

WALLONIE: COVID-19 RESPONSE (update 23/06/2020)

1. General overview

The Wallonia region has taken economic measures to support SMEs during the Covid-19 outbreak, including the tourism sector.

2. Highlight the measures

Besides **federal measures** such as:

- a fixed amount per month for firms which have recourse to partial unemployment for force majeure;
- deferral of VAT payment, social contributions and corporate tax;
- reduced social contributions for self-employed conditional on proving a decrease in revenue due to the outbreak;
- cancellation or deferral of social contributions for the self-employed
- income replacement for the self-employed;
- suspension of penalties for suppliers failing to fulfil government contracts.

WALLONIA REGION has taken measures, as followed:

FISCAL RELIEF, OVERCOMING LIQUIDITY

- 233 million euros for SME's which have to suffer from the crisis : 5 000 € payment for those which have to close their doors (hotels, catering, travel agencies, tourist attractions) ;
- possible waiver of utility payments;
- deferral of tax payments and water (Walloon water distribution network) invoices;
- freezing of loans to public institutions;
- guarantees on bank loans to companies (SMEs and larger ones) ;
- Quick loans (equal to the bank loans) from the Walloon government funding body (SOGÉPA) for turnaround SME's ;
- flexibility for SME's grant applications.

WALLONIA: RECOVERY PLAN DEDICATED TO TOURISM

1. The Plan - Tourism Focus:

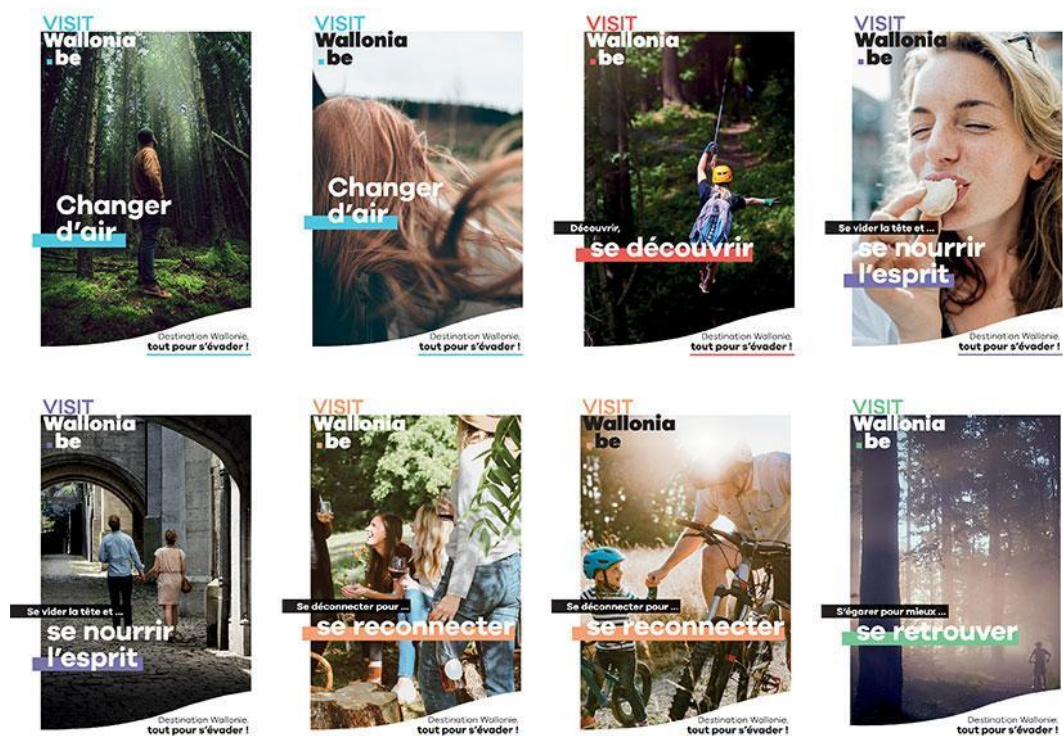
A **Walloon taskforce** has been working on developing a **recovery plan dedicated to tourism**. The taskforce is composed of the official bodies - “Commissariat general au Tourisme” (the Walloon administration of tourism) “Wallonia Belgium Tourism” (in charge of the promotion of Wallonia in Belgium and abroad) and representants of the Minister of tourism -, and works in collaboration with the private sector.

The Minister of Tourism for Wallonia has in June taken different post containment measures to support the tourism sector (6,5 million €).

- a) **A promotional campaign on Wallonia**, addressed to the public and which is made available to the tourist operators. These ones can also adapt the visuals of the campaign, so that they become its ambassadors in their own territory.

The campaign will be launched in Belgium and gradually abroad.

<https://www.visitwallonia.be/en/>



- b) **A health safety protocol for tourism services and tourists** which implements the guidelines of the National Security Council and is in line with the European recommendations :

<https://relance.tourismewallonie.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/GuideBonnePratique.pdf>

Tools have also be made available for tourist stakeholders :

<https://relance.tourismewallonie.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/mesures-sanitaires-recommandations-visiteurs.pdf>

https://relance.tourismewallonie.be/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/01502-AfficheA4_Paiement-bancaire_HD.pdf

- c) **Financial aid to tourist operators' health measures implementation** (to the benefit of authorized accommodation establishments and tourist attractions, and also to social tourism establishments).
- d) **Reimbursement** (with a maximum amount) **of costs incurred and not recoverable by event organizers.**
- e) **Financial aid in tourist attractions and social tourism establishments maintenance costs** incurred during closure due to the Covid19.
- f) The **promotional actions or events organised by the "Maisons du Tourisme"** (tourist offices at a greater scale) will be fully paid by the Walloon Government. These actions should be in line with the philosophy of the promotional campaign (cf 1).
- g) **Data collection:** The Walloon administration of tourism also made different surveys to advise the Walloon taskforce: a consumer survey to know about tourist intentions after the Covid19, as well as a survey within the tourist professional associations to determine the sectors' concerns and needs.
- h) **Communication:** The Walloon administration of tourism is also pursuing its work of:
 - monitoring the Covid19 impacts on the sector (data analysis and surveys);
 - informing the tourist sector about the national and regional measures taken;
 - applying the different measures taken to support the sector.

2. Contact

Regional department: Tourisme Wallonie, Commissariat général au Tourisme