

# 2010 INTERNATIONAL AWARD ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INNOVATIONS



BEP

Development Agency of the Province of Namur - Belgium

ECOLYS

The Green Building Park



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## The Green Building Park

### Presentation

**by the Economic Bureau -  
Development Agency of the Province of Namur (BEP)**

The ECOLYS business park is a 45 hectares area focused on eco-construction and sustainable development. It has the ambition to become a showcase for eco-construction and a centre of innovation & expertise for the sector. ECOLYS has been developed by a team of the BEP (Economic Bureau – Development Agency - of the Province of Namur, Belgium), in collaboration with the city of Namur and specialized actors of the sector.

Business parks today tend to be centred round a particular type of activity in order to provide more services for the businesses located on the site and to enhance their image through that of the business park. Against this background, the BEP has established the necessary tools to improve the services provided to businesses from the design of their facilities in the park through to routine production from such facilities.



The BEP's aim is to take advantage of the synergies existing between these two objectives by installing in the service area a section for the promotion and demonstration of eco-construction techniques, with the help of important actors in this sector. This will be combined with an information management database encompassing all the various aspects of the eco-construction sector and its rapid development in contrast to long-term investment decisions. Thus ECOLYS

will shortly be able to provide an indispensable element which is currently lacking and which make tangible and accessible to SMEs the vast amount of knowledge with respect to eco-construction and sustainable development already built up and still to come.

This will give a major boost to the search for innovative solutions and to the identification of the needs of SMEs in order to comply with the existing and future requirements of environmental legislation, based on the 3 pillars of sustainable development, including human capital.

The BEP and its BIC provides the assistance desired by businesses in terms of support with decision making, networking and communication, such that the ECOLYS business park can become not only a showcase for eco-construction but also a central meeting place and centre of innovation.

ECOLYS has been recognized on different levels as the first eco-park in Wallonia, with its global strategy and support to major fields of activity in the Region, which will drastically need to develop in e very close future.

## How does the innovation solve a particular problem?



ECOLYS is innovative in its ability to integrate and network the different members of society and the eco-construction professionals who will be involved in the activities occurring in the ECOLYS business park: in particular businesses, the Eco-construction and Cap2020 clusters, Bois et Habitat (construction industry trade fair), CSTC (Construction Industry Scientific and Technical Centre) (scientific), training organisations etc., as part of the future Walloon competitiveness pole centred on environmental technologies.

SMEs encounter significant obstacles in complying with environmental legislation and making improvements in the environmental field in general. Such obstacles relate to:

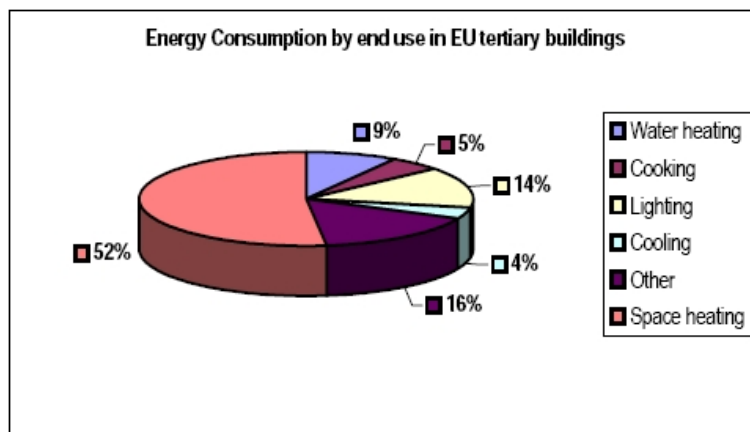
- A poor perception and lack of knowledge of environmental problems, impacts and risks
- A failure to appreciate the potential benefits of environmental management and of life cycle considerations
- Insufficient access to appropriate information, tools and training in the environmental field and poor local availability of these
- A lack of financial and human resources/skills to ensure requirements are met
- Relatively short-term planning on the part of the company.

Added to this are two factors relating to environmental policy:

- The behaviour of companies with respect to the environment is generally dictated by regulation or pressure from public opinion
- Environmentally responsible behaviour is not sufficiently recognised/encouraged in the market.

- This situation is damaging not only to environmental protection, but also to European economic development, where SMEs are one of the driving forces, representing around 60% of added value. As the Council has repeatedly stressed, economic development is one of the essential preconditions for progress towards sustainable development, since it will provide the resources necessary to solve environmental problems and maintain social cohesion.

The energy efficiency of the buildings is an important element in combating greenhouse gas emissions. This sector is estimated to account for around 40% of energy consumption in Europe. Research has shown, however, that more than 20% of energy consumption could be saved by applying stricter standards to new buildings and building undergoing major refurbishment. As the graph below shows, different uses are involved, with space heating being the main one.



The demonstration value of the project must also be understood, given that the problem of establishing or upgrading a commercial site is largely shared across the EU. Environmental considerations are in fact generally beyond the management capability of SMEs and rarely part of their strategy. This is all the more true since the additional efforts expected of them today (particularly in terms of energy performance) give rise to greater needs, while the eco-construction sector is growing and offering innovative solutions.

Numerous projects have already been conducted in relation to this problem. Lessons have undoubtedly been learned, but these can rarely be used directly by the SMEs, given the mass of information to be processed and the need to translate such lessons into a specific context. Assistance is, therefore, required to collect, structure and redistribute the information (i.e. benchmarking tools) in order to breathe life into the network and enable the various participants to meet, according to their needs and skills. It is also necessary to have access to a demonstration platform and to tangible examples to provide a concrete view of the different options. To promote this, the BEP and the businesses located in the park will undertake a joint communications programme.

The stimulus which ECOLYS will give to the incorporation of environmental considerations into the strategy of the SMEs is undoubtedly of interest to all business park managers. Once the added value has been demonstrated, it will create a model which can then be transposed elsewhere depending on the theme of the park and the environmental context.

## ECOLYS in practice

ECOLYS was designed in 2009 and the site is currently being prepared. The demonstration buildings will be built from mid-2010. The first business premises are expected in approximately the same time frame. A section of the park (10 hectares) will be specifically devoted to businesses in the eco-construction sector, while the remaining 25 hectares will be offered to businesses wishing voluntarily to adopt an eco-construction and sustainable development approach. The remaining area will be occupied by services (4 hectares) and landscaping.



### Actions and means involved

ECOLYS has two main strands of activity which will run in parallel and support each other in such a way as to constitute an integrated platform:

- Demonstration activity designed to enable those interested in eco-construction and sustainable development to see the technical solutions working in practice and to compare the various options. This activity will take place firstly in the promotion and development section and secondly in the ECOLYS business park where each installation will be deemed to be an example of an overall solution in terms of eco-construction and sustainable development.
- Creation of an information management database. The aim of this database will be to facilitate the exchange of know-how (information gathering, networking, watch, etc.) and to provide the content for promotion sessions in the business park. It will give eco-construction sector SMEs the information necessary to create their own development strategy.

More specifically, the activities envisaged are:

- design and construction of the demonstration and training infrastructure
- creation of a strategic information platform
- validation of the building projects of the candidate businesses from the point of view of eco-construction
- promotion to businesses located in the business park and outside it
- communication and dissemination to building and property professionals
- raising of awareness among indirect beneficiaries.

The ECOLYS project will involve a large number of different parties with an immense range of interests, knowledge and skills. It will, therefore, be necessary to create a sufficiently flexible organisational structure to enable them to interact freely and take advantage of the access to networks.

The BEP has, therefore, decided to set up two forums:

- a monitoring committee comprising experts from Wallonia's eco-construction clusters and local authority representatives (Namur municipal authority, Wallonia regional authority, technical departments from the various authorities, etc.). It will be responsible for supervising building projects
- an enterprise club bringing together all the businesses located in the park and outside experts. It will be responsible for supervising the creation of the information management database and promotional activities.

The innovative aspect of the project, therefore, lies in the high level of integration which it intends to achieve in assisting the SMEs wishing to set up business in the ECOLYS park, whether these are from the eco-construction sector or wish to adopt such an approach. This integration is also necessary to improve the SMEs' ability to adapt in response to new challenges and a rapidly changing background, given that decisions on a new facility must essentially be long-term ones. The integrative approach being developed, therefore, has two aspects namely:

- that of the sector which covers all the environmental impacts associated with the premises and the activities of an SME
- that of the SME's life cycle, from the choice of premises to the monitoring of the environmental performance once the business is in operation.



In the case of companies in the eco-construction sector, this integration relates to the design and installation of new products in response to market demand and in order to keep up with developments. It also involves a willingness to make the concept of eco-construction tangible via a demonstration and training unit and through the buildings in the business park.

ECOLYS and its pilot buildings will enable every business or every individual to be made aware of the energy performance of a building,

taking into account local climate conditions, and more broadly of the excellent design of projects of this type, taking account of their environmental impact. It is also envisaged that these buildings will receive energy performance certificates.

The eco-construction developed here, bringing together all the techniques designed to minimise the environmental impact of the premises and the business activities, will lead to an improvement on the current situation.

## What are the results?

The project is expected to produce two types of results:

- **Environmental performance of businesses located in the ECOLYS business park:**  
It is not possible at present to know which companies will locate in the park or to calculate the environmental benefits ECOLYS will produce. Specifications have, however, already been drawn up in conjunction with the members of the future monitoring committee, setting the criteria for acceptance of the candidate businesses on a multi-sector basis (energy, waste disposal, water, transport, etc.). These criteria have been established with a view to going beyond the requirements of the legislation in force.
- **Adequacy of the information management database and promotional activities:** Given the intangible nature of these components, it is not appropriate to set criteria in terms of content. Their contribution will, therefore, have to be judged by the use made of them and the satisfaction resulting from them. The quality control system which the BEP is currently setting up will be very useful in this context.

## International interest

The CREALYS science park established and managed by the BEP was the first park in Wallonia to be ISO 14001 accredited.

Based on this experience, the BEP will extend the ISO 14001 accreditation to ECOLYS.

The BEP is a member of a large number of European networks which will be used as channels to disseminate the experience gained from the ECOLYS project.



These channels are as follows:

- European Business and Innovation Centre Network (EBN – [www.ebn.be](http://www.ebn.be))
- Association of Regional Development Agencies (EURADA – [www.eurada.org](http://www.eurada.org))
- International Association of Science Parks (IASP - [www.iasp.com](http://www.iasp.com))
- Europe Enterprise Network (EEN - [www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu](http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu))
- Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme for SMEs (ECAP-[ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/sme/index.htm)).

The ECOLYS project is at the juncture of several eco-construction sector initiatives in which the BEP is involved:

- The INTERREG IVB project « Reducing the Greenhouse Effect through Alternative Industrial Estates Management in North West Europe » (REGAIN - [www.programme-regain.eu](http://www.programme-regain.eu)), including university experts. With the French association PALME.

- The INTERREG IVA project France-Wallonia-Flanders, BatiD2, the object of which is the promotion of sustainable construction and development to companies. Among the tasks is the development of a watch tool ([www.batid2-ecobiz.eu](http://www.batid2-ecobiz.eu))
- The experience gained by the BEP in managing the CREALYS science park. A promotion was staged in the park through the IDEALYS enterprise club ([www.idealys.be](http://www.idealys.be)) and ISO 14.001 accreditation is currently being implemented for the environmental management of the park. In addition, CREALYS is a stakeholder in the LIFE project « Sustainable Management by Interactive Governance and Industrial Networking (SMIGIN - [www.econetwork.eu](http://www.econetwork.eu)) (UWE and CCI of Valenciennes). The aim is to reduce the environmental impact of the SMEs in the same park by implementing joint solutions.

## To use *ECOLYS* in other countries

The BEP has signed a collaboration agreement with the three main representatives of the eco-construction sector in the Walloon Region:

- The CAP 2020 cluster ([www.cap2020.be](http://www.cap2020.be))
- « Bois et Habitat » asbl, a non-profit organisation ([www.bois-habitat.be](http://www.bois-habitat.be))
- The Eco-construction Cluster ([clusters.wallonie.be](http://clusters.wallonie.be))

The fields covered by ECOLYS relate to the 3 pillars of Sustainable Development, the Environment, the Economy and the social environment, all fundamental points.

Other institutions are included in the project, for example CSTC (Scientific and technical Centre for Construction); CCW (Federation of Construction in Wallonia); different training centres. These partners will all enable ECOLYS to reach the maximum number of businesses and individuals in order to achieve the objectives of the project. They can also be contacted to receive technical assistance and training in Belgium, as do representatives from BEP.



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