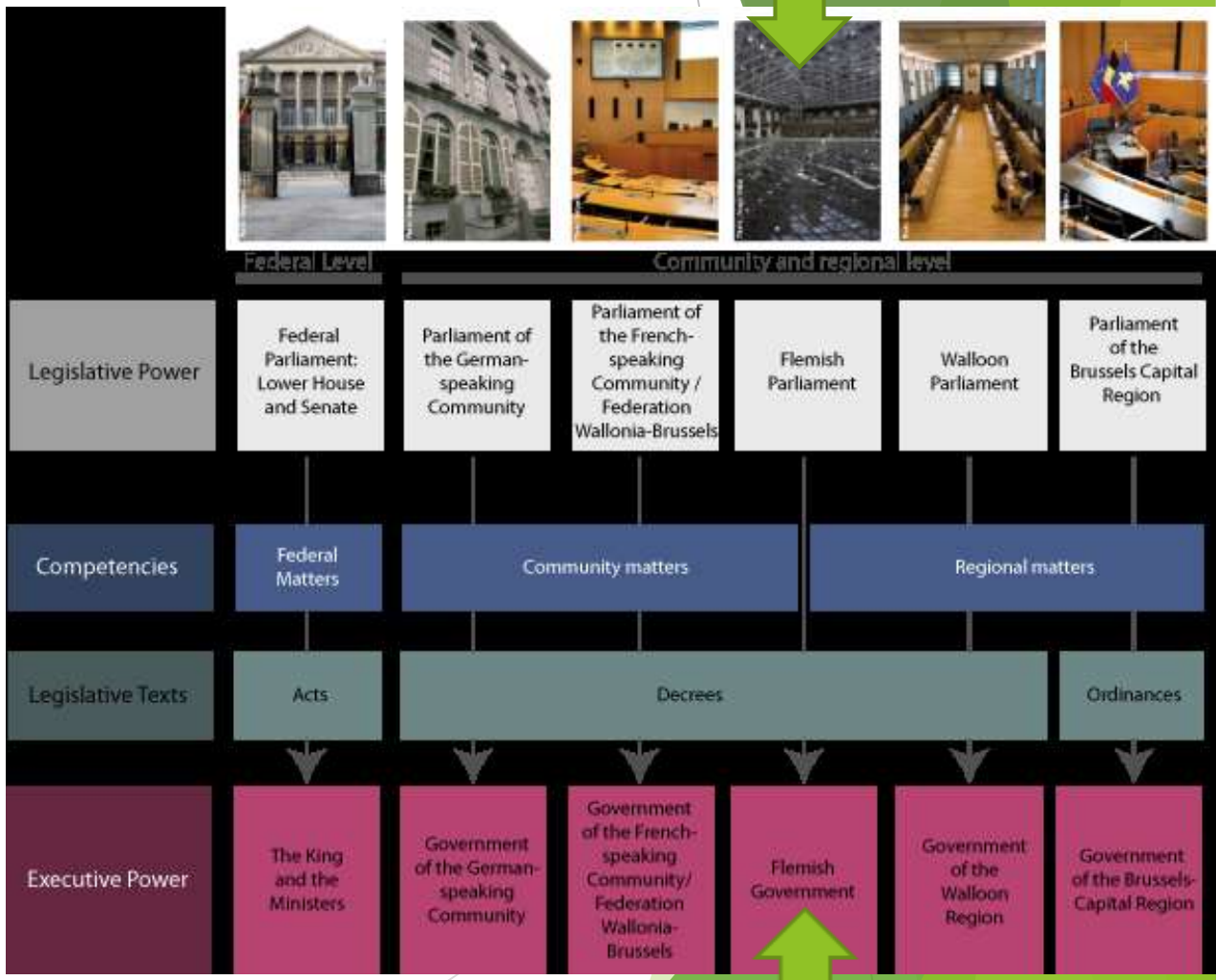
In 1980, the cultural communities became known just as Communities. That happened because the Communities decided not only about **cultural matters** but also matters relating to the individual, in other words **health** and **social services**. As a result, these **three Communities** were known as the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. These Communities were each given a Council (their Parliament) and a Government.



With the State reform of 1980, **two Regions** were also established: the **Flemish** Region and the **Walloon** Region. They also had a Council and a Government. In Flanders, the Government and the Council of the Flemish Region merged with the Government and the Council of the Flemish Community. So in Flanders, there is only one Government and one Council for the Community and the Region. During the third State reform in 1988-89, it was mainly the **Brussels-Capital Region** that took shape. the Communities were given more powers and the Regions were consolidated. So the Communities were given responsibility for e.g. **education**, while the Regions were given powers for inter alia **transport and public works.**

Belgian governance features: devolution





Belgian governance features: complexity

Result of 6 state reforms (1970-2012)

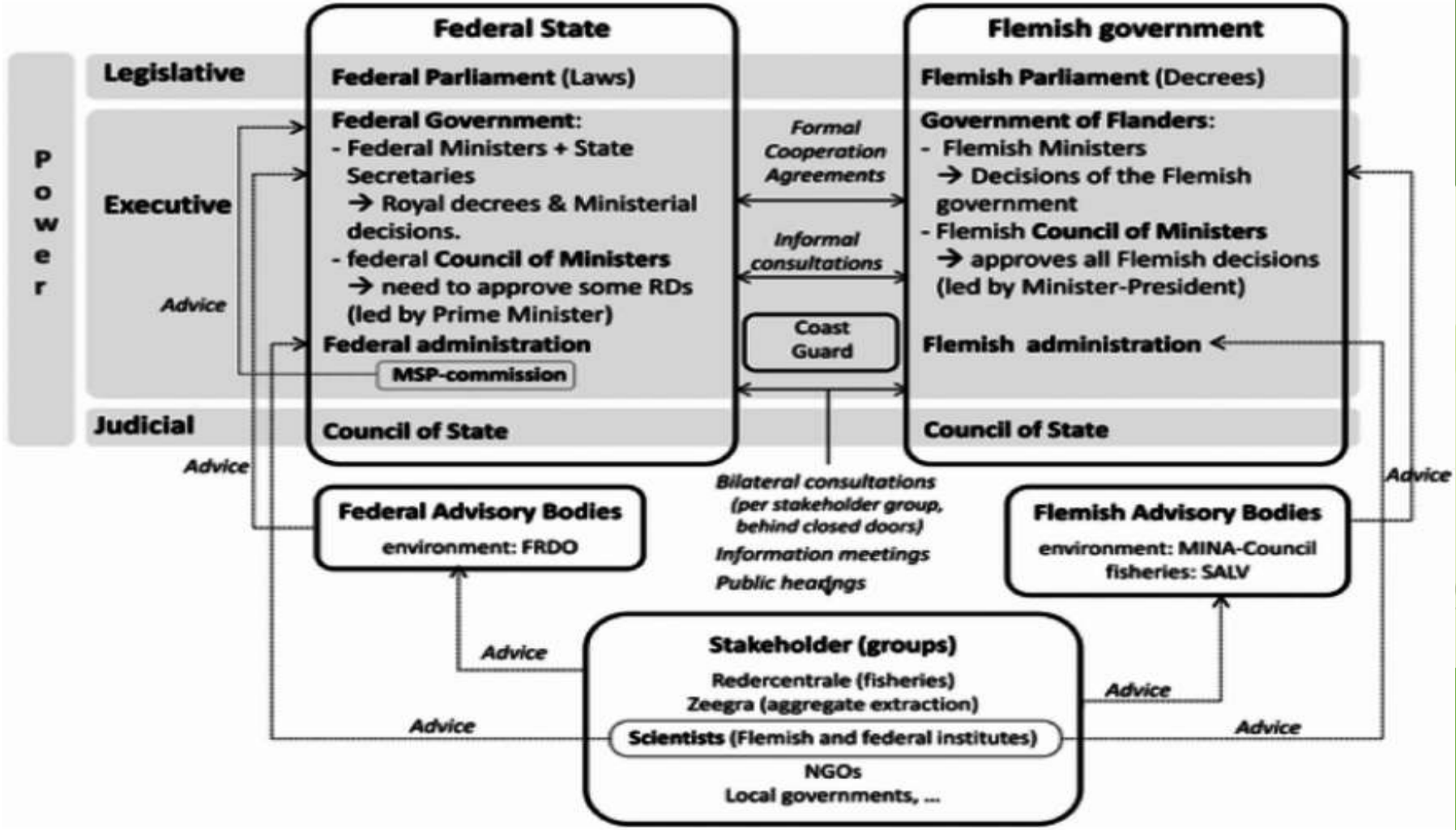
-> increasing complexity / fragmentation

Furthermore:

- Policy domains reveal complex competency divisions between federal/regional levels (coherence)
- Complex policy development and decision making processes (coordination)
- Non-hierarchical legislation: federal/regional legislation (competition)
- Intra-Belgian co-operation frameworks contain political, legal, administrative agreements… to be implemented / enforced…

BUT not so exceptional: BE 4 administrative tiers, just like AT, FR, DE, IT, PL, ES (EUPACK-report)

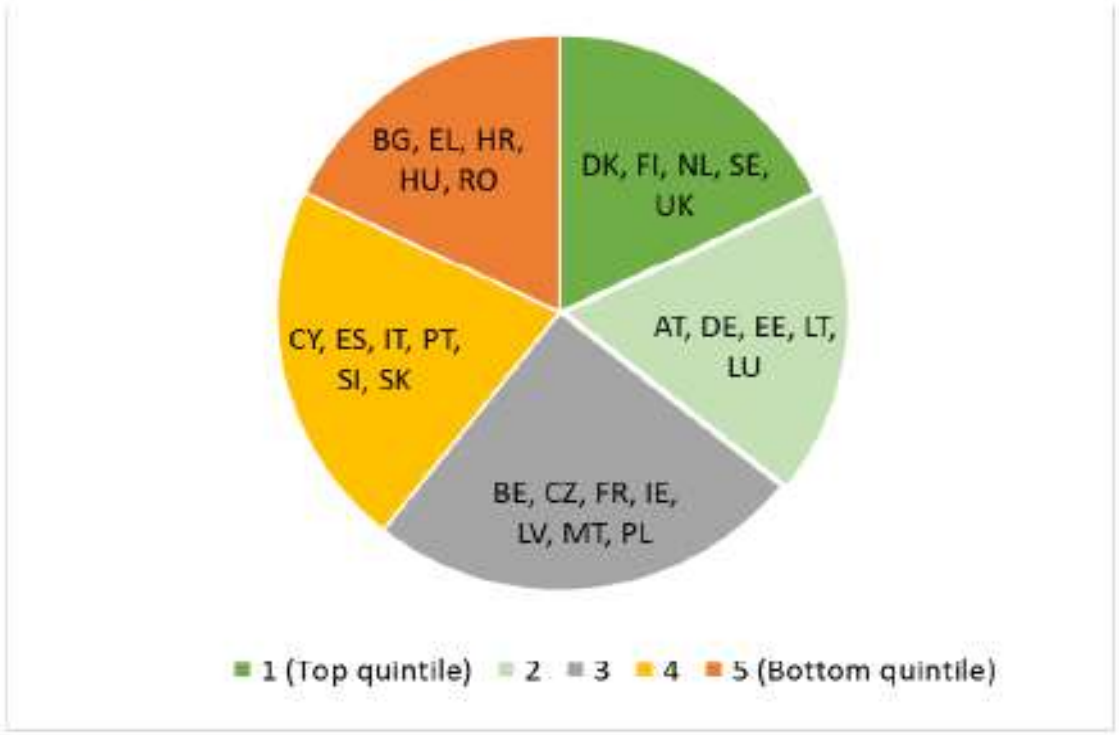
Belgian governance features: complexity



Institutional and stakeholder integration in Belgium. Institutional bodies, stakeholder participation and integration, related to marine and maritime governance in the Belgian part of the North Sea.

Belgian governance features: effects?

Graph 35: Overall indicator-based assessment of the EU Member States with regard to "policy making, coordination and regulation"[30]



Source: *Own calculation based on 4 comparative indicators*

30 The ranking builds upon country-specific means for the 4 indicators (**Regulatory quality - Rule of law - Societal consultation - Use of evidence based instruments**) on policy making, coordination and regulation used in EUPACK (2018).

Belgian governance reflects societal features: consociationalism

Consociationalism, a stable democratic system in deeply divided societies ((distinct ethnic, religious, political, national or linguistic groups) that is based on power sharing between elites from different social groups.

P. Norris mentions Belgium as an examples of established democracies, "with plural societies containing distinct ethnic communities divided by language, religion, and region, with constitutions characterized by multiple veto-points and extensive power-sharing." (Norris, P., Ethnic Pluralism and Consociational Democracy Revisited, Paper presentation at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, September 2005, p.3-4).

Historical differences in Belgian society: languages, cultures, religious-ethical, socio-economic

Current and upcoming issues? Migration and integration challenges, socio-ecological transition

More direct contacts between social groupings and political parties and governments

Close linkages between the formal and the informal settings

QUID Flanders?:…

Flemish governance features: public administration & role of ministerial cabinets

Regional Flemish administration (40 years young): initially ambitious, innovative, but went through reforms (efficiency…), New Public Management-elements (performance management, agencification,…)

Impact?

Also in Flanders: a typical, particular Belgian feature as described by the OECD (2010): "(…) the often **strong role of cabinets in rule-making processes**. In all governments (federal, regions, communities), ministerial cabinets (referred to as "strategic cells") are large, contain a mix of both civil servants and political nominees, and are often involved in law drafting (a task usually reserved for civil servants in other countries)."

Flemish governance features: public administration & role of ministerial cabinets

Impact on monitoring /evaluation/assessment/appraisal policies?

F. Varone et. al. (2005): "*Both in Flanders (Dutch-speaking) and in the bilingual Brussels Region, evaluations are ordered unsystematically and outside any institutional framework regulating the practice*. "

M. Brans et.al. (2017):"*Ministerial cabinets, which take up a leading role in policy formulation in Belgium, rarely give high priority to policy-analytical practices, such as the appraisal of different policy alternatives.*"

Comment: Charter (2009) ?

Flemish governance @ glance 2019

1st edition of a **stocktaking of the Flemish governmental operations** (regional/local), inspired by OECD – Gov@Glance, focusing on the following themes (in a selective and non-comprehensive way):

Public finance, Public employment, Policy process, Budget practices, HRM, Integrity, Regulatory policy, Public procurement, Institutions, Open and digital government.



Policy process: covers i.a. capacity for transitions and evaluations, policy advices,

Regulatory process

Institutions: covers i.a. structures of the Flemish administration, coordination and cooperation, autonomy and steering

Flemish governance @ glance: conclusions

Policy process:

Transition and evaluation capacity are essential for a good future policy.

Since 2004 "**transition-management**" has been linked to the long-term strategic policies of the Flemish government (Flanders in Action, Vision 2050, Visor 2030) in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other international policy objectives. Policy making implies a professionalization of the transition policy through, among other things, the further development of governance models for the management of transitions, the role of experiments, and cooperation and partnerships with actors. In addition to improved transversal and intern-sector approaches indicators has to be developed in order to prepare an annual progress report, to be aligned with EU and International processes (e.g. 'Voluntary National Review' (VNR) in the context of the SDG evaluations by the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF)).

Comment



Flemish governance @ glance: conclusions

Policy process - advice:

The FG@G states that the current policy analysis capacity is very fragmented, which means that short-term thinking takes the upper hand.

Policy advices comes from government policy advisors, advisory councils, cabinets, academics, consultants, think tanks, civil society organizations, research services of political parties, etc. Their role as policy advisers is very different and subject to change. Research into institutionalized advisory bodies such as the Flemish (strategic) advisory councils has revealed that policy advisory practice traditionally places a strong emphasis on public support for policy through the representation of representative actors. The system builds on the characteristics of the Flemish political system as a consensus democracy with neo-corporatist traits. These social actors have useful and relevant applied knowledge - among other things because they are responsible for implementing the policy on which they advise.

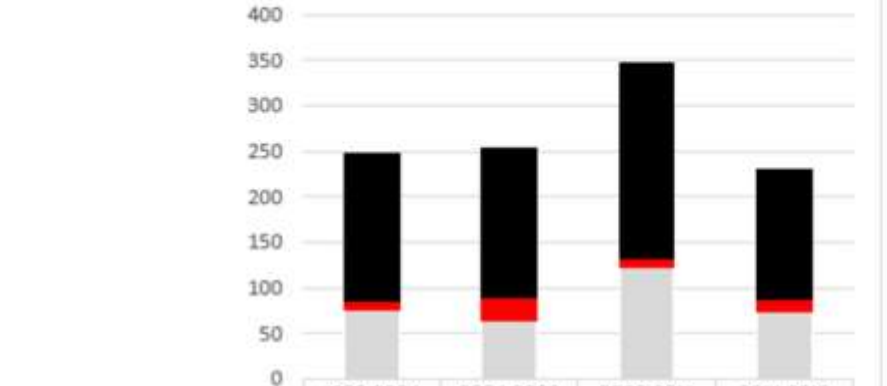
Comment



Flemish governance @ glance: conclusions

Policy process - evaluation

Grafiek 2 – Referenties naar beleidsevaluatie met toewijsbaar motief in beleidsnota's van de Vlaamse Regering, (1999-2019)

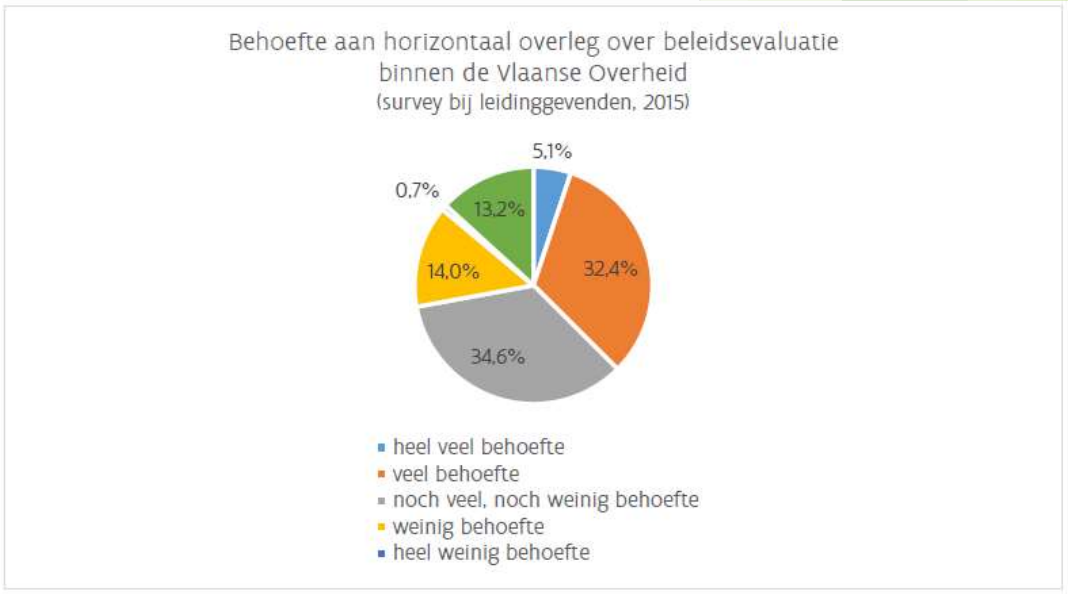


	1999-2004	2004-2009	2009-2014	2014-2019
verbetering en beleidsleren	161	165	215	144
verantwoording	10	24	10	12
beleidsplanning	76	65	122	75

Bron: De Peuter, B., & Pattyn, V. (2016). Waarom evalueren beleidsmakers? Een longitudinale analyse van motieven voor beleidsevaluatie in Vlaamse ministeriële beleidsnota's. *Bestuurskunde 25*(2), 32-45.



Policy note 2019-2024 addresses the need to improve the evidence/information – based policy making, inter alia by enhanced cooperation of existing capacity in and outside the administration.
Research Unit of the Flemish administration.



Flemish governance @ glance

Regulatory process

The FG@G recommends to maintain the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) approach. It states further that is important that the quality of RIAs is monitored and increased and that the (non) use of RIAs becomes visible. In other words, the quality of the legal regulations must be assessed on both the formal-technical and policy-content level. This also applies to the degree of implementation of European legislation.

More generally, available knowledge has to used in the policy process at the appropriate moment. Central to this is to make the RIAs visible via a website, to carry out ex post evaluations and to make them available, and to facilitate consultations on better regulation.

Comment



Flemish governance @ glance



Institutions

The FG@G states that the Flemish government and local authorities in the past have followed the international trend to set up autonomous entities to strengthen service provision and policy in its design, implementation and evaluation. After the increase of entities, the number of entities has been reduced during a few reform programmes. However the diversity of types of entities remains problematic as particular forms of independence, which are not mentioned in the Governance Decree (2018), remain. A further rationalization of types and entities is desirable. Proposals for new privatizations must be restrained on the basis of clear criteria. The effectiveness of the government, Flemish and local, not only depends on the strength of the autonomous entities, but also on the capacity to coordinate.

The FG@G recommends to develop a strong **center that coordinates**, directs and adjusts. Otherwise there is a chance that the system becomes centrifugal.

Comment

Flemish governance @ glance



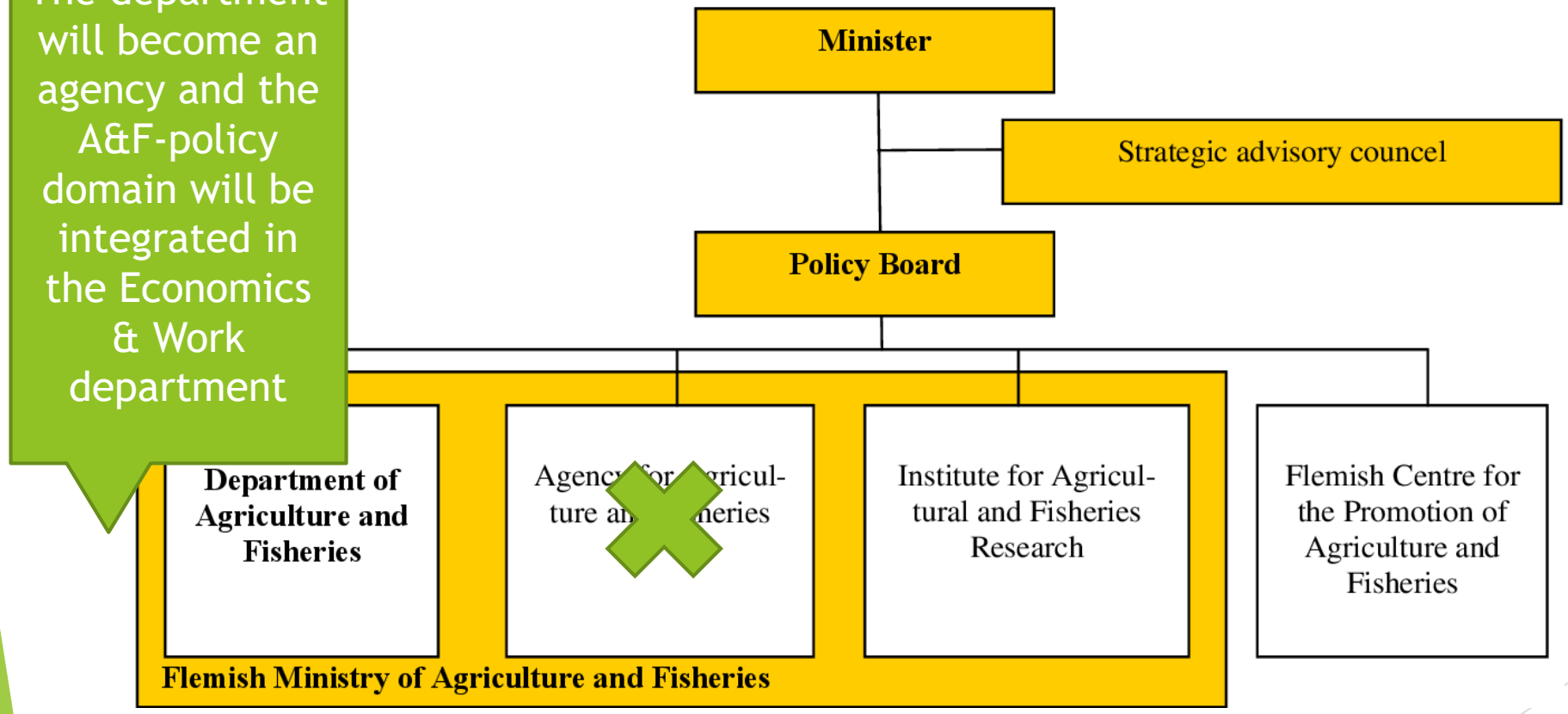
Institutions

The FG@G states that it is essential to have a **coordination mechanism** which goes beyond political coordination and which thinks and acts in a consolidating and integrating way. The coordination capacity and steering power within each of the 11 policy domains and government-wide (including through the "center of government") must be strengthened. For each policy domain, it must be clear which entity is responsible for supporting official coordination. This requires a culture of collaboration with a new vision of leadership and coordination through a novel interpretation of hierarchy and networks. The capacity and expertise in meta-governance must be strengthened, as must network management and leadership skills. Flanders is exceptional and unique within the OECD-context regarding the fact that departments and agencies are on the same level, without a clearly distinguishable task, which has consequences for mutual cooperation and official coordination.

Comment

Flemish governance: example

The department will become an agency and the A&F-policy domain will be integrated in the Economics & Work department



Governance: Policy making

OECD (2019), OECD Skills Strategy Flanders: Assessment and Recommendations

The governance of adult learning in Flanders is complex. While the federal government is responsible for the legal framework for certain kinds of adult learning policies, the regional and community level, which in Flanders is represented by the same government, is responsible for the majority of labour market and education policies. Several departments in the Flemish Government have some responsibility for the planning and delivery of adult learning, including: education and training, work and social economy, and finance and budget. In addition, many stakeholders, such as sectoral training providers, employers, unions and academics, have an important influence on participation and success in adult learning. It is also critical to engage adult learners themselves and place them at the centre of policy design. Governance structures are abundant in Flanders, with often strong roles for stakeholders. Examples of these structures are the Joint Policy Council, the Management Committee, the Flemish Education Council (VLOR) and the Social-Economic council (SERV), as well as triple-helix partnerships in the Flemish Cluster policy.

Governance: Policy making

OECD (2019), OECD Skills Strategy Flanders: Assessment and Recommendations

A comprehensive vision for adult learning that stimulates collaboration within government and with stakeholders is needed. Flanders already has an ambitious long-term vision for the future as articulated through "Vision 2050: a long-term strategy for Flanders," which outlines Flanders' plan to become an "inclusive, open, resilient and internationally connected region that creates prosperity and well-being for its citizens in a smart, innovative and sustainable manner." The Flemish Social Economic Council (SERV) and the Flemish Education Council (VLOR) representing relevant stakeholders have also expressed their strong support and commitment for better skills outcomes in the long term.

Governance: Policy making & Visions

More than 25 years of forward looking initiatives in Flanders (FT 1983)

VISION 2050 Was launched in 2016 under the previous government (2014-2019).

Is a strategic response to the challenges, trends (e.g. demographic, social, ecological, technological,... and opportunities Flanders is facing.

Underpinned by a future outlook (megatrends) and gap analysis





Governance: Policy making & Visions



Vision 2050 = central strategy which reflects and includes clearly sustainability ambitions through each of the 7 transition priorities,

July 2017: adoption by the Flemish government of a White Paper on **open and flexible governance** focusing on: citizen oriented services, added value through participation, regulation for growth and innovation, evidence-based policies and solution oriented cooperation by network organizations.

March 2018: adoption by the Flemish government of **Visor 2030 which contains 49 objectives** in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals; includes also indicators in order to **monitor** progress

Visor 2030 refers to **sectoral policy plans** (e.g. for climate, air, mobility, spatial planning, housing,...) for which separate adoption procedures exist

Ongoing governance challenges

Governance: Policy making & Visions



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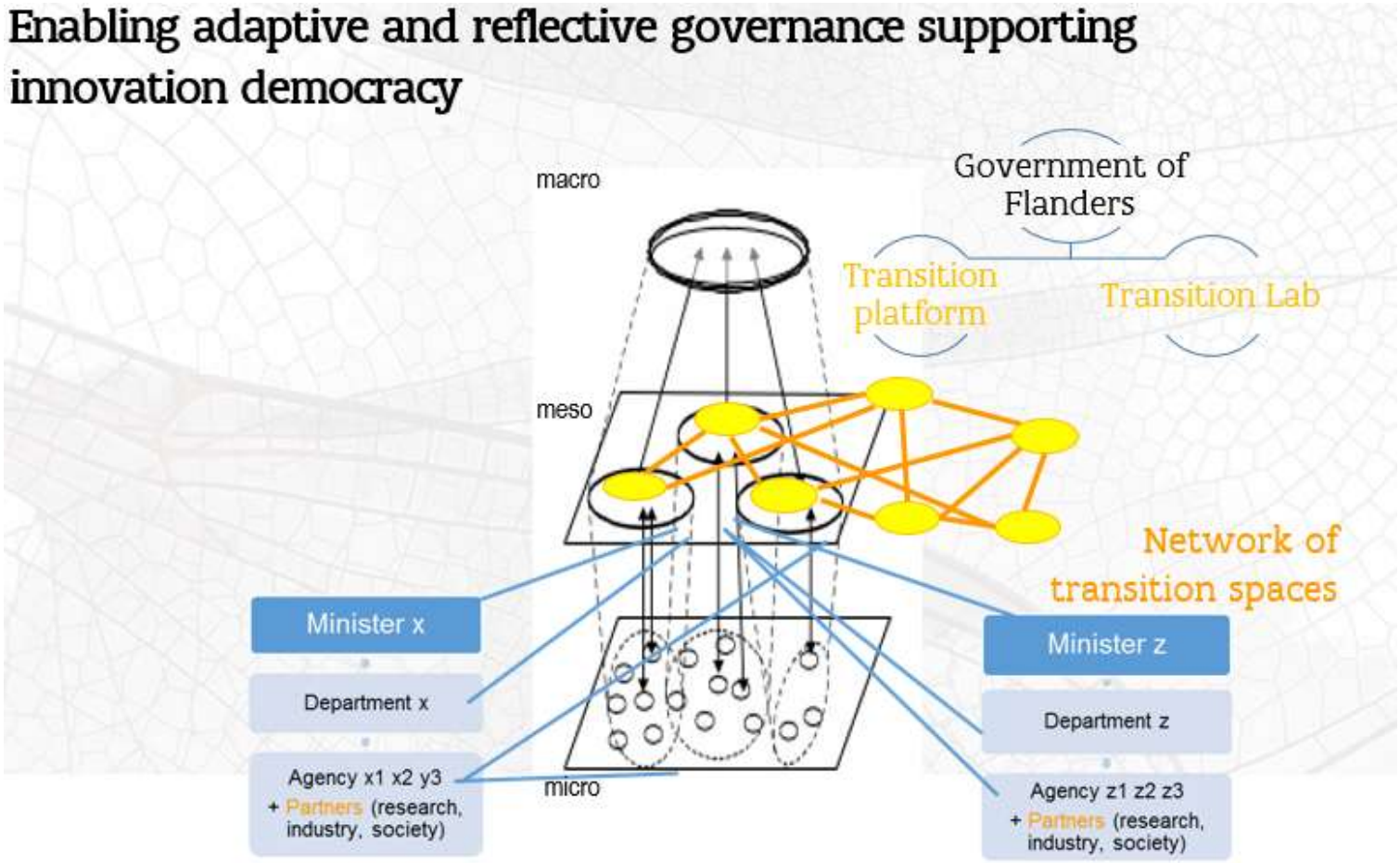
Ongoing governance challenges

Governance: Policy making & Visions





Governance: Policy making & regulation

Beleid

Strategische planning

Over de strategische beleidsplanning van de Vlaamse Regering

Onderzoek en evaluatie

De Vlaamse overheid doet aan onderzoek en evaluatie om haar beleid te ondersteunen.

Inspraak, advies en overleg

Over kwaliteitsvolle inspraakprocessen, advies en overleg, consultatieportaal

Werking en besluitvorming Vlaamse Regering

Beter beleid ma gedragsinzichte

Op deze pagina v over de toepassin gedragsinzichten

Werking van de Vlaamse Regering

Besluitvorming, vergaderingen en beslissingen Vlaamse Regering

Regeringsdocumenten

Nota, verslag, mededeling, conceptnota, visienota, groenboek, witboek

Verplichte advies- akkoord- en overlegprocedures

Inspectie van Financiën, Raad van State, Vlaamse Toezichtscommissie

Regering en Parlement

Samenwerking en informatie-uitwisseling tussen de Vlaamse Regering en het Vlaams P...

Intergouvernementele organen

Overlegcomité, interministeriële conferenties...

Governance: Policy making & regulation

Legislative cycle

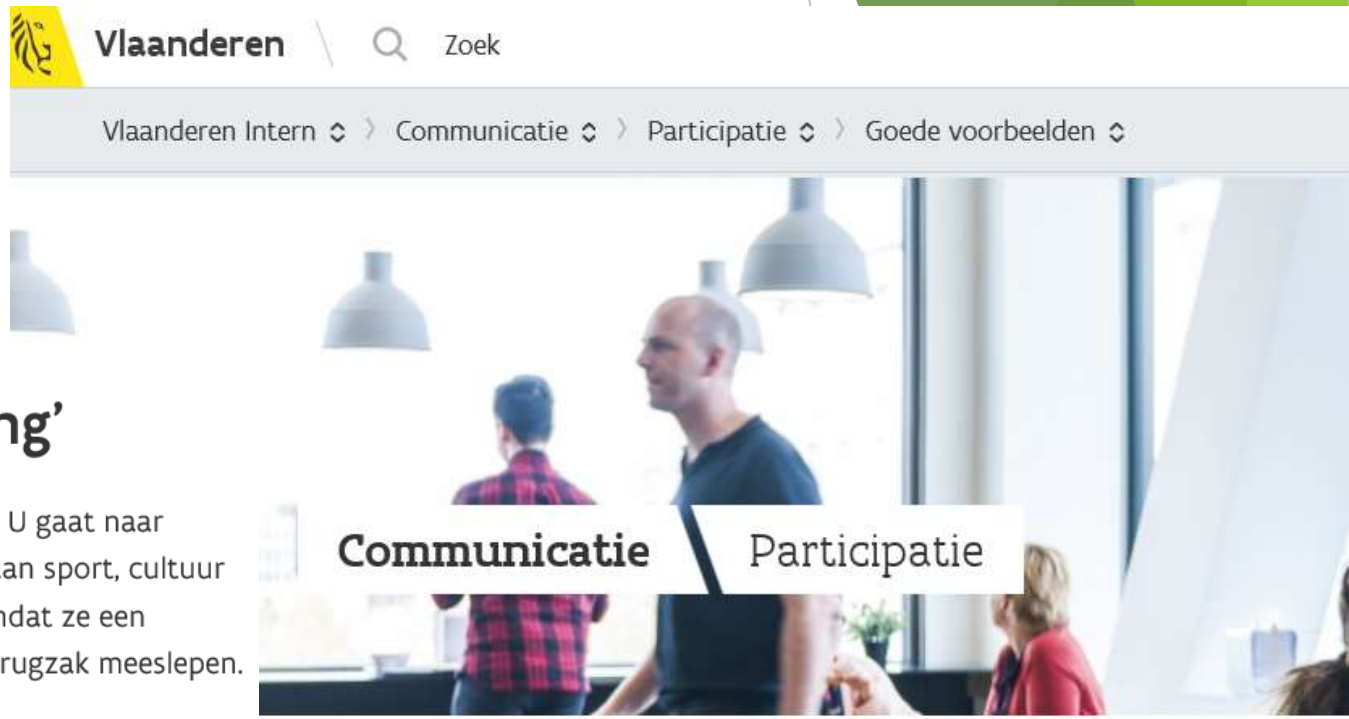


- Mandatory advices and consultations

- Advies Inspectie van Financiën
- Akkoord van de Vlaamse minister, bevoegd voor de begroting
- Akkoord van de Vlaamse minister, bevoegd voor de bestuurszaken
- Het wetgevingsadvies van het Departement Kanselarij en Bestuur
- Het advies over het kind- en jongereneffectenrapport (JoKER)
- Advies van de strategische adviesraden en van de Vlaamse Raad WVG
- Aanmelding van regelgeving bij de Europese Commissie
- Advies van de afdeling Wetgeving van de Raad van State
- Advies van de Vlaamse Toezichtcommissie
- Onderhandelingen en overleg met de representatieve vakorganisaties
- Consultatie van andere overheden die voorgeschreven is in de institutionele wetten

Governance: Policy making & regulation

Continuously developing and improving consultation and participation approaches



Participatie als 'deelnemen aan de samenleving'

Deelnemen aan het dagdagelijkse leven is 1 vorm van participeren aan de maatschappij. U gaat naar school of naar het werk, u bent lid van een vereniging en u neemt in uw vrije tijd deel aan sport, cultuur en recreatie. Toch zijn die alledaagse dingen voor veel mensen niet vanzelfsprekend. Omdat ze een handicap hebben, te weinig financiële slagkracht hebben, onze taal niet spreken of een rugzak meeslepen. Het participatiedecreet probeert bepaalde hindernissen weg te werken.

Participatie als 'meebouwen aan de samenleving'

De andere invulling van participatie is meebouwen aan de maatschappij. Burgers, organisaties en bedrijven: iedereen kan zijn stempel drukken op de samenleving door zich te engageren. U vraagt informatie op, reageert op consultaties, denkt actief mee over beleid, werkt samen met de overheid en andere actoren om projecten uit te voeren, of start samen met anderen een initiatief om uw omgeving beter en mooier te maken. Lokaal in de gemeente, op Vlaams of federaal niveau of in Europees verband.

Goede voorbeelden

Governance: Sector-monitoring

Monitoren

- Algemene omgevingsanalyse van Vlaanderen
- Economische betekenis van toerisme
- Energiearmoede
- Europa 2020
- Groene economie
- ICT-monitor
- Jouw gemeente in cijfers
- Lokale bestuurskrachtmonitor
- Pact 2020
- Resoc
- SALK
- Stadsmonitor
- Tevredenheidsmeting
- Vlaamse armoedemonitor
- Vlaamse Migratie- en Integratiemonitor
- Vlaamse Rand
- Vlaanderen in Cijfers
- VRIND

Lokale Inburgerings- en Integratiemonitor editie 2019

De Lokale Inburgerings- en Integratiemonitor 2019 (LIIM 2019) is net als de voorgaande edities het resultaat van een samenwerking tussen het Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur (ABB) en Statistiek Vlaanderen.

De monitor informeert iedere burger en lokaal bestuur over:

- de omvang en de samenstelling van de groep vreemdelingen, personen van buitenlandse herkomst en nieuwkomers in de gemeente;
- de maatschappelijke positie van die groep op het vlak van tewerkstelling, huisvesting, welzijn en armoede, onderwijs en sociale participatie.

Op de website van het Agentschap voor Binnenlands Bestuur (ABB) kan u voor elke gemeente uit het Vlaamse en Brusselse Hoofdstedelijke Gewest een gemeentelijk cijferrapport afladen. Ga hiervoor naar integratiebeleid.vlaanderen.be en gebruik 'LIIM' als zoekterm.

Statistiek Vlaanderen bracht de basisgegevens van de LIIM 2019 samen in een overzichtsbestand. Dat bestand kan u hier raadplegen.

Download het overzichtsbestand met de basisgegevens van de LIIM editie 2019

Publicatiedatum: 5 december 2019

Meer informatie:
Jo Noppe
Statistiek Vlaanderen

Governance: Monitoring

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Satisfaction with policy

- 1 in 2 satisfied with local policy, 1 in 3 satisfied with Flemish and Federal government policy
- Quarter of inhabitants of Flanders dissatisfied with policy of European Commission
- Slight differences in background characteristics
- Residents of central cities and rural areas more satisfied with local policy

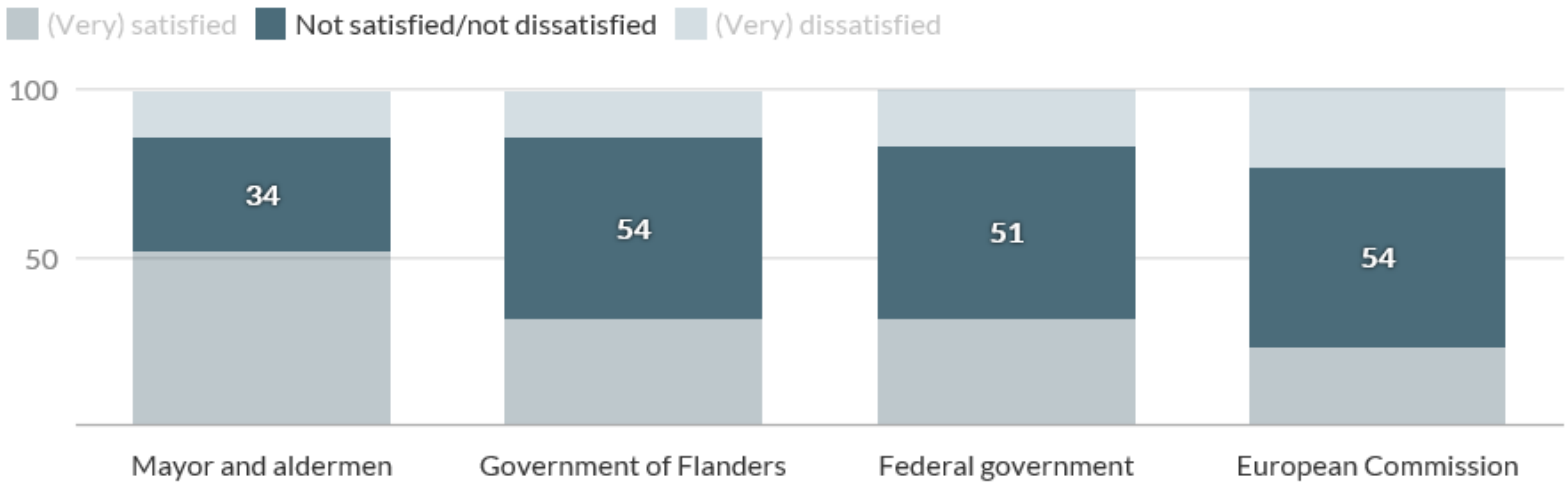


Publication date

12 February 2019

Satisfaction with policy of different administration levels among population aged 18 to 85

Flemish Community, 2018, in %



Note: the data included in the chart are estimates based on a survey. Consequently, a margin of uncertainty must be factored in. See: 'Fur information on definitions and sources'.

Source: SCV survey, processed by Statistics Flanders

Governance: Evaluation

Polit Vierteljahresschr (2019) 60:701–717
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-019-00211-8

PVS Politische Vierteljahresschrift

CRITICAL PAPER

Why do Ministers Ask for Policy Evaluation Studies? The Case of the Flemish Government

Valérie Pattyn · Bart De Peuter · Marleen Brans

Published online: 4 December 2019
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Abstract Policy evaluations can be set up for multiple purposes including accountability, policy learning and policy planning. The question is, however, how these purposes square with politics itself. To date, there is little knowledge on how government ministers present the rationale of evaluations. This article is the first to provide a diachronic study of discourse about evaluation purposes and encompass a wide range of policy fields. We present an analysis of evaluation announcements in so-called ministerial policy notes issued between 1999 and 2019 by the Flemish government in Belgium. The research fine-tunes available evidence on catalysts for conducting evaluations. The Flemish public sector turns out to be a strong case where New Public Management brought policy evaluation onto the agenda, but this has not resulted in a prominent focus on accountability-oriented evaluations. We further show that policy fields display different evaluation cultures, albeit more in terms of the volume of evaluation demand than in terms of preferences for particular evaluation purposes.

Keywords Evidence-informed policy · Policy evaluation · Political discourse · Qualitative content analysis · Belgium

Table 2 Distribution of evaluation purposes across policy fields

Policy Field	PP	AC	PL	Total
Education	27	16	80	123
Environment (including Spatial Planning, as of 2014–2019)	39	4	75	118
(Social) Economy, Science, Technology and Innovation	31	7	60	98
Welfare, Public Health, Family, and Equal Opportunities[b]/Poverty[c]	32	3	58	93
Mobility and Public Works	50	5	33	88
Housing	13	2	38	53
Energy	18	1	29	48
Finance and Budget	16	1	30	47
Sports	8	3	24	35
Foreign Policy and International Development	12	1	19	32
Agriculture	10	0	21	31
Media	6	1	23	30
Culture	6	0	20	26
Planning and Statistics[a, b]/Horizontal Governmental Policy[c, d]	11	2	13	26
Home Affairs	4	0	16	20
Civil Service[a]/Administrative Affairs[b-d]	2	0	14	16
Tourism	4	0	12	16
Brussels Affairs	5	0	10	15
Youth	2	0	11	13
Total	338	56	685	1079

Policy fields that are in italics were later on subject of a separate policy note
PP Policy Planning, *AC* Accountability, *PL* Policy Learning
The superscripted letters refer to the policy notes' title for the first[a], second[b], third[c] and fourth[d] term of government

Governance: Evaluation

The Flemish public sector turns out to be a strong case where New Public Management brought policy evaluation onto the agenda, but this has not resulted in a prominent focus on accountability-oriented evaluations. Policy fields display different evaluation cultures, albeit more in terms of the volume of evaluation demand than in terms of preferences for particular evaluation purposes.

evaluation announcements largely follows the NPM dynamics in the public sector, generally speaking. When the attention to NPM wanes, so does ministerial interest in policy evaluation and vice versa. The findings do not point at an increasing impact of EU cooperation on the evaluation volume across sectors. As it has been shown in earlier studies, the history of policy evaluation has, to a large extent, developed along policy field lines (e.g. Barbier 2012). This sectoral pattern is clearly visible in the Flemish public sector, but mostly in terms of evaluation volume. Those policy fields excelling in evaluation maturity internationally speaking (and beyond the EU) are also the fields where we detect most evaluation announcements. As for explaining the type of evaluation purposes, our results are less conclusive. Contrary to our expectations, we could not retrieve a strong association of NPM with the announcement of accountability-oriented evaluations. Instead, we found a relatively strong dominance of announcements which are learning oriented. While one could argue that ministers will probably not be keen to initiate evaluations to be held accountable for the results of their policies, they neither seem to be extensively using evaluations for their outward-facing function (Boswell 2018), at least not in Flanders. Newer policy fields show no deviant pattern in this regard. Our expectation of finding more plans for evaluations focusing on policy planning in such fields cannot be confirmed.

For the administration in charge of the implementation of the evaluations announced in the policy notes and the evaluation community at large, our findings can be read as an incentive to engage in policy evaluations that are not primarily accountability focused, but that also enable policy learning. In fact, not all evaluation methods lend themselves to policy learning (Pattyn 2019). This is not to say, on the other hand, that parliamentarians cannot use learning-oriented evaluations to hold ministers accountable (Speer et al. 2015; Bundi 2016). Instead, they can verify to what extent actual evaluations are consistent with ministers' initial announcements.

Governance: Evaluation

Ex ante: rise & decline of RIA

Regulatory Impact Assessment system started in 2005 and RIA became a mandatory step in the approval procedure of certain categories of regulations (decrees) at the initiative of the Government of Flanders. RIA has been gradually expanded but also reduced… RIA Guidance mentioned impacts on: administrative burden and management costs, child & youth (JoKER), poverty, equal opportunities, inclusion, sustainable development, local authorities, Brussels…

Evaluation (2017, Van Humbeeck) revealed:

- Design is rather good (EA inspired)

- Not legally required but formal compliance is rather high

- Number of RIA's was initially high (587 in 7 years, declining, became less mandatory)

- Average quality was low, no improvements due to declining monitoring and quality control

- Impact on policy decisions was poor

No or slow change in the policy culture, no indication for improvements

Declining practice resulted in a reshuffle in order to incorporate IA-elements in the explanatory memorandum to draft-decrees, as required by an internal regulation.

Governance: Evaluation

Ex post: towards renewed approaches?

Since 2017 more attention to evaluations of the implementation of decrees

Early 2018 embedded in the updated internal regulation of the Flemish Parliament requiring that policy notes of ministers should contain a list of planned, current and past evaluations indicating their follow-up by the Flemish Government.

Methodological guidance

Re-established Research Unit is planning further work

Close cooperation with the Flemish Evaluation Platform open network for all actors involved and interested in public policy evaluation, within all policy sectors and governmental levels in Belgium

Open netwerk voor beleidsevaluatie VEP Vlaams Evaluatie Platform

Institutionalisation



Observations from a good governance / better regulation perspective

Institutionalized Flemish policy making approaches (regulatory policies/public management) have developed driven by internal and external factors, e.g.:

- Consecutive state reforms (devolution / policy domains)
- International trends (NPM / OECD / EU-policies / globalisation)
- Societal evolutions (political decline of traditional parties; other actors/movements/interest groups requiring responses to new challenges; fragmentation)

Enhanced need for information/evidence-based policymaking including foresighting

Government Agreement 2019-2024: monitoring (26X), evaluation (59X), scientifically (36X)

Institutionalisation


STAATSBLAD — 19.12.2018 — MONITEUR

VLAAMSE OVERHEID

7 DECEMBER 2018. — Bestuursdecreet (1)

Major development: Governance Decree of 7 December 2018

Preparation (as from 2014) included a Green and White Paper and various external/internal consultations.

The advice from the Social and Economic Council of Flanders about the Green Paper stated that it missed important proposals for necessary cultural changes to reform the relationships between politics (cabinets) and the administration, to improve cooperation, to increase transparency, as well as evidence-based policies and better regulation.

This decree contains now a few provisions regarding participation, consultation, monitoring, evaluation.

Furthermore ongoing reform of the administration: merger of entities and policy domains; re-establishment of the Research Unit; renewed Board of Presidents (of policy domains).

Institutionalisation

Learning organisation?...

22 January 2020 **Joint declaration** by

all Belgian **institutionalized socio-economic advisory councils, pleading for "better regulation" along 7 headlines:**

- **Engagement at high political level**
- **More transparency in the legislative process (including early consultation)**
- **Ex ante & ex post evaluation of regulation**
- **Innovation friendly & future proof regulation**
- **Coherence & cooperation between governments**
- **Role of advice and representative, consultative bodies (participatory policy making in all stages) :**
- **(PM role State Council)**

Final observation



Joint Research Centre

Evidence-informed policymaking

The principle that policy should be informed by evidence is under attack. Politicians, scientists and civil society need to defend this cornerstone of liberal democracy.

Framing of a policy problem and the accompanying decisions on what evidence to commission or take into account is sometimes seen as a technical issue. It is in fact political, hence the competition among political actors to impose their framing on a problem.

It is important to recognise that the framing of policy problems determines the selection of what research is needed, what evidence counts and what should be ignored. The commitment to evidence-informed policy cannot be taken for granted. Partisan leadership in highly polarised political environments undermines the capacity of governments to use evidence effectively; partisanship weakens cooperation, while interest groups compete to interpret the evidence. Populists and authoritarians may perceive independent evidence as a challenge to their interpretation of 'the public interest', underlining the need to recognise evidence-informed policy as a core value along with democracy. To make policy making innovative, inclusive and evidence-informed, a new model of conceiving and delivering policies could help; one that starts with a more open and democratic initial framing of policy problems. Making a public call for evidence at the beginning of the process and allowing only evidence open to public scrutiny to be taken into account would enhance trust in the evidence used in the policy process. A well-designed evidence-informed policy system would include knowledge brokers and boundary organisations, sitting between scientists and policymakers.
The principle of informing policy through evidence could be recognised as a key accompaniment to the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Thank you

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