

BIOECONOMY WORKING GROUP

ANNUAL PLAN 2022

WORKING GROUP LEADERS

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OBJECTIVES

The Working Group focuses on increasing the influence of regions and their stakeholders in shaping the European circular bioeconomy while also working to increase the awareness of the sector as a whole. The group covers the bioeconomy in the widest sense, tackling issues related to topics such as food systems, forestry, bioenergy, biowaste, bio-based products etc. Seeing the growing role of the bioeconomy in decarbonisation efforts, the group also concentrates on the ecological sustainability of these solutions. The group develops contacts with European policymakers to increase cooperation and projects between European regions in bioeconomy, with a particular focus on Horizon Europe and the Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership.

CONTEXT

What are the key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2022?

European Green Deal strategies:

- Soil Strategy
- Zero Pollution Action Plan
- Forestry Strategy
- Algae Strategy
- Circular Economy Action Plan
 - Circular Economy Package I: sustainable products policy initiative and strategy on sustainable textiles
 - Circular Economy Package II: policy framework for bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics

Follow up on the implementation of the Bioeconomy Strategy - an assessment report of the strategy is planned for March, with a high-level event in June. Possibilities for ERRIN to be represented in and contribute to the event will be explored.

Follow the development of EU regulatory frameworks for removing, recycling and sustainably storing carbon, following the EC Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles (December 2021).

Which funding programmes are important for the Working Group and how does the WG aim to facilitate project development?

Horizon Europe:

- Cluster 6 and especially the calls from Destination 3
- Soil Mission: [HORIZON-MISS-2021-SOIL-02-06 Engage with and activate municipalities and regions to protect and restore soil health](#)

Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership: First calls are expected to be published before summer and the Bioeconomy WG will explore the possibility of organising a project development activity around the launch of the calls.

LIFE: Sub-programme on “Circular economy and resource efficiency”

Interreg: New Interreg Europe programme and regional programmes

ERASMUS+: Linked to skills in the bioeconomy sectors

How does the group support partnership building and collaborate with other European organisations or networks?

A closer collaboration is foreseen between ERRIN and the ACR+ network as the work on the Circular Regions and Cities Initiative will kick off. The collaboration with the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC) will continue around the Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership and the BIC bioeconomy platform for regions.

What topics and tailored activities could be proposed for less active regions, for example tackling topics directed to widening countries?

The Bioeconomy WG will to a greater extent promote the possibility for all WG members to present their regional examples in the meetings. The activities for 2022 represent a wide range of topics and activities that hopefully all members can participate and find value in.

ACTIVITIES

The Soil Strategy and its links to the Soil Mission

March 2022 | Online meeting

The European Commission will be invited to present the Soil Strategy and its objectives, as well as its links to the EU Soil Mission. Best practices from ERRIN regions related to soil and soil pollution will also be presented, for example on the issue of carbon sequestration in soils (e.g. peatlands), the reuse of biochar/biowaste as biofertilizers, etc.

This online meeting aims to give more context to the issue of soil – both by presenting the objectives of the new Soil Strategy and by highlighting the work regions are undertaking related to soil. This activity follows up on the meetings organised by the Bioeconomy WG on the Soil Mission in 2021, and presents an occasion to assess the interest of the WG members on the topic of soil and to highlight how this issue is tackled in regions. The meeting is directed both towards the Brussels-based audience and regional stakeholders.

Status report: where are we with the European Bioeconomy Strategy?

April 2022 | Online meeting

This WG meeting will be an online information session where the European Commission will be invited to present the outcomes of the assessment report on the European Bioeconomy Strategy and the plans for the high-level event in June. The meeting will present an opportunity for WG members to ask questions on the report and its findings.

The aim of the meeting is to understand how the work towards achieving the objectives of the European Bioeconomy Strategy is proceeding in the EU. Additionally, the WG will explore any potential possibilities for ERRIN to contribute to the planned high-level event. The meeting is directed both towards the Brussels-based audience and regional stakeholders.

The Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership: launch of the first calls

June 2022 | Physical meeting

The European Commission (DG RTD) will be invited to present the new Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership (CBE). The calls for proposals, which are expected to be launched before summer, will be presented by the CBE Secretariat. The objective of the meeting is to present the new partnership and the newly launched calls to the WG members.

This meeting could potentially be organised together with a project development activity around the calls. If possible, the meeting would be organised as a physical meeting for the Brussels-based audience and any regional stakeholders willing to travel to Brussels.

Policy framework on bio-based plastics

September 2022

The EU policy framework on bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics is expected to be published in 2022. A Member of the European Parliament actively working on the topic will be invited to set the scene, while the European Commission will be invited to present the new framework. Regional projects on the topic of bio-based plastics will be invited to present their work. Views from the business sector and information on their activities could potentially also be included.

The aim of the meeting is to present the new policy framework, as there currently is no EU law in place applying to bio-based, biodegradable and compostable plastics in a comprehensive manner, as well



as innovative regional projects addressing the issue. The meeting is directed both towards the Brussels-based audience and regional stakeholders.

The urban perspective of forestry

October 2022

This meeting will present the urban side of the Forestry Strategy and highlight urban challenges and opportunities related to forestry. Links to relevant topics such as the New European Bauhaus, nature-based solutions and carbon sequestration in urban contexts will be explored through the presentation of regional projects.

The aim of the meeting is to give an urban perspective to the topic of forestry and highlight examples of how forestry is incorporated into urban areas around Europe. The meeting is directed both towards the Brussels-based audience and regional stakeholders.

Bioeconomy meets data

November/December 2022

This meeting aims to present examples of how data is used within the bioeconomy across European regions, for example in the agri-food sector, the forestry sector, and within waste management. The selected Digital Innovation Hubs working on bioeconomy-related topics could also be invited to present their activities.

The meeting will be co-organised with the ICT WG and is directed both towards the Brussels-based audience and regional stakeholders.