

## BIOECONOMY WORKING GROUP

### ANNUAL PLAN 2023

#### 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 (e.g. nature based solutions, green and blue solutions for carbon capture). 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

Please explain shortly how the Working Group's aims and activities are linked to the wider R&I landscape and the ERRIN missions:

#### **What are the key EU level priorities, strategies, and events that the Working Group aims to follow up in 2023?**

As regards key EU level priorities and strategies, the working group will keep a close eye on the implementation of the Horizon Soil Mission and the new proposed Soil Charter. Many legislative proposals in discussion or upcoming also promise to be of interest for the working group, e.g. the new Soil health Law, the Nature restoration Law or the upcoming Sustainable Food Systems regulation. The European Circular Economy action plan as well as the Bioeconomy Strategy remain of course key policies for the working group, as well as the Food 2030 Strategy and the new Communications on Algae and Plastics.

Attention will be paid to opportunities that emerge in the context of the European week of regions and cities, EU Green Week, the European Week of industry, and other similar Brussel-based conferences related to the bioeconomy. The Bioeconomy working group has also been invited to the Swedish Presidency conference on Bioeconomy, organised at the end of February in Stockholm.

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

The main funding programme of interest is Horizon Europe, with a focus on Cluster 6 and its associated partnerships (especially “Circular biobased Europe”) and Missions (Soil Mission). Also, Erasmus+ opportunities, and potentially LIFE calls are of interest. Other funding programmes may be considered if the members express interest.

We will start the year with a coffee meeting inviting members to network and reconnect after in the new year. Our goal is to target funding programmes of interest to refine and define which calls are of particular interest for the members. A specific dedicated session on project development is also planned in the autumn on pre-selected 2024 Cluster 6 calls related to sustainable food and feed systems.

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

The working group has established a strong dialogue already with the Circular Biobased Europe Joint Undertaking team and the Biobased industries Consortia (BIC), as well as with various representatives of the Commission. These connections are meant to continue in 2023, with a particular focus on the European Commission and DG AGRI in the context of the Soil Mission.

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

Ideally for the less active regions, we would recommend attending the coffee meeting in February. During this meeting, new members can connect with the working group leaders and ERRIN member representatives. Furthermore, they'll have the opportunity to express their needs. Should any suggestion and request from less active regions emerge from the discussions, we could then think of organising specific activities. The working group leaders are also open to schedule separate conversations with members that are interested in increasing their involvement in the working group upon request. The coffee meeting and the interaction with the members will be a key step for us to plan the year ahead and see how we best serve our members.

Overall, it is also important to say that the working group members, be it active or less active regions, can be involved in the organisation of the activities of the working group by proposing to host one of the meetings. For the hybrid meetings in particular, offices with good technical settings are more than welcome to mention their interest in hosting a meeting of the working group.

## ACTIVITIES

### Bioeconomy WG coffee meeting: Kicking off 2023

**8 February | 9:00-10:30 (in person meeting)**

This meeting will offer an opportunity for all Bioeconomy WG members to come together to network and jointly kick-off the WG activities for 2023. The WG leaders will present the annual plan for the new year, providing an opportunity for WG members to familiarise themselves with the planned activities and discuss their potential involvement in the planned work. This will also be an opportunity for members to propose to host some of the sessions planned, provide feedback (should they wish so) on other meetings and highlight their interest when it comes to future Horizon Europe calls and project development. The Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and opportunities for WG members to participate in the activities of the initiative will also be presented.

This meeting will be an information and networking session directed towards Brussels-based people.

### A Soil Deal for Europe: Soil Charter & Living Labs

**18 April | 10:00-13:00 (in person meeting, followed by a networking lunch)**

Following-up on the past meetings organised by the Bioeconomy working group on the Soil Mission, this new event is meant to introduce a new development around the Mission, i.e. the new Soil Charter. The Commission (DG AGRI) will be there to present the Charter and its features in the context of a dialogue where regions will be able to ask their questions and provide feedback on the initiative. Time to present in more details the concept of living labs and their role in the Mission (ENoLL) and regional examples of living labs is also envisaged.

This meeting will be an information and networking session directed towards Brussels-based people. The meeting aims to provide the members with an understanding on what the Soil Charter is and how they could support it and get involved in the activities that will be organised.

### Coffee meeting on Soil calls

**3 May | 10:00-12:00 (in person meeting)**

Based on the results of [the survey on the EU Mission calls](#), this informal coffee meeting is set up to discuss the project proposal ideas. During the meeting, we will discuss the next steps related to the EU Mission Soil calls and explore the following calls:

- HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-07: [Back to earth: bringing communities and citizens closer to soil](#)
- HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-08: [Co-creating solutions for soil health in Living Labs](#)
- HORIZON-MISS-2023-SOIL-01-09: [Carbon farming in living labs](#)
- HORIZON-MISS-2023-CLIMA-OCEAN-SOIL-01-01: [Joint demonstration of an integrated approach to increasing landscape water retention capacity at regional scale](#)

The event will include a simple interactive mapping/matchmaking session that is open to all interested meeting participants.

### **Nature Restoration Law: Showcasing local challenges and opportunities** **September 2023 (TBC)**

The new Nature Restoration Law, proposed by the European Commission in June 2022, will present challenges to cities as it proposes ambitious restoration requirements for urban ecosystems. This meeting, which will be organised jointly with the **Smart Cities WG**, will discuss some of these challenges while also showcasing the innovative solutions urban areas are adopting to fulfil the requirements of the law.

WG members will be invited to present their innovative solutions, such as integrated green infrastructure solutions, compensation models as well as improving and monitoring the quality of green areas, in this best practice exchange, with the aim to jointly discuss and explore the innovation aspect of the new law. The meeting will be directed both towards Brussels-based people and regional stakeholders.

### **Project facilitation: Sustainable food and feed systems** **3 October | (online) 14:00-16:00**

This meeting will constitute a combined information and project facilitation session around new Horizon Europe calls linked to sustainable food systems. A potential link could be made with the new Horizon Europe Partnership on “Safe and Sustainable Food Systems” and give an update on the implementation of the Food 2030.

This meeting will be open to the members and external stakeholders and is meant to be a project facilitation/ open discussion on a few pre-selected calls related to food systems for 2024. The members will be able to provide feedback on calls of interest ahead of the meeting. Ideally only 4-6 calls would be selected, specifically calls where regional and local authorities are at the center. are

The meeting would potentially take place in two parts: starting with a general meeting where the calls would be briefly introduced, ahead with some tips about the writing of proposals, followed by parallel roundtables that the participants can join according to their needs and where projects ideas can be pitched.

### **Informal exchange on the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)** **16 October | 13:30-16:00 (online meeting)**

This meeting will offer the opportunity for ERRIN-members who are not part of the CCRI initiative to exchange with the ERRIN members who have been selected as CCRI [Pilot](#) or [Fellow](#) on the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI). The aim of the meeting is to exchange the intermediate learnings and to reflect how the wider ERRIN membership can benefit from the CCRI, the [CCRI projects](#) and the service portfolio of the [CCRI associated partners](#). We will also touch upon R&I gaps from the

stakeholder perspective and reflect on how future EU funding in the field of circular economy (e.g. DG RTD for new Horizon Europe calls for new CCRI projects) ideally should look like.

### **Participation in the EU Soil Days, Spanish EU Presidency event co-organised by the Murcia Region**

**6 November | 9:30-18:00 (in person in Brussels)**

The Bioeconomy WG leaders will co-organise a session in this conference of the Murcia Region a session on the governance of improving soil health activities in the EU. This session will exchange on what comes next after the soil Manifesto and will present some learnings from the lab, in which ERRIN-members are invited to showcase proved governance and ecosystem approaches to address the Soil mission at local and regional level.

### **End of year drink of the Bioeconomy WG**

**Date TBC**

The Bioeconomy WG leaders like to close the working year with the WG members in an informal drink.