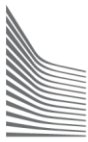Brussels, 16.6.2025
COM(2025) 290 final

ANNEX 3

ANNEX

to the

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

State of the Digital Decade 2025: Keep building the EU's sovereignty and digital future

{SWD(2025) 290 final} - {SWD(2025) 291 final} - {SWD(2025) 292 final} - {SWD(2025) 293 final} - {SWD(2025) 294 final} - {SWD(2025) 295 final}

European Commission

SHORT COUNTRY REPORTS 2025

Belgium

Executive summary

Belgium benefits from a dynamic tech ecosystem and rapid technology adoption among enterprises. It holds a leading position in VHCN (gigabit) coverage, although there remains room to expand FTTP coverage and address persistent gaps in digital skills. The country has positioned itself as a leader in cybersecurity, strategic technology development and online service provision.

Belgium shows a high level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade, having set 14 national targets, 93% of which are aligned with the EU 2030 targets. **The country is following its trajectories, with 86% of them on track (on the basis of the 2024 trajectories defined for 7 KPIs out of 8 analysed). Belgium addressed 75% of the 8 recommendations issued by the Commission in 2024, either by implementing significant policy changes (50%) or making some changes (25%) through new measures.**

Belgium stands out for its performance in gigabit coverage and rapid progress in 5G deployment. While fibre coverage still has room to grow, efforts to expand its deployment are accelerating. Business digitalisation is improving, with a focus on AI adoption and support to SME and start-up innovation. In cybersecurity, Belgium leads by engaging SMEs and committing to resilience-building initiatives. Digital skills development remains an area that needs to be prioritised, with programmes addressing ICT and STEM shortages and promoting gender inclusion. Belgium excels in online public services. Aligning with EU priorities, Belgium embeds sustainability in its strategies, and enhances the EU's sovereignty and competitiveness, such as in R&D for semiconductors.

Digital Decade KPI [1]	Belgium				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	DESI 2024 (year 2023)	DESI 2025 (year 2024)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2024 (3)	DESI 2025	Annual progress	BE	EU
Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	91.2%	93.8%	2.8%	82.0%	82.5%	4.9%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	25.0%	30.7%	22.8%	30.0%	69.2%	8.4%	82.0%	-
Overall 5G coverage	40.4%	96.9%	140.0%	99.5%	94.3%	5.9%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate)	15	30	100.0%	18	2257	90.5%	164	10000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity (2)	-	83.7%	4.1%	-80.3%	72.9%	2.8%	90.0%	90%
Cloud	47.7%	-	-	62%	-	-	75.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	13.8%	24.7%	78.9%	15.0%	13.5%	67.2%	75.0%	75%
Data analytics	44.5%	-	-	-44%	-	-	75.0%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics	64.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%
Unicorns	7	7	0.0%	-	286	4.4%	14	500
At least basic digital skills	59.4%	-	-	63%	-	-	80.0%	80%
ICT specialists	5.4%	5.7%	5.6%	7.1%	5.0%	4.2%	10.0%	~10%
eID scheme notification		Yes						
Digital public services for citizens	83.2	81.4	-1.1%	87.0	82.3	3.6%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	91.6	95.4	4.1%	94.0	86.2	0.9%	100.0	100
Access to e-Health records	100	100	0.0%	100.0	82.7	4.5%	100.0	100

(1) See the methodological note for the description of the indicators and other metrics.
(2) DESI 2025 reports the version 4 of the Digital Intensity Index, that is comparable with the DII value from DESI 2023 (referring to year 2022) for the calculation of the annual progress. It is not comparable to the national trajectory that is based on version 3 of the index.
(3) National trajectory value if present in the national roadmap and if the indicator was measured in DESI2025 (year 2024).

Belgium

According to the 2025 special Eurobarometer on the Digital Decade, 72% of Belgian citizens consider that the digitalisation of daily public and private services is making their lives easier. Concerning the action of the public authorities, 87% consider it important to counter and mitigate the issue of fake news and disinformation online, and regarding competitiveness, 84% consider it important to ensure that European companies can grow and become 'European Champions' able to compete globally.

A competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU based on technological leadership

In recent years, Belgium has made significant **progress with its connectivity infrastructure's coverage**. Belgium is now in the leading position on **VHCN (gigabit) coverage**. By now, Belgium has recovered the lag in 5G spectrum assignment and has scope to improve its **FTTP coverage,** which is below the EU average, but deployment is gaining pace on that front. Moreover, the country's **5G coverage** now surpasses the EU average as it has rapidly improved since 2023. This firmly puts Belgium on track to achieve its 2030 targets. While Belgium has made progress in increasing the share of high-speed broadband subscriptions and 5G SIM card usage, it still lags behind the EU average in 5G coverage for households in sparsely populated areas and in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band. The country's strong growth rates in these areas indicate a positive trajectory, but there is still room for improvement to catch up with the EU average.

Belgium and its regions prioritise advances in **AI take-up by companies and the digitalisation of online public services, which shows a strong dynamic in particular for businesses.** It is also home to strategic assets such as R&D in semiconductors, and actively promotes quantum computing and quantum ecosystem. The Centre for Cybersecurity Belgium (CCB) and its activities position Belgium as a leader in cybersecurity, but also strengthens its capacity for technological innovation and resilience by narrowing the cybersecurity skills gap. Regarding cybersecurity, Belgium continues to lead by example through a range of initiatives. Looking ahead, the continued implementation of the current National Cybersecurity Strategy, the development of its successor, and efforts to enhance SME participation in cybersecurity measures will be key to ensuring long-term resilience and success.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Belgium's digital transformation is under pressure due to **persistent gaps in digital skills, ICT talent shortages, and gender imbalance among ICT specialists.** The low performance in advanced digital skills hampers labour market outcomes and competitiveness. However, Belgium excels in delivering **digital public services**, especially for businesses (above the EU average), and in the uptake of **e-ID** by citizens. Belgium leads the EU in terms of **access to e-Health records** in 2023 with a maximum score of 100. **Authorities focus on closing skills gaps** through lifelong learning and targeted reskilling, with **special attention given to women** in digital roles. Efforts also target combating disinformation and promoting digital literacy to protect citizens online, fostering a safer and more inclusive digital environment.

Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Regarding progress in its **twin transition**, Belgium is actively engaged in both greening its digital infrastructure and supporting digital solutions for carbon reduction in other sectors. While several initiatives show promise, a comprehensive strategy that links the digital and green transitions would likely accelerate these efforts.

Belgium

National Digital Decade strategic roadmap

Belgium submitted an addendum to its national Digital Decade roadmap on 11 December 2024, **addressing all the roadmap recommendations issued in 2024.** The country pledged to improve coordination across governance levels and to transition to an annual roadmap update cycle starting in 2025. The roadmap includes **13 updated and 5 new measures added to last year's 161 measures.** The new measures focus on people, digital skills, accessibility and inclusion. Most trajectories remain unchanged, with updates limited to missing KPIs for edge nodes and FTTP. The revised roadmap is composed of 166 measures with a budget of EUR 913.71 million (equivalent to 0.15% of GDP), up from EUR 892 million. It still covers all objectives of the Digital Decade such as a human-centred digital space, resilience and security, sovereignty, sustainability, and protection of society. Stakeholder engagement is planned for 2025, with Belgium committing to a more coordinated national strategy to close identified gaps and align with the EU's 2030 digital objectives. The country also decided to deliver a yearly roadmap, starting in 2025, instead of one every two years as the DDPP requires.

Funding & projects for digital

Belgium allocates 26% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 1.2 billion)[1]. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 329 million, representing 13% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Belgium's digital transformation[2].

Belgium hosts the EUROPEUM EDIC. It is also a member of the Local Digital Twins towards the CitiVERSE EDIC and participates as an observer in the Alliance for Language Technologies EDIC, for which the region of Flanders is a member. Belgian entities are indirect and/or associated partners in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT) and in the IPCEI on Next Generation Cloud Infrastructure and Services (IPCEI-CIS). Belgium is a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Within the Digital Decade's **Best Practice Accelerator**[3], Belgium leads the 'Technology Uptake' Cluster, organising workshops on AI adoption for SMEs and other key topics, with active participation across Europe and plans for ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Digital rights and principles

According to a support study, Belgium has been one of the most active Member States in implementing the **European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles**, with over 100 initiatives overall and 12 new initiatives launched in 2024. Belgium is most active in the areas of digital education, training and skills and fair and just working conditions. Less activity has been identified with regards to sustainability. Measures in the area of freedom of choice appear to have most impact on the ground, in contrast to those addressing safety, security and empowerment and sustainability.

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[1] The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.

[2] This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.

[3] The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are made available to Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

Belgium

Recommendations

- **Basic digital skills:** Address the gender gap in digital skills, provide support for the less educated, assist older adults in becoming digitally savvy, and improve online safety skills to ensure comprehensive digital inclusion.
- **ICT specialists:** Sustain efforts to boost the number of female ICT specialists and female ICT graduates.
- **Digitalisation of SMEs and advanced technologies take-up – Cloud:** Expand efforts to advance cloud infrastructure and promote cloud adoption among SMEs through broader national coordination across all regions and more concrete actions.
- **Artificial intelligence:** Continue to support innovation in AI to reinforce leadership in the sector and create future global leader companies.
- **Fixed and mobile connectivity:** To enhance digital infrastructure, (i) focus on accelerating FTTP deployment, particularly in sparsely populated areas; and (ii) direct efforts towards increasing the assignment of harmonized spectrum in the 5G pioneer bands.
- **Green and digital transition:** Continue to coordinate efforts and develop more structured monitoring mechanisms for emission reductions, linking environmental sustainability with digital innovation.
- **Cybersecurity:** Continue efforts in cybersecurity to address evolving threats, particularly maintaining vigilance for enterprises and administration.