

Chapter 5

Policy recommendations

This chapter provides specific advice for developing green skills in local labour markets in Flanders, Belgium. Learnings from the mechanisms used to address green skills challenges in other countries are presented as examples for future policy makers. Specific recommendations for policy makers at the regional (Flanders) level and the local level are presented alongside recommendations for local businesses in order to present the best method of developing green skills in the local area. Adapting education and skills policies and initiatives for the green economy transition.

Recommendation 1.1: Mainstreaming environmental and sustainability principles in all education curricula (activities at school level).

As highlighted in this report, skills for the green economy transition can be defined as “the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society” (Cedefop, 2012). The local roundtables and interviews undertaken as part of this study highlighted the importance of ensuring a generally positive mind-set towards the transition to a green economy amongst all workers. A broad understanding of environmental and sustainability principles should be present in all workers, influencing their expertise, attitudes and skills. Early education of sustainable development could play an important role in raising awareness and shaping attitudes.

Flanders has long been active on environmental education and sustainable development education. For instance, a platform on Education for Sustainable Development with representatives of various policy departments and stakeholders was established to implement the Flemish action plan during the UN decade for Sustainable Development Education (2005-14). However, participants in the roundtables shared their impression that education for sustainability was taking place on an ad-hoc basis rather than systematically.

A systematic approach would require collaboration from a number of different departments and sectors. Therefore, Flemish authorities should continue to collaborate inter-departmentally to build a greater understanding and appreciation of the challenges faced through the transition to a green economy. As noted by the OECD (2013), policy co-ordination between disparate departments, including policymakers responsible for skills development, environmental policy, human resource development and broader economic strategy, can soften the transition to a green economy.

Additional efforts could be made in areas where Flanders performs less well on environmental indicators and where business surveys show limited awareness of green economy considerations (e.g. air quality or water). This could be achieved through dedicated school activities co-ordinated with the STEM academies and organised by specialist bodies such as Vlakwa (Flanders Knowledge Centre for Water). In the Netherlands, for instance, the European Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Water Technology (Wetsus) has developed activities for primary and secondary schools in Leeuwarden in addition to research activities and collaboration with universities (see Box 5.1).

Recommendation 1.2: Mainstreaming environmental and sustainability principles into higher education curricula.

Participants in the roundtables organised as part of this project suggested that sustainability principles should be integrated in higher education curricula to ensure all workers have a broad understanding of environment and sustainability principles. This is particularly relevant for those courses that lead to careers in industries directly impacted by the transition, such as the construction sector, but also for careers in the finance and

Box 5.1. Building a talent pipeline from school to university research: Wetsus, the European Centre of excellence for sustainable water technology

The European Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Water Technology in Leeuwarden has developed a wide range of educational activities to build a talent pipeline for water management technologies. The Centre collaborates with primary and secondary schools working with a team of six teachers on various projects. For primary education, activities revolve around the discovery of water. For secondary education, activities include cluster excursions, design assignments, guest lectures, competitions and the development of teaching materials in collaboration with education.

The Centre has also developed a Master's degree in Water Technology, a two year programme offered jointly by Wageningen University, University Twente and University of Groningen. It also welcomes Ph.D students and post-doctoral researchers and collaborates with a large network of universities.

Source: www.wetsus.nl/.

business sectors. Mainstreaming greens skills into broader curricula can also contribute to increased environmental awareness and enables actors to both drive and adapt to changes associated with the transition to a green economy (OECD, 2013).

Flanders has been active in mainstreaming environmental and sustainability awareness across higher education curricula such as through the Eco-campus project led by the Department of Environment (LNE) in collaboration with the Department of Education. The first eco-campus project (2008-11) had many objectives extra-curricular focuses, including building environmentally sensitive behaviours in student life and on campus. The second Eco-campus project (2011-15) focused more on the adaptation of curricula and providing a platform “to stimulate and support colleges and universities in producing graduates who consider sustainable development and environmental care as the main framework for their professional and private practices”.

Future activities should build on the results of the Eco-campus project and continue assisting colleges and universities in the adaptation of curricula especially for business and finance courses. This could also include more activities in partnership, which could contribute towards the development of a future talent pipeline for green sectors.

Recommendation 1.3: Addressing technical skills shortages for the green economy transition.

The firm surveys and interviews with business representatives suggest that technical skills could be a bottleneck with negative impacts on the Flemish transition to a green economy. Flanders has already identified that attracting young people to careers in Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is of key strategic importance. In 2012, a report by the Flemish Council for Sciences and Innovation highlighted concerns that existing initiatives were not directed to reach a critical mass of pupils/students and teachers. The Flemish government responded with a STEM Action Plan and the Science Communication Plan. In addition, an initiative called STEM platform was launched in 2014, which promotes STEM academies in Flemish municipalities. One quarter of Flemish municipalities now have a STEM academy (e.g. a network of organisations that plan after-school activities around science and technology for children and youngsters up to 18 years old).

The STEM academies could be encouraged to raise awareness of environment education and sustainability as part of their activities. However, policies should not only focus on attracting students in STEM careers through initial education but also explore how to facilitate career pathways into STEM related-sectors through continuing vocational education and training.

Recommendation 1.4: Assist greening industries in building their talent pipeline by further improving the transition from school to work through practical training and skills development.

Transitions from school to work in greener areas of the economy could be made smoother in Flanders. The education system could be made more flexible to quickly adapt to emerging needs connected with the green transition, and collaboration between industry and the education sector should be further intensified through apprenticeship and other work-based training programmes. The Tech partnership in the UK is a good example of how companies and training providers can be mobilised in partnership to deliver greater skills development opportunities in the green sector. This partnership contributes to addressing skills shortages while also helping companies with HR tools boost their attractiveness and strengthen their talent pipeline (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. The Tech Partnership – apprenticeships and HR support to accelerate the flow of talent in the UK tech industries

The overall objective of the Tech Partnership is to accelerate the growth of the digital economy in the UK. In particular, it aims to inspire young people about technology, accelerate the flow of talented individuals from all backgrounds and help companies develop the technology skills they need for the future.

The Partnership gathers over 500 employers (including top IT firms) and collaborates with universities and colleges to set up apprenticeships. Roughly 30 000 apprenticeship jobs were created in the last 3 years and new tech degrees were developed by employers.

The Tech Partnership provides a wide range of support activities such as skills management tools, Tech ambassadors and HR support. Interestingly, the partnership assisted several small tech firms in redrafting job adverts to attract young talent. This included not only focusing on technical characteristics of vacancies but describing the purpose.

Source: The Tech partnership, www.thetechpartnership.com/, presented at OECD LEED Annual forum 2015 Manchester.

In Flanders, on a provincial level, the Regional Technological Centres (whose goal is to facilitate the transition from education to work) could play a more active role in this area. The new Flanders cluster policy could also help to improve talent pipelines in specific sectors (see also recommendation 2.1).

Recommendation 1.5: Continue to support education and training agencies in their efforts to support the green economy transition.

Education and training public agencies such as VDAB (Flemish public employment service), Syntra (Flemish Agency for Entrepreneurial Training) and AHOVOKS (Flemish Agency for Higher education, Adult education, Qualifications and Grants) have well integrated green

elements in their activities. The analysis of local initiatives shows that there is a good level of flexibility left to public agencies (in particular to VDAB and Syntra) to adapt their activities to local needs with differentiated programmes in the different Flemish provinces.

Participants in the local roundtables estimated that the collaboration of the various public agencies was rather good and positive. New partnerships should therefore build on, rather than disrupt, existing collaboration. The added-value of the participation of public employment services and agencies in various local projects should be acknowledged and further supported.

Recommendation 1.6: Help develop training for green investors, managers and business leaders and support green entrepreneurship.

The local roundtables in Flanders highlighted the fact that SMEs and entrepreneurs have a critical role to play in boosting green innovation. The OECD survey to businesses indicates that CEO vision is also an important driver for greening company practices. As the survey highlights, CEOs that are convinced of the importance of greening the economy (and that are aware of the opportunities available) can make a big difference in their company directions and support for greening activities. Special attention could be given to “greening” the training provided by business schools and management courses. Training for green investors and green entrepreneurs could be developed with support from public authorities. The certification and training for green investors in Canada (see Box 5.3), the Carbon Trust micro entrepreneur fast track in the UK are good examples of such programmes. In Denmark, a special fund has also been set up to help develop green business models (see Box 5.4).

Box 5.3. Certification and training for green investors in Canada

In 2010 the David O'Brien Centre for Sustainable Enterprise in co-operation with Finance and Sustainability Initiative Montreal created the Sustainable Investment Professional Certification (SIPC) Program. This program offers basic sustainability training to business professionals with 70 to 80 hours of self-study curriculum material, online study guidance and certification testing, which culminates in the Sustainable Investment Professional Certificate. The programme is now a part of the John Molson School of Business executive centre.

The SIPC programme is an online sustainable investment certification offered through a business school and it is designed specifically to provide professionals in the finance, investment and corporate world with a practical set of skills and knowledge.

Source: www.concordia.ca/jmsb/programs/executive-centre/sipc.html.

Box 5.4. The fund for green business development and the accelerator programme for new business models in Denmark

The Fund for Green Business Development promotes eco-efficiency in Danish firms by giving grants to selected firms. The fund holds around 19 million Euros in the period 2013-16. It supports innovative projects with the potential to create growth and new green jobs in Denmark and act as catalysts for environmental improvements.

The Fund has also joined forces with the Danish Regions and the Regional Municipality of Bornholm to establish an accelerator programme on green business model innovation. The programme was launched in October 2014. The programme recognises as a starting point

Box 5.4. The fund for green business development and the accelerator programme for new business models in Denmark (cont.)

that with new business models, "companies can conquer new markets and customer segments as well as increasing their competitiveness". "New business models can work as a catalyst for innovation and they can also lead to significant environmental improvements, e.g. by changing the incentive structure in the market."

The Fund supports businesses in an initial phase to develop an overall business plan. The Danish regions and municipalities assist businesses in a second phase for testing and implementing the new business model.

Source: <http://groenomstilling.erhvervsstyrelsen.dk/greenbusinessmodels>, <http://groenomstilling.erhvervsstyrelsen.dk/greenbusinessfund>.

Step up knowledge sharing and partnerships to encourage green innovation

Recommendation 2.1: Increasing knowledge sharing/cluster activities in target sectors and cross sector partnerships.

The company survey highlighted that the chemical industry and the construction sector are advanced in terms of their greening activities, particularly with the support of public agencies and trade associations. Around one quarter of firms interviewed take part in cluster or supply chain platforms to green their business.

The new Flanders innovation policy is likely to reinforce the focus on business cluster policies in relation to the smart specialisation agenda. Clusters are defined as "geographical concentrations of interrelated companies and associated institutions for research, education and training and other supporting institutions, which are active in the same or related domain of value creation." This new policy can be seen as an opportunity to better identify potential skills needs and gaps in selected clusters and tailor the response of education and training providers to business needs.

The OECD (2015) has previously identified inclusive stakeholder management as key to promoting the sustainable use of water and other natural resources. Informal collaboration methods can foster two-way sharing of ideas and technical expertise between stakeholders including layers of government, citizen groups, businesses from diverse sectors and regulators.

The OECD company survey shows that such collaboration is not well spread in the manufacture of food products (only 5% of the firms interviewed). Additional activities should be supported in sectors where a sustainability vision is not yet well developed, but where there is an enthusiasm to do more (e.g. the agro-food sector). These activities could include support for knowledge sharing, road-mapping and joint planning for greening practices. Trade associations could help raise awareness and help launch particular projects during the transition. The development of appropriate communication channels, including web-based technologies when feasible, is a simple method of improving dialogue and information sharing between disparate businesses (OECD, 2015b).

Activities should build on existing structures and replicate good practices from other sectors such as the Academy of the Future project. For instance, the green skills partnership for London used existing networks of employers and colleges to support the development of new forums (see Box 5.5). Beyond sector specific activities, cross-sector and value chain collaborations should be encouraged for instance through broader knowledge sharing platforms or 'innovation theatres'.

Box 5.5. The London Green Skills partnership

In 2011, employers, trade unions, education providers, local authorities and community representatives launched the London Green Skills Partnership, a bottom-up initiative with three main objectives: to create local networks to enable stakeholders to work together; to provide training, skills and work experience for locals, including the unemployed; and to transform communities into greener, safer, cleaner and more inclusive places.

The partnership is co-ordinated by Unionlearn, a Trade Union body in charge of education and skills, and includes numerous London colleges (e.g. Lewisham, CONEL, South Thames), employers (e.g. Bovis Lendlease, Lakehouse, Carillion), voluntary sector organisations (e.g. Groundwork), trade unions (UCU, UCATT, UNITE) and Job Centre Plus. The partnership has developed collaborations between training providers, employers, trade unions, the voluntary sector and communities to deliver sustainability training and employment opportunities.

The Partnership includes training for job seekers in both basic and specific environmental skills needed to transform employment into greener jobs in domains as diverse as retrofitting buildings, hairdressing and waste management. Trained individuals also act as “green ambassadors” in their neighbourhoods and workplaces in order to share their green skills with colleagues and neighbours to foster additional change.

Source: www.unionlearn.org.uk/green-skills-partnership, http://erc-online.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Skills-needs-in-greening-economies_FinalReport.pdf.

Recommendation 2.2: Step up efforts to encourage innovation via platforms for experimentation in order to better link education and innovation and SME support instruments.

The promotion of experimentation within the green economy should be an important dimension of Flanders innovation policy. As previously mentioned, international initiatives such as the “accelerator programme for business models” in Denmark often provide incentives for pilot testing in companies. “Experimentation labs” – places free from rules where students and entrepreneurs experiment, and freely discuss their preferences – are also interesting to the extent that they support experimentation. Examples exist in Ghent (Living Lab) and Eindhoven. Some experimentation labs are fully dedicated to the green economy such as the GreenFabLab in Spain (see Box 5.6).

Box 5.6. Self-sufficient Fab Lab in Valldaura, Spain

The Valldaura Labs is a project promoted by the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia for the creation of a self-sufficient habitat research centre. Located in the Collserola Natural Park, in the heart of the metropolitan area of Barcelona, it has laboratories for the production of energy, food and other products. It develops projects and academic programmes in association with international research centres.

The group comprises three laboratories – Food Lab, Energy Lab and Green FabLab. The laboratories are investigating the processes involved in the production of energy, food and things locally, using the resources of the immediate environment, and developing technologies and knowledge that can be employed in the construction of a new global human habitat.

Source: www.valldaura.net/about/?lang=es.

There are some indications that Flanders is not performing as well as other selected benchmark regions on the promotion of green innovation. This suggests that more emphasis could be placed on instruments that support technology and innovation, such as the initiatives supported by the Institute for Science and Technology (IWT). The example of the German region of Baden Württemberg, which has topped the list of European regions for innovation indicators, shows the importance of dedicated instruments and programmes with public support but also encouraging clusters based on the region's industrial strengths (see Box 5.7).

Box 5.7. The example of Baden Württemberg (Germany)

Baden Württemberg has topped the list of European regions for innovation indicators, including green innovation, for many years. The region is said to have the strongest innovative capacity, with no other European region investing as much economic output in research and development.

As the cradle of car manufacturing, the region has built on its industrial backbone to foster innovation in relation to electromobility (fuel cells) and renewable energy. Research in these niches is triggered by public programmes and the funding of strong public research infrastructure (universities, research institutes such as Fraunhofer and Max Planck) as well as by private research by car manufacturers and suppliers. There is a strong relationship between industry and the regional government.

This is facilitated by a clear policy framework with ambitious targets (the environment policy plan) and by public funding. Baden Württemberg is providing €16 million per year to promote climate protection measures. It finances the fuel cells challenge programme as well as the State's electromobility initiative.

Cluster activities are also promoted. The region has created a database of cluster activities and a cluster atlas.

The region is also well connected in European and international networks and hosts a yearly Green Innovation and Investment Forum. The Forum aims to support researchers, start-ups and founders with smart business ideas from the green technology and eco innovation sector from across the continent in collaboration with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Source: www.isi.fraunhofer.de/isi-wAssets/docs/p/de/vortragsfolien/regionen_cluster/Presentation_Koschatzky.pdf, www.clusterportal-bw.de/, www.green-inno-forum.eu/.

Monitoring the green economy transition: benchmarks and dissemination to inspire local stakeholders

Recommendation 3.1: Support the assessment of the employment impact of the green transition beyond job creation.

When estimating the labour market impact of the transition to a greener economy, policy makers should not only focus on the job creation potential but also on how the transition can help to maintain and secure jobs, for instance by anchoring critical economic industries in local areas. Studies such as the Vlakwa study on the socio-economic importance of water can help raise awareness among business sectors and policy makers of the dependence of local industries on key environmental resources. This is particularly relevant as the OECD company survey highlights that companies are aware of some of the environmental challenges that affect their operation management (e.g. waste and energy) but are less aware of other environmental issues such as water or air quality.

Recommendation 3.2: Provide benchmarks for green economy transition activities at the local level.

Tracking of environmental metrics is important not only to determine the impacts of climate change on existing economic processes, but also to plan for the future impacts of the green transition on labour markets. For example, the monitoring of climate change metrics has enabled the OECD (2015c) to understand the impacts of climate change on the absolute stock and the productivity of natural resources and then calculate the broader impact on economic and socioeconomic outcomes.

The report highlights that limited comparable data is available at the local level. Nevertheless, the project roundtables and final event showed that there is a willingness to provide benchmarks at the local level to encourage and galvanise local actors.

Flanders' regional authorities could assist local areas in their monitoring of the green economy transition. An interesting example is France where a national observatory for employment and jobs in the green economy has been created (see Box 5.8). One of the Observatory's pillars of work is to assist with local indicators in French regional and local areas. It also assists economic sectors to assess the impact of the transition to the green economy.

Box 5.8. National observatory on green skills and jobs in France

The Observatory For Green Skills and Jobs (ONEMEJ) is a structure for dialogue and work among various stakeholders which is co-ordinated by the French General Commission for Sustainable development. It aims to build a methodological framework to conduct studies, collect data and ensure a shared diagnosis on jobs, professions and training for green growth. It produces an annual review of its activity including a synthesis of the results of observation.

ONEMEJ has several working themes. One working theme (workshop 4) gathers regional observatories for training and employment and other local stakeholders to develop methods and tools for collecting comparable regional data.

Source: www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/L-observatoire-national-des-18551.html.

Recommendation 3.3: Map local initiatives and facilitate the dissemination of lessons from local and international projects.

The report highlights that there is a wealth of initiatives in Flanders related to the transition to a green economy and that provinces and local stakeholders such as Ghent city are taking action and promoting partnerships between education and training providers and businesses. Nevertheless, local initiatives are not always aware of each other. In addition, participants in roundtable discussions identified that there were difficulties with involving businesses.

A mapping of local and sector initiatives would be a first step to avoid the multiplication of platforms. This could help the identification of initiatives that can be replicated or stepped up. This could also increase the visibility of local initiatives, encourage business participation and identify any potential policy gaps to be addressed. In addition, establishing dissemination and exchange mechanisms would help local stakeholders to learn from good practices but also project failures.

Flanders is well integrated in international networks and is involved in a number of initiatives such as the Vanguard project on smart specialisation, or the participation of

Flemish universities and research centres in European Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KIC). The dissemination of international project results and best practices from other countries could be reinforced to inspire local stakeholders. Lessons could be taken from the Green Entrepreneurship Network in Spain (see Box 5.9).

Box 5.9. The Green Entrepreneurship Network in Spain

The Red Empreverde (Green Entrepreneurship Network) is a platform created to support business creation in green sectors or green-related activities. This network was created by the Fundación Biodiversidad (Biodiversity Foundation), a public foundation of the Spanish Government, depending on the National Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Development. The Foundation aims at preserving natural heritage and biodiversity while creating employment, wealth and well-being in the society. The Foundation collaborates with entities and institutions in the public sector, civil society and the business environment.

The Green Entrepreneurship Network seeks to foster entrepreneurship and business growth in sectors or activities related to the environment protection. The Network provides support to entrepreneurs and business owners through 1) drafting or redefining business plans, 2) bringing investors and entrepreneurs together, and 3) providing training and technical assistance. The Network also organizes contests to encourage quality projects while financially supporting some of the most promising initiatives.

Members of the Network include entrepreneurs, investors, or any other actor interested in seizing the economic opportunities arising from the green economy. The Network is co-financed by ESF. The Network benefits of the collaboration of the Spanish Network of Business angels, the Triodos Bank, and the National Innovation Enterprise (ENISA) which is a publicly-financed entity of the National Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

The network has been created recently, but already made an important contribution to launching enterprise creation in green economic sectors. The Network brings together over 400 investors and various hundreds of potential entrepreneurs. It has also stimulated the exchange of ideas, created synergies between some of the ideas and also added value to some other projects. The contest has also permitted the identification of some of the most promising projects, and supported their development indirectly (courses, technical assistance, etc.) and directly (grants). Finally, the platform and the communication of this project has contributed to raising awareness of the opportunities emerging from the green economy and encouraging potential entrepreneurs to further develop their ideas in a more structured way.

The network contributed to a clear definition of the terms: green enterprise, green entrepreneur, eco-investor and other stakeholders in the green activities. The on-line platform (www.redempreverde.es) facilitates the dissemination of good practices to a wider market. The platform also brings investors (venture capitalists, business angels, banks) closer to the ideas (entrepreneurs, businesses) so that it is easier for them to meet and make businesses in a sector of common interest. The platform serves as a social network for entrepreneurs, investors and other actors to exchange and consolidate ideas. It also centralises the services offered by the network (monitoring, technical assistance, training courses, etc.) in a one-stop-shop that is easy to access.

Source: www.redempreverde.es.

Next steps for action and implementation

Adapting education and skills policies and initiatives for the green economy transition

OECD Recommendation	Next steps for implementation
1.1 Mainstream environmental and sustainability principles in all education curricula (activities at school level).	• <i>For regional authorities:</i> Continue inter-department collaboration for environmental education; provide additional guidance to teachers at school level to address environmental aspects with pupils; provide guidelines as to how STEM academies could integrate environmental aspects; encourage green businesses to organise school visits or participate as 'green ambassadors' at schools; enable public agencies such as the Water centre to participate in raising awareness at schools. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Encourage local "green" businesses to participate in extra school curricula activities for instance as "green ambassadors".
1.2 Mainstreaming environmental and sustainability aspects in all education curricula (activities in higher education curricula).	• <i>For Flanders level public authorities:</i> Continue to support projects facilitating the mainstreaming of environmental and sustainability aspects in higher education curricula with a more direct focus on the adaptation of curricula, and guidance for trainers. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Encourage partnerships and collaboration with universities and business schools to promote the benefits of greening the economy. • <i>For businesses:</i> Work with higher education institutions to insist on the importance of environmental aspects.
1.3 Addressing technical skills shortages for the green economy transition.	• <i>For Flanders level public authorities:</i> Investigate how to facilitate career transitions into STEM as part of the STEM action plan. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Continue contributing to efforts to raise interest in STEM careers. • <i>For businesses:</i> Work with the education and training system to ensure that labour market demands are well-articulated and actively feed into programme design and delivery.
1.4 Assisting greening industries in building their talent pipeline: further improving the transition from school to work through practical training.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Develop stronger labour market information on the regional and local level regarding future industry needs and expected occupations • <i>For local area activities:</i> Strengthen outreach and foster partnerships between employers and the education and training system to ensure that supply meets demand. • <i>For businesses:</i> Encourage the formation of networks on a sectoral or regional basis to ensure greater transparency in education pathways related to the green economy.
1.5 Continue support for education and training public agencies to work on the green economy transition.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Continue to support education and training agencies in their effort to embed green activities into their work. Encourage multi-stakeholder approaches and ensure that resources at the local level are devoted to working with other organisations. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Promote partnership working and provide platforms to bring local stakeholders together.
1.6 Help develop training for green investors, managers and business leaders and support green entrepreneurship.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Seek out business leaders who have demonstrated vision towards green activities and promote their efforts to other employers; promote the benefits to SMEs of developing greener products and services. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Stimulate local and sector networks among employers to encourage information sharing; work with training organisations to develop specific training for managers. • <i>For businesses:</i> Reach out to training organisations to articulate skill needs with respect to the green economy; embed green activities into HR planning and overall business strategies.

Knowledge sharing and partnerships to encourage green innovation

OECD Recommendation	Next steps for implementation
2.1 Increasing knowledge sharing/cluster activities in certain target sectors.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Support knowledge sharing, road-mapping and joint planning activities for greening practices; target strategic sectors in co-ordination with the Smart Specialisation Strategy. • <i>For local area activities:</i> In sectors where a sustainability vision is not yet well developed, but where there is an enthusiasm to do more (e.g. the agro-food sector as identified in the survey), greater support could be provided at the local level. • <i>For businesses:</i> Trade associations could help raise awareness and help to launch a transition.
2.2 Step up efforts to encourage green innovation via platforms for experimentation better linking education and innovation and SME support instruments.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> More emphasis could be placed on the transition to a green economy in instruments supporting technology and innovation such as IWT-support. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Build on examples from Ghent and promote "experimentation labs": places free from rules where students and entrepreneurs experiment, and freely discuss their preferences; strengthen co-operation with local business and universities.

Monitoring the green economy transition: benchmarks and dissemination to inspire local stakeholders

OECD Recommendation	Next steps for implementation
3.1 Support the assessment of the employment impact of the green transition beyond job creation.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> When estimating the labour market impact of the transition to a greener economy Studies such as the Vlakwa study on the socio-economic importance of water can help raise awareness among business sectors and policy makers as they can highlight the dependence on key environmental resources.
3.2 Provide benchmarks for green economy transition activities at the local level.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Assist local areas in monitoring the green economy transition by building good local level information and benchmarks to monitor trends over time.
3.3 Mapping local initiatives and facilitating the dissemination of lessons from local and international projects.	• <i>For Flanders level:</i> Identify policy innovations at the local level and disseminate evidence on what works in the areas of the green economy. A mapping of local and sector initiatives could help avoid the multiplication of platforms and facilitate business participation. Dissemination mechanisms (e.g. a website, conferences) would encourage greater awareness for local areas. • <i>For local area activities:</i> Better report to the regional level both successful initiatives that promote green activities as well as those programmes that have not been optimal to ensure lessons learned are shared across local areas.

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