

Press kit

The Belgian Pavilion is gearing up to welcome visitors at the upcoming World Expo in Osaka from 13 April to 13 October 2025. The announcement that Osaka would be hosting Expo 2025 was made on 23 November 2018 by the General Assembly of the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).

Since then, Japan has diligently been preparing for the arrival of over 150 international participants, underscoring the global significance of this event. Belgium's enthusiastic participation in Expo 2025 Osaka was solidified on 2 February 2022, following approval by the Federal Council of Ministers. The Belgian government formally confirmed its involvement on 18 February 2022, marking a significant milestone in its commitment to international engagement. Belgium's presence at international expos was entrusted to the Belgian Commission General for International Exhibitions, commonly known as BelExpo. The Belgian participation in Expo 2025 Osaka was officially ratified during a Signing Ceremony on 8 December 2022, during the Belgian economic mission to Japan.

On 18 July 2023, after a public tender procedure, the design of the Belgian Pavilion was unveiled during a press conference at the Royal Meteorological Institute in Brussels in the presence of H.E. Minister of Economy and Employment, Pierre-Yves Dermagne, and H.E. Ambassador Masahiro Mikami. During the press conference, the design of the pavilion was unveiled, alongside the masterminds behind the ideas, the consortium consisting of the Belgian Carré 7, Poly-Tech Engineering and Pirnay Engineering, the international Beyond Limits and the Japanese OneDesigns.

Following a comprehensive recruitment process, Mr. Pieter De Crem was officially appointed as BelExpo's Commissioner General for Expo 2025 Osaka by Royal Decree on 12 November 2023. In this role, Mr. De Crem will lead Belgium's participation at the Expo, steering the nation's representation on the global stage. With his extensive experience and leadership, he is entrusted with ensuring that Belgium's presence at the Expo highlights its innovation, culture, and expertise to an international audience.

Following this announcement and extensive paperwork to obtain the necessary building permits, the Belgian Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka marked a significant milestone with its Ground-Breaking Ceremony on 16 January 2024, led by Commissioner General Pieter De Crem, in the presence of H.E. Ambassador Antoine Evrard, H.E. Ambassador Koji Haneda and Mr. Hiroyuki Ishige in Osaka. This occasion marked the first construction works performed on the Belgian plot on Yumeshima Island, the site of Expo 2025 Osaka.



In April 2024, the Belgian team started the excavation work, where the ground was cleared and prepared to lay the foundation. Following the excavation, levelling the ground, the rebar and formwork, the basement wall and column concrete pouring and the insulation of the ground floor slab all progressed without issues. After laying solid foundations for our pavilion, the team started the superstructure on 1 July 2024. This steel work was finished on 1 August 2024 and was marked by a Jôtô-shiki or 'last beam' ceremony in the presence of the BelExpo team, the Buildings Agency and the members of our consortium.

A second major public tender, following the construction of the pavilion, was launched on 30 June 2023 for the design and execution of the visitor journey of the Belgian pavilion. The visitor journey includes but is not limited to, the development of an impressive and immersive scenography for the exhibition within the Belgian pavilion, including a mascot, as well as the interior design of the shop, the multifunctional space, the restaurant, bar, and rooftop terrace.

And today, on 11 September 2024 we are finally ready to reveal the results.

1. BelExpo

BelExpo, officially known as the Belgian Commission General for International Exhibitions, was charged with showcasing Belgium and its Regions at international exhibitions overseen by the *Bureau International des Expositions* (BIE). Since 1931, the BIE has been the intergovernmental organisation regulating world expos, with its headquarters situated in Paris.

Functioning as an autonomous administrative entity, BelExpo receives daily support from various governmental bodies, including the FPS Economy and the Buildings Agency. BelExpo was established with the primary goal of managing Belgium's participation in international exhibitions. Funding for these international exhibitions is a collaborative effort between the federal and regional governments. BelExpo is responsible for coordinating between all the different stakeholders.

Participating in international events like Expo 2025 Osaka allows Belgium to enhance its global reputation and that of its diverse Regions. The Belgian pavilions and gardens serve as international ambassadors, promoting interest in Belgium and attracting tourists and investors. These exhibitions offer a platform to highlight Belgium's economic prowess, innovative capabilities, and academic strengths. BelExpo's efforts aim to spotlight Belgian products, services, and solutions, thereby boosting the country's global standing.

Recent highlights for BelExpo include Expo 2020 Dubai and Floriade 2022 Almere. The Belgian garden at Floriade 2022 earned the Special Award for Sustainability, while the Belgian pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai impressed millions of visitors worldwide.

In the construction of these pavilions, BelExpo collaborates closely with the Buildings Agency. The agency's architects, engineers, and technicians oversee the entire construction process, ensuring that the pavilions meet the highest standards and serve as exemplary representations of Belgium's architectural and engineering excellence.

2. Strategic objectives

A world expo draws a diverse crowd, ranging from tourists and families to business professionals. Each group seeks something unique: emotions, excitement, information, connections, and networking opportunities. Participating countries strive to meet these varied expectations through their pavilions. The role of world exhibitions has evolved; originally platforms for showcasing industrial and scientific advancements, they now added focus on country branding, impressing, and entertaining visitors.

Belgium boasts numerous strengths: a high quality of life, expertise in cultural and scientific projects, and a progressive ecosystem. Belgian pavilions reflect these attributes, along with showcasing Belgium's renowned specialities like chocolate, beer, and other culinary delights. This is an opportunity to promote Belgium and increase global awareness of our country and its regions.

Belgium has outlined several goals for Expo 2025, which guided the decision to participate:

- enhance global knowledge of our country and its strengths;
- create opportunities for Belgian companies, industries, and the scientific community;
- attract foreign visitors and investors to Belgium;
- strengthen our international agenda through partnerships with other countries and regions;
- provide a comprehensive experience for visitors, both online and in the physical pavilion, allowing them to fully experience Belgium.

The theme '*Saving Lives*' was chosen for Expo 2025 Osaka to highlight Belgium's strengths. This theme allows a showcase of our innovative companies, significant investment in R&D, and achievements in healthcare, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and public health.

The Technical Committee for Expo 2025 Osaka has refined the focus to life sciences, health, and wellness, covering everything from prevention and diagnosis to aftercare, with a strong emphasis on innovative and technological applications.

The visitor experience at world exhibitions has grown increasingly important. Participating countries must offer engaging experiences both offline and online, facilitating collaboration among different nations and regions. Whether visitors attend virtually or physically, as tourists or professionals, the experience should be seamless and memorable.

That is why the second public tender was named *visitor journey*. The experience of the visitor should be coherent and pleasant. These two public tenders ensure not only a beautiful, impressive building but also a memorable and captivating experience inside the pavilion.

3. Belgium: more than a sum of its parts

Belgium's involvement in international exhibitions is orchestrated by BelExpo, which collaborates with various regional and federal authorities. For each exhibition, a Technical Committee is formed, comprising representatives from both federal and regional levels. While BelExpo's management is overseen by a Board of Directors that includes stakeholders from the federal level as well as from the Regions and Communities, the Technical Committee handles the operational aspects of participation.

For Expo 2025 Osaka, the Technical Committee includes representatives from the Buildings Agency, FPS Economy, FPS Foreign Affairs, HUB.brussels and Brussels International, FIT (Flanders Investment & Trade Agency), AWEX (Agence Wallonne à l'Exportation et aux Investissements Etrangers), WBI (Wallonie-Bruxelles International), and Ostbelgien (the German-speaking Community in Belgium).

The Committee's mission is to develop the full content of the Belgian pavilion. Each representative has explored the specialities and interests of their respective Regions or Communities related to the theme of Expo 2025 Osaka. The Committee has presented this content to the candidates in the public tender, who have all created a proposition for an engaging and cohesive exhibition.

The Committee actively engages with stakeholders across all Belgian entities to highlight the country's strengths in the "Saving Lives" theme within the pavilion's exhibition space. Additionally, a content program featuring events such as seminars and workshops will be put together within the pavilion and at other locations on the expo site.

Belgium, though small, is a country with significant opportunities, strengths, and expertise. Each entity within Belgium has its own unique specialities and strengths. The Technical Committee ensures that the best of Belgium is showcased for Expo 2025 Osaka. The pavilion's content will be organised into different zones to highlight these strengths effectively.

Unity is strength is not only the Belgian national motto but will be the hallmark of the Belgian pavilion.

4. Global opportunities

Belgium's participation in Expo 2025 Osaka aims to significantly benefit the Belgian economy and industry. A global event of this scale provides Belgian stakeholders with access to key international collaborations, investments, and new opportunities. Expo 2025 Osaka serves as a neutral platform where countries can forge deeper relationships beyond initial, superficial contacts.

Belgium seeks to enhance and strengthen its relationship with Japan in all sectors through its participation in Expo 2025 Osaka. The goal is to establish more partnerships and improve market accessibility for Belgian companies, organisations, and individuals in Japan, and vice versa. The Belgian pavilion at the Expo is designed to captivate (mostly Japanese) visitors, sparking their interest in Belgium. This innovative showcase aims to encourage visitors to explore Belgium further, both as tourists and for business opportunities. Belgium and Japan will celebrate 160 years of Friendship in 2026, just one year after Expo.

Funding for Belgium's participation in Expo 2025 Osaka comes from Belgian public funds, partners, and sponsors. Therefore, achieving a return on investment for the Belgian economy and these stakeholders is crucial. The Belgian pavilion will prominently feature materials, products, and technologies from Belgium, offering visitors a comprehensive experience of the country's innovations and strengths. We have the (financial) support from the federal government (54,55%), the Flemish government (21%), the Walloon government (9%), the government of the French-speaking community (9%), the government of the Brussels Capital Region (6%) and the government of the German-speaking community (0,45%). This translates into daily support from representatives of the respective governments as well as the Buildings Agency, the FPS Economy and FPS Foreign Affairs.

Within the pavilion and during various events, Belgium will highlight its leadership in healthcare, life sciences, and the broader theme of 'Saving Lives'. In 2021, Belgium ranked ninth on the World Index of Healthcare Innovation and fourth within Europe. Additionally, Belgium is second in the European biotech rankings, showcasing its prominence in life sciences, healthcare, and scientific research. These strengths will be at the heart of the Belgian pavilion, attracting foreign investors to Belgium.

Belgium's expertise in healthcare and life sciences is further underscored by its leading position in several key areas. Belgium holds the number one spot in Europe for biotech market capitalization and R&D expenditure in life sciences, reflecting its strong commitment to innovation and development. Additionally, it ranks as the third largest biopharma exporter per capita worldwide. These achievements reinforce Belgium's reputation as a global leader in the sector, making it an ideal destination for international investment in healthcare and biotechnology.

Promoting the Belgian, Brussels, Flemish, and Walloon brands is essential. Belgium and its federated states will present themselves as a small yet powerful nation, brimming with opportunities and strengths, to further elevate their global standing.

5. The Belgian pavilion

The consortium behind the Belgian pavilion embraced the Expo's theme of "Designing the society of the future, imagining our life of tomorrow," with a focus on "Saving Lives." Their vision centred around the universal concept of water and its significance in creating and sustaining life. By emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living beings through water and cells, they aimed to reflect the essence of humanity and our relationship with the environment.

Belgium's historical ties with water, evident in its development and international trade routes through ports like Antwerp, further reinforced their choice of theme. Water, a symbol of life and inspiration for Belgian artists, embodies the nation's essence. Our pavilion's architecture mirrors this theme, transitioning from the solid, liquid, to gaseous states of water, symbolizing the journey of human consciousness.


Externally, the pavilion represents water's various forms: solid, liquid, and gaseous, while internally, it symbolizes the journey of human life through water and cells. The heart of the exhibition, a luminous space filled with plants and water features, serves as a metaphor for life and connects visitors with nature.

The hexagonal shape of the heart, inspired by water molecules and found in nature, symbolizes unity, balance, and community. This motif, shared in Japanese culture, underscores the pavilion's international resonance and its message of solidarity for a better future.

The theme 'Water' is extended to the Belgian character of the pavilion, encapsulating the essence of "Belgium - Brussels, Flanders, Wallonia", as well as being vital in *Saving Lives*, since Belgium does better globally than most countries on two fronts: clean water for all and vaccines. These two also happen to be referred to as the first and second most important factors in saving lives by the WHO.

Belgium's unique ability to embrace diversity and foster unity despite occasional political tensions is a testament to its multilingual and multicultural identity. The pavilion celebrates this richness, showcasing Belgium's linguistic and territorial diversity as integral to its strength and history.

Water, chosen as the pavilion's theme, pays homage to life, human beings, and Belgium's federated entities. With water being omnipresent across the country's landscape, from the coast to the high fens, Belgium's identity is intricately linked to its relationship with water. Natural waterways like the Meuse and the Scheldt, and a whole network of manmade waterways have historically connected communities, facilitating cultural and economic exchanges.



Brussels, as a strategic crossroads, exemplifies how water has played a pivotal role in fostering multiculturalism and international connections. Additionally, thermal baths, mineral springs, and Belgian beer culture further emphasize water's role in bringing people together across linguistic and cultural divides.

The pavilion's architectural design embodies Belgium's unity, with distinct façade elements representing the country's federated entities. The symbolism of water and its states - liquid, solid, and gaseous - mirrors Belgium's essence, where unity prevails despite differences in environment. The choice of rainbow reflections in the cladding reflects Belgium's stance on equality and inclusivity, affirming its commitment to diversity.

Just as water flows seamlessly, connecting individuals and cultures, each cell represents a unique facet contributing to Belgium's collective identity. Ultimately, the pavilion serves as a reminder that diversity is Belgium's greatest strength, with every voice and perspective essential to preserving harmony and unity. Together, Belgians can navigate the currents of change and "save life" in their country.

The Belgian Pavilion boasts a built-up area of 768m², with an expansive canopy covering 1,062m². The exterior landscaping, designed by a landscape architect, complements the pavilion's architecture.

Entrance to the pavilion is strategically designed to cater to different visitor types, with a main entrance in the northwest corner and a covered queuing area accommodating up to 145 people.

Exiting via an outward ramp to the roof terrace, visitors can enjoy the stage view and forested surroundings. The spacious rooftop accommodates events and gatherings, with flexible seating arrangements and shaded areas. Clear signage guides visitors to the exit, passing through the boutique or "Belgian Shop" on the ground floor.

The winning consortium, consisting of Carré 7, Beyond Limits, One Designs, Pirnay, and Poly-Tech, offers a comprehensive range of expertise.

Carré 7 leads the design, collaborating with partners such as Arter and A-tech. Pirnay/Poly-Tech provide structural engineering, with support from JMA Architects for the Japanese regulating matters. Beyond Limits acts as the consortium's project manager. One Designs handles the local civil works and interior design. For more information on each member of our brilliant consortium, visit their respective websites:

- Carré 7: <https://www.carre7.com/>
- Beyond Limits: <https://www.expobeyondlimits.com/>
- Pirnay Engineering: <http://www.bepirnay.be/>
- Poly-Tech Engineering: <http://www.bepirnay.be/>
- One Designs: <https://www.koyou-onesd.co.jp/en/>

6. Procedure Public Tender


Just before revealing the design of the Belgian pavilion to the public on 18 July 2023, the second public tender for the *visitor journey* of the pavilion was launched on 30 June 2023, marking the first phase of the procedure: the selection phase. BelExpo, along with the members of the Technical Committee entered a meticulous evaluation process identifying whether the candidates were able to craft an immersive and unforgettable experience in the Belgian pavilion.

'The Buildings Agency is the privileged partner of the Belgian Commission General for International Exhibitions. It plays an essential role in the realisation of the Belgian pavilion project on the site of the Osaka World Expo in Japan. In its capacity as delegated tender authority, in close collaboration with BelExpo, it drafted the selection and attribution guides and the technical performance clauses for this 'Visitor Journey' contract, as was also the case for the first contract for the design and construction of the pavilion. The Buildings Agency is also involved in the evaluation of bids and tenders, as well as providing extensive legal support. Finally, the Buildings Agency also monitors the construction and fitting-out of the Belgian pavilion. It ensures that everything is done in accordance with the public tenders awarded and the quality and performance criteria set by BelExpo,' says Laurent Vrijdaghs, general administrator and chairman of the Buildings Agency management committee.

Over the course of the past year, three candidate consortia were selected in this first phase to proceed with their offers during the attribution phase. The three candidates worked tirelessly to submit an offer that would meet all the conditions set as well as please the visitors' eye. In the attribution phase the three chosen consortia transitioned their concepts into concrete ideas and propositions to shape a visitor journey for the Belgian pavilion.

During this phase, the team conducted a detailed evaluation of the proposals, emphasizing innovation and sustainability. Engaging dialogues between BelExpo, the Technical Committee, and the Buildings Agency facilitated a deeper understanding of the proposals, allowing candidates to refine their submissions through the Best and Final Offer (BAFO) process. After careful evaluation of the BAFOs and thorough consultations with our internal and external legal teams, BelExpo and the Buildings Agency were able to identify the strongest proposal, leading to the successful awarding of the public tender to our winning consortium.

Although the procedure faced a brief delay when one candidate challenged the tender's award, the State Council ultimately supported BelExpo's decision. This allowed us to move forward with awarding the public tender to the selected consortium, ensuring the project could proceed as planned.



Today, on 11 September 2024, we are thrilled to announce that BelExpo, along with the Buildings Agency, was able to award the public tender to the winning consortium.

The selected consortium has demonstrated creativity, a true vision and expertise as well as a promising immersive journey that will leave a lasting impression on visitors.

Discover the visitor journey and the masterminds behind it!

7. Telling Belgium's Story: the Exhibition Narrative

The exhibition space in the Belgian pavilion will consist of four areas, each covering a different focal point: the Belgian (common) point of view, as well the Brussels, the Flemish, and the Walloon point of view. Belgium as a country is renowned for certain expertise whereas the Regions all have their own specialities that will be highlighted as well.

Belgium

The common Belgian focus will exhibit Belgium's excellence in vaccines. Belgium has contributed on an immense scale to the development of vaccines. Our country is globally recognised for its extensive expertise, which encompasses far more than just the production of these life-saving immunisations. Belgium possesses a comprehensive ecosystem that integrates every critical phase of vaccine development and distribution, ensuring that Belgium remains at the forefront of global health innovation.

Central to this ecosystem are the academic institutions that drive pioneering research, laying the groundwork for new vaccine discoveries. This research is seamlessly translated into practical applications through robust research and development efforts, where promising findings are developed into viable vaccine candidates. Rigorous clinical trials are conducted to ensure the safety and efficacy of these vaccines, a process in which Belgian institutions excel. Once a vaccine has proven effective, Belgium's leading pharmaceutical companies take charge of large-scale manufacturing, leveraging advanced technologies and stringent quality controls.

The journey of a vaccine from the lab in Belgium to the patient anywhere in the world is supported by Belgium's sophisticated logistics network. Efficient transport systems and advanced cooling capabilities ensure that vaccines are distributed swiftly and securely, maintaining their potency until they reach healthcare providers. Belgium's expertise in global export is another crucial element of this ecosystem, with a well-established track record of navigating international regulations and delivering vaccines to all corners of the world. This entire framework is further strengthened by favourable government policies that provide financial support, tax incentives and streamlined regulatory processes, fostering an environment where vaccine innovation and distribution can thrive.

"Belgium's holistic approach to vaccines exemplifies how a coordinated and well-supported ecosystem can significantly impact global health. By integrating top-tier research, cutting-edge technology and strategic governmental support, Belgium not only excels in vaccine production but also ensures a reliable and efficient response to global health challenges, which is the message that will be conveyed to the visitors of the Belgian pavilion."

Brussels

The regions will each also have their day in the sun in the Belgian pavilion. When walking through Brussels, visitors will get a glimpse of the progress Brussels has been making regarding robotics in medicine. Brussels is rapidly emerging as a hub for innovation in medical robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), showcasing impressive advancements that are transforming healthcare. The city's unique blend of academic excellence, cutting-edge research institutions, and a thriving tech ecosystem positions it at the forefront of this dynamic field. With a strong emphasis on developing intelligent systems, Brussels is pioneering the integration of robotics and AI to enhance medical procedures, improve patient outcomes, and streamline healthcare operations.

A significant example is Axiles Bionics, a company that has revolutionised the field of prosthetics with advanced joint solutions. Originating as a spin-off from the Free University of Brussels, Axiles Bionics has developed state-of-the-art prosthetic devices that combine AI with tangible technology to create highly functional and adaptive bionic joints. Their ground-breaking framework earned them the prestigious Henry Van De Velde design award, highlighting their excellence in design and innovation.

Brussels' collaboration with FARI, a Brussels institute putting the Common Good at the heart of AI, data and robotics research, highlights the city's commitment to fostering interdisciplinary partnerships and leveraging AI to push the boundaries of medical technology. These initiatives are part of a broader movement in Brussels to integrate advanced robotics into healthcare, exemplified by the city's upcoming exhibitions featuring cutting-edge exoskeletons. These wearable robotic devices have the potential to significantly enhance mobility and rehabilitation for patients with physical impairments, showcasing yet another facet of Brussels' leadership in medical robotics.

'The Brussels-Capital Region wishes to contribute to the Belgian Pavilion by highlighting the essential alliance between innovation, technology and health. Our approach is clear: technology must be at the service of people, not the other way around. We are delighted that the consortium selected embodies all the creativity and know-how that are so distinctive to our country, and that the Brussels-Capital Region, in partnership with FARI, the Brussels institute for interdisciplinary research into artificial intelligence, will be able to offer international visitors a high-quality technological experience and a showcase that is both original and informative', says Geoffroy Clerckx, Brussels International.

Flanders

Meanwhile Flanders is set to captivate audiences with its "Circle of Life" exhibition (from cradle to grave and beyond), inspired by the innovative 'Body of the Future' concept that has recently been developed by Health House (the health tech experience centre

in Leuven), with the kind support of spearhead cluster Medvia & many other partners. This exhibition will showcase Flanders' expertise in health tech, guiding visitors through an immersive journey of human life, from birth to old age. By focusing on the entire human lifespan, the exhibition highlights how Flanders' advanced medical technologies support and enhance health at every stage of life.

The "Circle of Life" exhibition will demonstrate how cutting-edge technologies can assist and improve human life in all stages, even before birth (in the womb). As visitors progress through the exhibition, they will encounter advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies that address the complex health challenges faced by adults. The journey will culminate in exploring eldercare innovations, illustrating how Flanders' health tech enhances quality of life and independence in later years. The exhibition will mainly focus on newly developed healthcare technologies but will at the same time show a glimpse of the future, exploring the limits of our human capabilities (and beyond).


Flanders' expertise in health technology is not only evident in the development of these innovations but also in the comprehensive approach to healthcare that integrates these advancements seamlessly into everyday life. The exhibition underscores Flanders' specialization in creating technologies that guide and support the human body through each stage of life, from cradle to grave, ensuring a continuum of care that adapts to the evolving needs of individuals.

"Thanks to the presence of a number of large multinationals, a whole range of innovative SMEs, world-class universities, and internationally renowned research centres such as IMEC and VIB, Flanders is an absolute world player in the "life sciences" industry. With the 'Circle of Life' story (which is based on the successful 'Body of the Future' concept of the Leuven experience centre Health House, and presents a number of innovative technologies linked to the most important phases in a person's life), Flanders aims to highlight the strengths of its health tech and biopharma companies internationally. Expo 2025 Osaka (and specifically the sub-theme 'Saving Lives') provides an excellent forum for this," says Barbara Tieleman, Head of Marketing & Events at Flanders Investment & Trade Agency (FIT).

Wallonia

Wallonia has chosen to illustrate the challenges of artificial intelligence in healthcare, with a focus on digital twins. This is a major advance in personalised medicine, since this technology makes it possible to adapt treatments to the unique genetic and physiological characteristics of each individual.

A digital twin is a virtual model built from a collection of as much medical data as possible on a human individual or a specific organ, on which the effects of certain drugs or external factors such as a change in lifestyle can be virtually simulated through the



application of AI models. The applications are vast, including the discovery of new drugs and the design of new diagnostic tools. Wallonia, which is at the forefront of the development and implementation of these advanced AI simulations, wants this futuristic theme to be understood by the general public.

To this end, the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency and Wallonie-Bruxelles International (who are coordinating the participation of Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation at the Osaka Expo) are working in coordination with TRAIL (Trusted AI Labs) and MedReSyst (Network and Systems Medicine) to promote the progress made here in this sector.

TRAIL

The TRAIL Institute (Trusted AI Labs) brings together the expertise of all the French-speaking Belgian universities and the 4 research centres active in AI (Multitel, Cetic, Sirris, Cenaero). The idea is to unite the strengths in the field to accelerate cutting-edge AI research and training, with the aim of stepping up the take-up of AI by businesses and public services.


“Wallonia is positioning itself at the forefront of innovation in healthcare thanks to an ethical and responsible approach to artificial intelligence. By collaborating with TRAIL and MedReSyst, we want to illustrate how digital twins, powered by multi-omics databases and AI models, are revolutionising healthcare. This scenography will highlight this technology, towards preventive, predictive, personalised and participative medicine. Our ambition is not only to raise public awareness, but also to inspire young people and professionals to train in this crucial area for the future of healthcare.”

MedReSyst

MedReSyst is the medical branch of TRAIL. It also brings together the 5 French-speaking universities, the Multitel and Cetic research centres and a number of key hospitals, and aims to develop the tools needed to implement network and systems-based medicine, making it possible to understand the patient as a whole and improve his or her care from screening to treatment.

How can this be achieved? By centralising and analysing databases using several levels of artificial intelligence. From the DNA genome to environmental influences, everything is intertwined as a cause of disease. The MedReSyst initiative aims to understand all these interactions in order to find the best way to treat as many diseases as possible.

Although the three Regions each developed their concepts independently, they demonstrated a common thread in Belgium’s healthcare innovations: health tech. Not only health tech plays an important role though, so does the ethical use of that



technology. The focus on ethics forms a compelling argument for collaboration with our universities and companies: the use of AI and other technology will always be subject to ethical boundaries putting the patient and their rights, best interests and well-being at the forefront.

Belgium and its regions have a lot to offer the world in the field of *Saving Lives*. How will this be conveyed to the Expo 2025 Osaka public? The winning candidate consortium made a convincing case on how they will do just that! Discover who they are and their vision in translating this concept into a coherent, educational and enjoyable experience!

8. The winning consortium

The winning consortium consists of several very strong and well-known players in the world of designing spaces and experiences. The companies are very Belgian with an international twist, given their operations go global!

Dirty Monitor

Dirty Monitor is an artists' collective founded by Orphée and Mauro Cataldo in Charleroi in 2004. Together, they developed their first artistic projects for local cultural centres and museums. Pioneers in digital art and video mapping, their high-profile collaborations with leading Belgian artistic directors such as Luc Petit and Franco Dragone have enabled them to spread their expertise around the world.

Profirst

Profirst is a Belgian events and communications agency founded by Bruno Pani in 1989. Combining artistic direction, strategy and top-of-the-range production, each event is designed as an effective communication lever to reinforce the brand's image. Specialising in luxury, fashion and beauty, Profirst enjoys a worldwide reputation thanks to its many international clients.

Tempora

Tempora is a Belgian agency specialising in the design, production, promotion and management of exhibitions and cultural facilities. Based in Brussels, it develops major projects both in Belgium and internationally. Every year, the company welcomes more than 800,000 visitors to all the sites and exhibitions it operates.

Showtex Asia

Active in the entertainment and events industry since 1983, Showtex is the world leader in the invention, manufacture, sale and installation of innovative fireproof curtains. Its sewing workshops enable rapid production of top-of-the-range, made-to-measure scenic elements. Also, a supplier of technical elements and stage lighting, ShowTex is an excellent example of Belgian know-how, in constant search of innovation.

Barco

Founded in 1934 in Poperinge by Lucien de Puydt, Barco began by assembling radios from parts imported from the United States, hence the name 'Barco' (Belgium American Radio Corporation). Today, Barco is still a Belgian company specialising in digital projection and imaging technology. It focuses on three main markets: entertainment, business and healthcare. With more than 400 patents to its credit, Barco develops innovative solutions to bring added value to its customers around the world.

9. Crafting the Experience: Design Insights

"Saving lives"

The theme of World Expo 2025 is 'Designing the society of the future, imagining our life of tomorrow'. This exhibition is being held in a particular economic, health and social context for Japan, which is facing challenges requiring innovative technologies and healthcare to improve quality of life.

This is an opportunity to be seized by the Belgian pavilion, whose scenography, designed by Dirty Monitor, Profirst, Tempora, Barco and Showtex Asia, revolves around the general theme of the Exhibition, and more specifically the sub-theme 'Saving Lives'.

This theme highlights the innovation of Belgian companies, their investment in research and development, and their successes in the fields of healthcare, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and public health.

The 'Saving Lives' theme is interpreted in the light of the present and future challenges of living together with almost 9 billion human beings in a globalised and rapidly changing world. These challenges are measured on the scale of a life, a community and a science: that of health, in its capacity to prevent disease, repair the living, and push back the limits of human life.

"Human Regeneration"

The Pavilion is structured around a strong, unifying idea: 'Human Regeneration'. This term evokes the improvement, transformation and renewal of a system (in this case, man as a living organism), as well as the ability to reconstitute an organ or tissue. Symbolically, it also evokes regaining strength and life in the face of adversity, a notion that echoes the field of healthcare (react, repair, regenerate).

This idea will be expressed in three ways in the Pavilion:

PREVENTING ILLNESS.

The Pavilion highlights Belgium's ability to develop and implement technologies and strategies to prevent disease and promote health on a global scale, including innovations in vaccination and disease surveillance. Adapting the human organism so that it reacts better to its environment and strengthening its immunity to counter certain diseases requires major innovations in processes and therapies. Vaccines, the theme chosen by Belgium's federal government, are a perfect illustration of this challenge.

REPAIR.

This curative vocation is expressed through healing mechanisms (medicines, prostheses, etc.) and the development of new tools for researchers and medicine. Artificial

intelligence is playing an increasingly central role in the research process, as demonstrated by the theme chosen by Bruxelles-Capitale, as well as the technology of digital twins, highlighted by the Walloon Region. These virtual models make it possible to collect and compare data to study the impact of medical processes on an individual.

PUSHING BACK THE LIMITS OF HUMAN LIFE.

This challenge concerns all phases of life, from the fight against infertility, to the development of regenerative gene therapies (speech, memory, etc.), or ways of enabling ageing populations to live in good health. This sub-theme is the contribution of the Flemish Region.

A graphic principle: Kintsugi

Anchored in the concept of Human Regeneration, the Pavilion's creative expression is based on the graphic principle of Kintsugi. This ancient Japanese technique for repairing broken ceramics highlights the cracks rather than masking them. The method uses a special lacquer mixed with gold, silver or platinum powder to glue together the fragments of a broken object. The result is a piece embellished with shimmering veins in the broken areas, giving the object new life and a unique beauty.

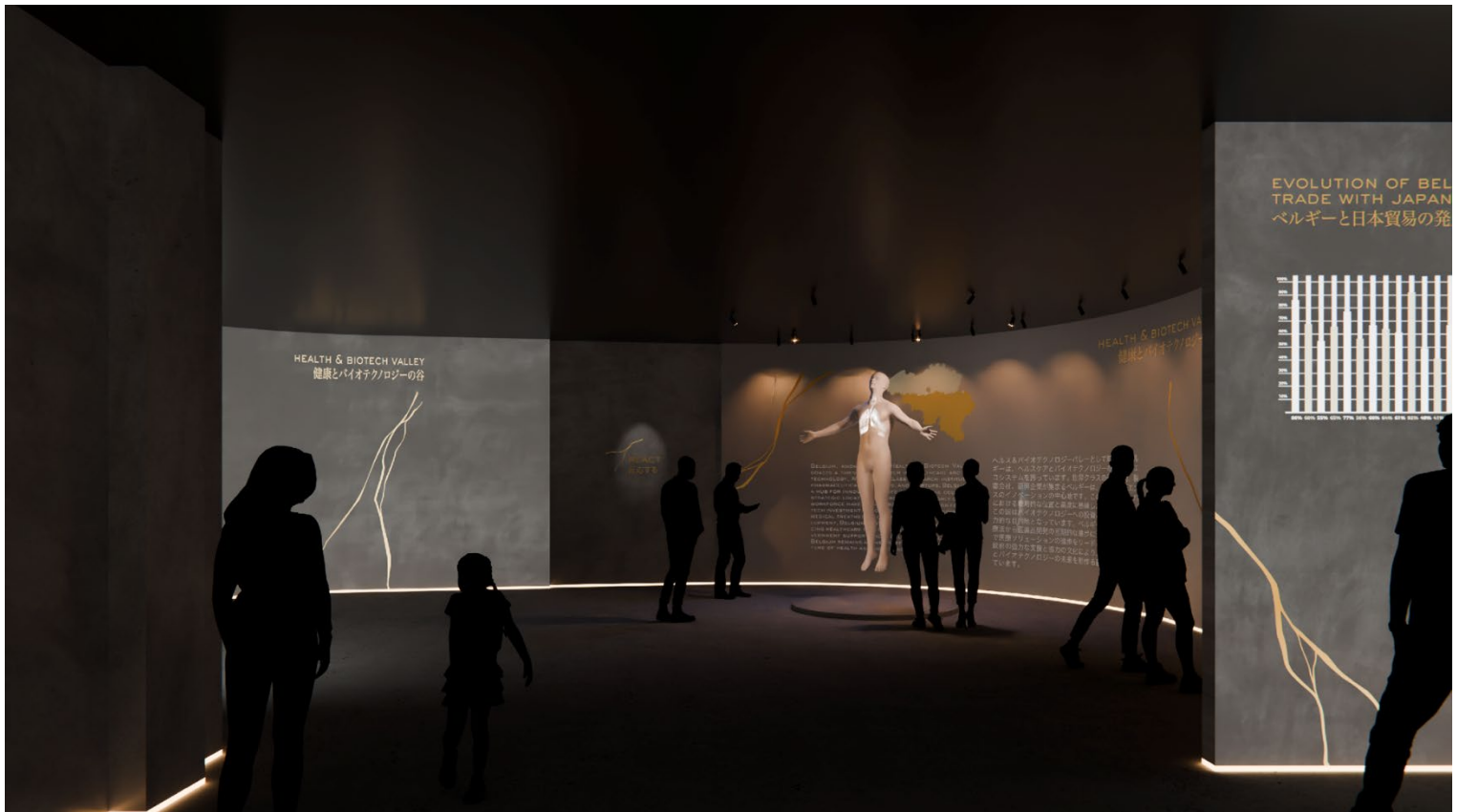
Kintsugi embodies a philosophy that accepts imperfections and values objects despite - or because of - their flaws. It represents resilience, the acceptance of change, and the celebration of what is imperfect, temporary and incomplete. This approach is often seen as a metaphor for the trials of human life, encouraging us to recognise and value scars rather than hide them.

Integrating the concept of Kintsugi with the theme of health in the Belgian Pavilion offers an enriching perspective on healing and recovery. In terms of health, Kintsugi can be seen as a powerful metaphor for the healing process, highlighting not only resilience, but also the beauty and value that can emerge from repair after illness or injury.

In this way, Kintsugi serves as a model for approaching healing and health in a way that values the human experience in all its complexity, promoting a more empathetic and holistic view of medicine. This graphic principle guides the creation of the Pavilion's visuals and is found as a motif in many places, including unexpected spaces, bringing visual coherence to the whole.

Visuals

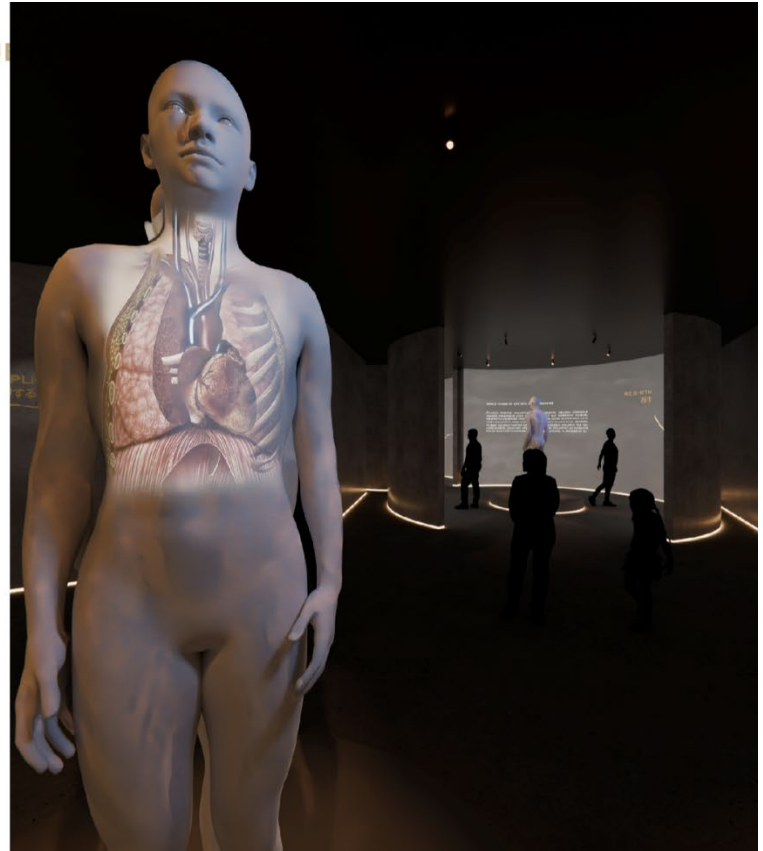
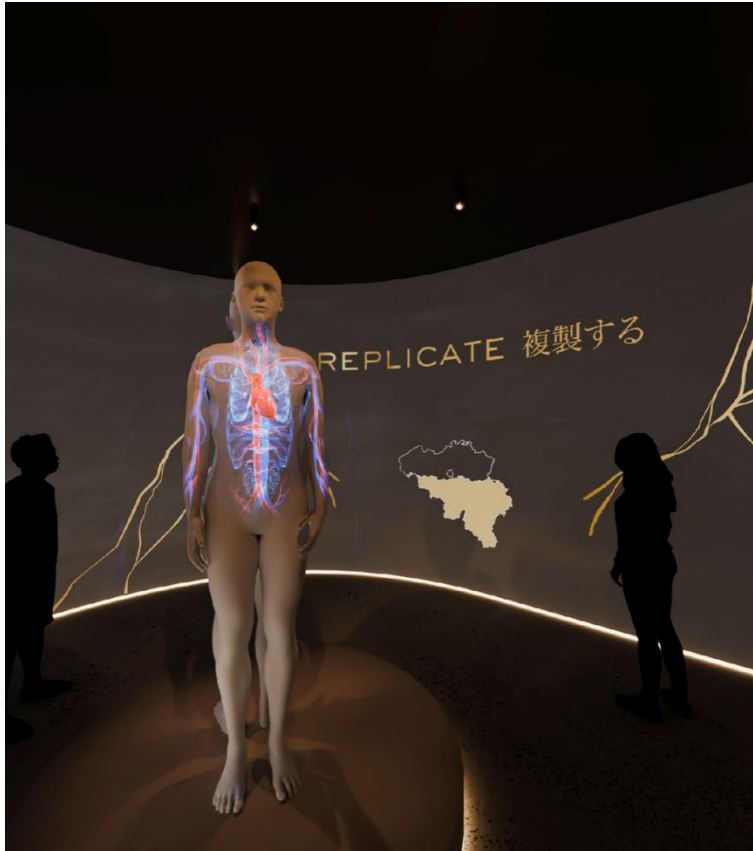
The exhibition space



Kintsugi on the ramp



Exhibition technology



The official Belgian mascot



10. Further course of preparations

The preparations for Expo 2025 Osaka are really kicking into high gear. As of today, 11 September 2024, there are only 214 days left until the opening! While there is still a lot of work to do, we are also proud of what we have accomplished so far.

With the consortium for the visitor journey of our pavilion now selected, we can better align our efforts in this area with the ongoing construction work. We have begun holding weekly meetings with both the visitor journey consortium and the construction consortium to ensure coordination. Additionally, our Technical Committee, in collaboration with their partners at FARI, Health House, TRAIL, and the scenographers, are working closely to ensure the chosen content is translated as clearly and accurately as possible.

The consortium has started their efforts in creating a memorable pavilion experience, beginning right here in Belgium! Every element of the scenography and the storytelling is being developed in Belgium allowing our team and the Technical Committee to visualize the pavilion's design before its installation in Japan. Quality is our top priority!

What else?

The Belgian pavilion will, of course, feature a Belgian restaurant. While the consortium is currently developing the restaurant's look and feel, we are also searching for a company to operate it. The concession (call for candidates) will be launched very soon. The selected company will be responsible for the menu and catering in the Belgian restaurant.

We will also begin publishing job offers very soon! The vacancy for the position of Pavilion Director was posted in June, and we are currently in the recruitment process. However, this is not the only opportunity to work at our pavilion in Osaka. Job postings will range from hosts and accountant to event coordinator.

The Belgian shop is also taking shape. The consortium responsible for the visitor journey is overseeing the design of our shop, and we are in the final stages of selecting its contents. The products will include chocolates, biscuits, and other confectionery items, along with Belgium-themed souvenirs and pavilion-branded merchandise. Companies interested in having their products featured in our Belgian shop are still welcome to reach out.

11. Name our Spirit

The mascot of the Belgian pavilion has finally been revealed. This extraordinary, cute character is the very essence of our Belgian pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka. an innovative fusion of Belgian creativity and the building blocks of life: cells.

Be the Architect of Our Cell-abration!

We're on a mission to create the best experience possible in our Belgian pavilion but we need your creativity to complete the puzzle! Our pavilion's spirit is waiting to be set free.

Name the Cell, Save the Day

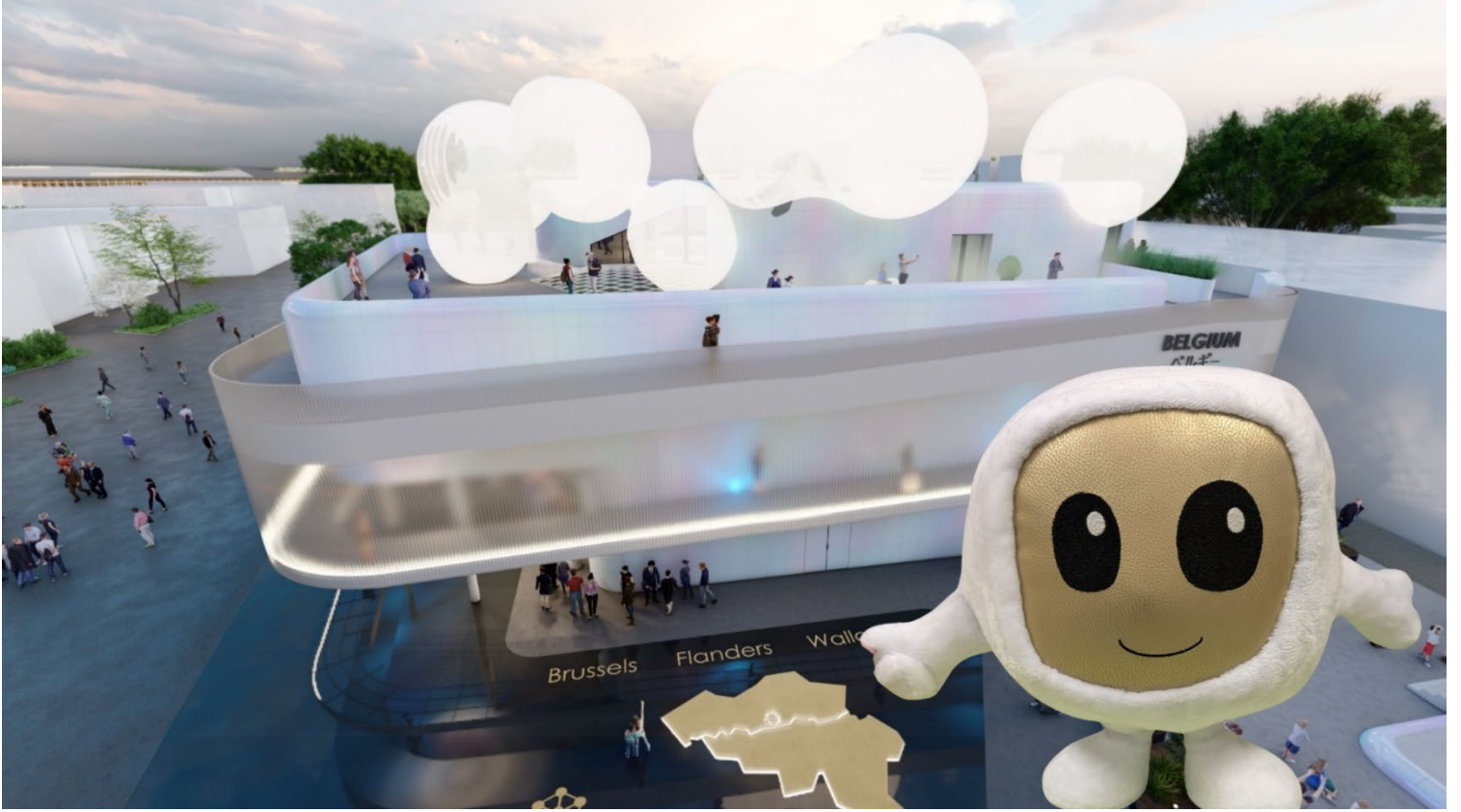
All we need to do to set its spirit free is find the perfect name for our mascot!

Share your ideas and be part of our story. Submit your name suggestions here <https://belexpo.be/competition-mascot-name> and bring our cell-abration to life!

The winner will receive a plushie of our mascot and a dinner for two in our Belgian pavilion!

Deadline: 15 October 2024.

The final decision will be made by a focus group consisting of people from all demographic backgrounds.



12. Content programme: events & more

In addition to showcasing an exceptional architectural design and a captivating exhibition, the Belgian pavilion is set to become a lively hub of activity throughout Expo 2025 Osaka. We are thrilled to announce that we are developing a dynamic content program that will run alongside the pavilion's exhibition during the entire Expo, featuring a wide array of events that span from seminars focused on life-saving technologies to cultural celebrations and live performances.

Our events will align with the thematic weeks established by the Expo Association, each offering a unique lens through which to explore key global challenges. We particularly focus on:

- the Health & Well-Being Week, will take place from 20 June to 1 July 2025;
- the Future of Health and Biodiversity Week will start on 17 September and end on 28 September 2025; and
- the Peace, Human Security, and Dignity Week will run from 1 August to 12 August 2025.

Alongside these global themes, we will celebrate Belgium's rich culture and diversity with dedicated national and regional weeks:


- from 26 May until 1 June 2025, the Belgian pavilion will be hosting Wallonia Week;
- the Belgian pavilion will be celebrating Flanders Week from 16 June 22 June 2025;
- from 8 September to 12 September 2025 the pavilion will revolve around Brussels Week; and last but not least
- on 14 September the Belgian National Day will take place. The entire expo site will celebrate Belgium on this spectacular day!

In addition to these events, BelExpo and its partners have curated two additional theme weeks to highlight other facets of Belgian know-how and creativity:

- the Belgian Architecture & Design Week, which will take place from 7 to 13 May 2025; and
- the Belgian Food & Beverage Week that will fill the entire week between 5 to 12 June 2025.

The Belgian pavilion itself will be a testament to the collaborative spirit and shared expertise of both Belgium and Japan, but also the other countries on the expo site. The content of the pavilion will offer a compelling and accurate portrayal of Belgium, engaging visitors in an unforgettable journey through our country's values, culture, and innovations. We will regularly cooperate and co-organise activities with the pavilions of other countries and partners, including the European Union.

The FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister is joining forces with BelExpo and the Belgian pavilion to offer a number of activities linked to its country



branding campaign 'Belgium. Embracing openness'. This international campaign aims to strengthen Belgium's reputation among investors, opinion leaders, researchers and students.

'Belgium. Embracing openness' is based on the three main pillars that make Belgium such an attractive destination for foreign investment: innovation, partnerships and diversity. Belgium wants to enable forward-thinking innovators from around the globe to push the limits of what is possible today. With this in mind, the FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister's campaign is the perfect link between Belgium's entrepreneurial spirit and the Belgian pavilion's scenography, which focuses on new technologies and cutting-edge sectors.

By hosting this full program of events, we aim to underscore our commitment to presenting Belgium not just as an exhibition but as a vibrant, forward-looking nation eager to engage with the world. This content program is a central pillar of our participation in Expo 2025 Osaka, designed to make our pavilion a must-visit destination for visitors and companies alike, reinforcing our strategic vision to showcase Belgium on the global stage.

13. Contact

For general questions or comments, don't hesitate to get in touch with BelExpo at the e-mail address belexpo@economie.fgov.be.

For specific questions related to Expo 2025 Osaka, please get in touch with BelExpo at expo2025osaka@economie.fgov.be.

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