

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 EU Soil Strategy and soil activities in regions

15 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.

Circular Bio-based Europe call for project proposals: online project facilitation workshop **21 June 2022 | Online meeting**

The new Circular Bio-based Europe Partnership and the call for project proposals, which is expected to be launched before summer, will be presented by the CBE Secretariat. As many of the topics in the new CBE call for proposals are in line with the interests of the Bioeconomy Working Group, the WG will organise a project facilitation workshop around the calls. The workshop will be organised online with breakout sessions to discuss pre-selected project ideas around the new calls.

10 years of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy: presentation of the progress report **15 September 2022 | Physical meeting**

This WG meeting will be an information session where the European Commission will be invited to present the outcomes of the progress report on the EU Bioeconomy Strategy. 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. The Bio-based Industries Consortium will also be invited to present their new regional funding platform.

The urban perspective of forestry **5 October 2022 | Physical meeting**

This meeting aims to give an urban perspective to the topic of forestry by exploring innovative projects and activities of how urban forests, green areas and other greening interventions are incorporated into the urban landscape in cities and regions across Europe. The European Commission will also be invited to present the EU policy framework on urban greening and initiatives that support the creation of greener, healthier and more liveable cities.

The meeting will be organised as a physical meeting, and is therefore mainly directed towards a Brussels-based audience.



Bioeconomy meets data

November 2022 | Online meeting

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.