

## Belgium

The Belgian Government Interoperability Framework (BELGIF) has been published in May 2005 in Wiki-form on the Internet. Since then, minor revisions and updates have been performed, with a 2.0 version planned for 2010.

The decision of the Council of Ministers in June 2004 concerning the use of open standards and specifications for new systems at the Federal level also ordered a steering group to create a list of mandatory standards. This eventually became BELGIF, and is managed by a working group under the ICEG umbrella (ICEG = eGov cooperation between Federal level and Regions / Communities in Belgium).

The goals of BELGIF have been stated as:

- Reduction of Total Cost of Ownership;
- Guaranteed openness of data by avoiding vendor lock-in;
- Reuse of custom-made solutions in different departments (mutualisation / tax-payer only pays once).

There is no central governance overseeing the implementation of these standards and guidelines. Typically, ICEG members are IT experts from their respective governments / social security, but they do not act as the formal central point of contact. It is up to each government to create their own centre of expertise (and they have done just that) and to facilitate the implementation in their administrations.

It may or may not be possible to enforce BELGIF using existing “general” laws (not specifically mentioning BELGIF), although this has not been tested.

The framework itself covers only technical aspects of interoperability. Closely related are other projects of the ICEG participants, including Identity and Access Management, and the Federal Services Bus.