



# Green Skills Roadmap Flanders

Proposal for a high-level strategy in  
support of the Flemish green skills  
transition

**Executive summary**

**REFORM/SC2021/111**

**Trinomics** 



This project is carried out with funding by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support of the European Commission

 **ockham|IPS**

**Authors**

Simon Broek  
Gert-Jan Lindeboom  
Pavla Cihlarova  
Maja Lardot  
Tessa Zell  
Koen Rademaekers

**Contact person**

Simon Broek  
[S.broek@ockham-ips.nl](mailto:S.broek@ockham-ips.nl)

**Date**

Rotterdam, 11 July 2023

**Version**

Final Version

**Wettelijk depot**

D/2023/3241/342

This project is funded by the EU via the Structural Reform Support Programme and implemented by Trinomics, in collaboration with the European Commission. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union.



Rotterdam, 11 July 2023

High-level Strategy support of the Flemish green skills transition

In association with:



# Executive Summary

## E.1 Introduction

This strategy is one of the key deliverables in the European Commission DG Reform project ‘Green Skills Roadmap for Belgium’ (REFORM/SC2021/111), implemented by Trinomics together with Ockham IPS under the supervision of the European Commission DG Reform and the Flemish Department of Work and Social Economy (DWSE). The strategy builds on the analyses included in the ‘Report on Green Skills Need in Flanders’<sup>1</sup> (Deliverable 2), and the insight gained from best practices studied in the context of peer learning activities organised to Gothenburg (Sweden) and Paris (France) as part of Deliverable 3<sup>2</sup>. The outcomes of the consultation activities are reported in a separate document (Deliverable 4), and highlight in more detail the building blocks from the consultation activities that were used to underpin the development of this Strategy. The consultations took place in the period September - December 2022, and included a variety of Flemish stakeholders in multiple consultation events. Stakeholders were asked to provide input for the vision (presented below) and contribute to diagnosing the critical challenges in addressing the green transition in Flanders. Based on these inputs, a broad variety of concrete policy proposals were formulated and validated by means of a survey and consultation workshops. This strategy is the final product of all this work and is accompanied by a more detailed Roadmap (Deliverable 7), where the contents of this strategy are further operationalised in concrete next steps and milestones.

## E.2 Vision and objectives for 2030

Flanders has the ambition to benefit from the green transition as an engine of growth. By offering a fertile eco-system for technology-driven innovation, Flanders seeks to be in the vanguard of the Green Transition in Europe. This calls for investing in skills and better embedding green skills in training and education as a driver for a new wave of high-quality green jobs, enriching existing jobs and further enabling economic development. It seeks to inspire a critical mass of ‘front-runner’ Flemish employers (especially SMEs), governmental and civil society organisations, as well as individual citizens to invest in future green skills and jobs. As such, the green skills transition is not only about greening, but also about making companies, institutions and individuals ready for the future.

Given this vision, the objective of this high-level strategy is to contribute to an environment in which different actors, including individuals, companies, sectoral organisations, various skills development providers and the regional government are sensitive to the importance of green skills, today and in the (near) future. It also seeks to ensure that these stakeholders are encouraged to overcome challenges related to the green skills transition matching the future supply and demand for green skills. This objective is linked to four specific objectives:

- Encourage employers to identify future green skills and jobs needs and stimulate them to act upon the identified needs;
- Stimulate skills development providers to improve the supply of green skills according to current and future demand;
- Encourage individuals to reflect on their own skills and develop green skills to support future-readiness;

---

<sup>1</sup> Trinomics (2023). [Report on Green Skills Needs in Flanders.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Trinomics (2023). [Green Skills roadmap Flanders: best practices report.](#)

- Improve the governance among the Flemish actors to create an enabling environment for the strategy's implementation.

### **E.3 The green transition as opportunity**

The green transition offers opportunities for the Flemish labour market and economy, both in terms of job creation and economic growth. Existing estimates suggest that no less than 80 000 additional jobs are to be created by new opportunities and demands in Belgium. Many more jobs in Flanders face new or additional skills requirements, which means that Flanders has the unique opportunity to reap the benefits of the Green Transition while strengthening the resilience of its workforce, including those in the social economy and those that are currently not employed.

With European-level strategies, policies and targets in the European Green Deal, the importance of working on a cleaner environment, more affordable energy, and smarter transport will only further increase. At the societal level, citizens already show an increasing awareness and support for the green transition, with increased calls for further accelerating the transition and responding to its consequences.

### **E.4 The green skills challenge**

The green transition is hampered by the green skills challenge: there are green skills gaps in specific sectors and generally across the economy and society. At the same time, the lifelong learning culture could be strengthened to stimulate people to invest in green skills development. Such learning does not need to focus on completely new jobs or entirely new skillsets; much can be gained by addressing 'greening' in relation to the application of existing skills in new 'green' contexts.

### **E.5 Embedding the high-level strategy in the policy context: related policy initiatives**

The green transition is already prioritised in a large number of existing high-level strategies and policies. Additionally, numerous public and private initiatives already exist to improve green skills development in Flanders. However, there is scope for linking these two, and presenting an explicit strategy that lists how Flanders can effectively respond to the green skills challenge in the face of the accelerating green transition. This high-level strategy seeks to complement existing initiatives and brings together the various efforts related to green skills in one place. This helps to further encourage the development of a lifelong learning culture towards the relevant skills of the future, while strengthening the cooperation between education providers and the labour market.

### **E.6 A call for action - responding to the identified challenges**

There is a need to improve the capacity of stakeholders and governance in Flanders to put in place the activities foreseen.<sup>3</sup> A governance structure is proposed that seeks to facilitate the coordination between the different actors and the actions to be undertaken and allows the coherent linking of more specific actions defined in the Roadmap to this Strategy's high-level vision. The governance structure will enable bringing together relevant governmental stakeholders and represents stakeholders from the

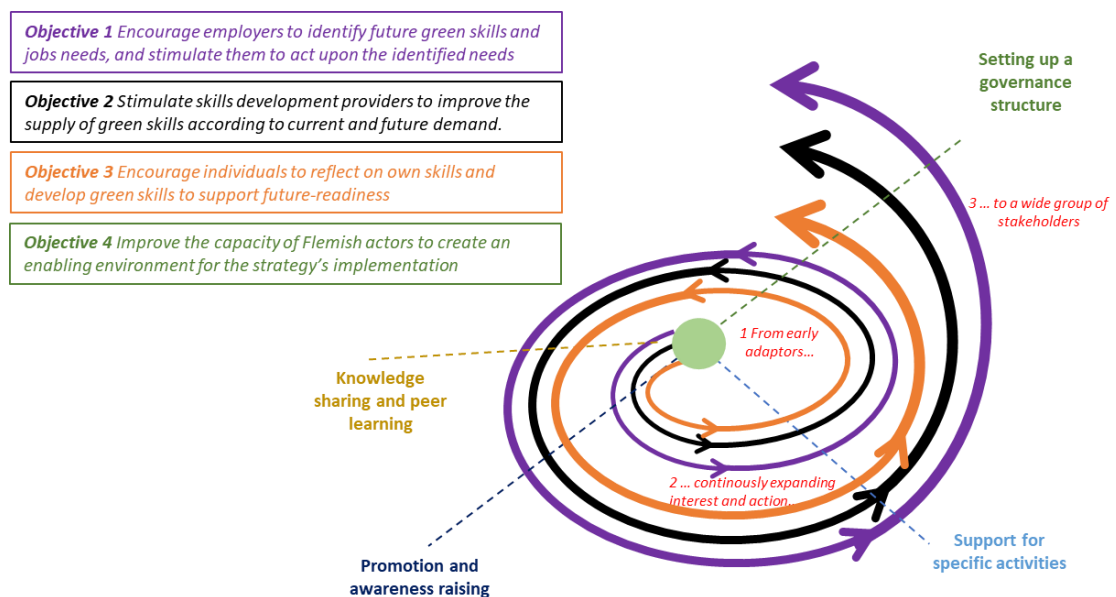
---

<sup>3</sup> The governance structure will be further developed in the forthcoming report on the governance framework, Deliverable 6 of this project.

world of work (unions, employer’s organisations, sectoral funds), the world of education and training (learning providers), as well as other key stakeholders from civil society to facilitate cooperation and coordination of actions. In addition, the Strategy foresees support for specific activities (in relation to education and encouraging job creation), which are presented in more detail in the Roadmap for Green Skills. Such actions are subsequently complemented by actions in the field of promotion and awareness raising, as well as actions related to knowledge sharing and peer learning.

The strategy aims to raise awareness and provide specific (financial) support, so that companies, skills development providers and the Flemish government are increasingly encouraged to take active steps themselves to respond to the green skills transition. Through knowledge exchange and peer learning among front-runners that already work on green skills development at the national and international level, the Strategy aims to expand towards reaching a tipping point, where an increasing number of previously ‘non-engaged stakeholders’ also become involved in the green skills transition, while in turn incentivising others. The figure below shows the envisaged change process of continuously expanding interest in, and action on, green skills by companies, skills development providers and the government. The types of actions are presented in the figure.

Figure Four! Geen tekst met de opgegeven stijl in het document.-1: Envisaged change process



While the strategy is primarily directed at all sectors and covers all green skills, it prioritises specific sectors for the implementation of actions. This enables these specific sectors to effectively function as front-runners, pilots or exemplary sectors. While the Strategy aims for an intersectoral approach, in the short term, the activities can be primarily targeted on the following (clusters of) sectors (technical and professional skills and green competences):

- **The construction sector** could illustrate how a sector-specific approach could work on solving existing shortages of skilled workers and all employees requiring new skills.
- **The energy & utilities sector** could illustrate how the sector-specific approach could support the growth of the sector by recruiting more workers with the right skills specific to individual green technologies as well as generally applicable professional skills.
- **The circular economy sector** could illustrate how the sector-specific approach could support creation of new jobs and respond to new skills demands.

- **The manufacturing & extractive industries sector** could illustrate how a sector-specific approach could work, mainly focusing on the up-skilling and re-skilling of employees. Actions should - among others - focus on attracting employees with sufficient STEM skills which are also in high demand in other sectors.