



European Network for
Rural Development

Bioeconomy Event Highlights

The first meeting of the Thematic Group on 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy' allowed a diverse group of stakeholders to define and agree on priorities, methodologies and communication tools for the TG, whose overall aim is to encourage the development of sustainable bioeconomy value chains in rural areas.

Key messages included the need for synergies between policy instruments at various levels, importance of developing territorial and local approaches, and attracting new investments in rural areas. Better communication and engagement of different stakeholders were recommended.

The meeting results will guide the work of the TG until June 2019, with two more live meetings, continuous online engagement and a new Rural Bioeconomy portal to be launched on the ENRD website.

Event Information

Title: 1st Meeting of Thematic Group on 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy'

Date: 9 October 2018

Location: Brussels, Belgium

Organiser: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: 41, including representatives of Managing Authorities, European organisations, research institutes and private sector and the European Commission.

Outcomes: Definition of priorities, methodologies and communication tools for the Thematic Group

Website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/1st-meeting-thematic-group-mainstreaming-bioeconomy_en

Bioeconomy in Europe: policy context, initiatives and strategies



Bioeconomy contributes to employment and economic growth while preserving ecosystems, particularly in rural areas. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan have been revised to introduce a system-wide approach and ensure that bioeconomy brings long-term benefits. Emerging national/regional strategies are crucial to support the development of bio-based business models that valorise local resources. In addition, rural stakeholders willing to seize new opportunities need coherent public support and private investment. Various RDP measures can help address now barriers to bioeconomy and increase the value retained by rural areas. The ENRD TG on [Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy](#) aims to explore these topics to bring to light the potential and opportunities of the bioeconomy in rural areas.

The EU and worldwide policy context

Catherine Bowyer and Ben Allen (IEEP) [presented](#) the [scoping paper](#) prepared for the TG. There are currently 15 dedicated national or regional bioeconomy strategies, and a wealth of related strategies adopted around the world in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the transition to a low-carbon society. This global interest in the bioeconomy responds to new opportunities provided by scientific and technological developments, the need to promote sustainable development and to better connect producers, processors and consumers.

Galin Gentchev (European Commission) [gave an overview](#) of the process of revision of the 2012 EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan, stressing the need to optimise the social, environmental and economic impacts across all the sectors of the bioeconomy through a system-wide effort and to connect with the circular economy agenda.



Bioeconomy initiatives in Southern Europe

Sandro Angiolini, ENRD CP / María Teresa Ambrós Mendioroz, Ministry of Agriculture, Spain



Angiolini's [overview](#) of bioeconomy initiatives in Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal reveals that, despite the diversity of contexts, these countries face similar cultural, economic, technological and administrative barriers. Potential solutions include updating skills and infrastructures, more coordination within value chains and re-orientation of public funding tools towards bioeconomy.

Ambrós Mendioroz [described](#) the situation in Spain. The country has eight regional bioeconomy strategies, an 'umbrella strategy' (2015) and a national Bioeconomy Observatory. The cooperation measures of the national RDP have proved to be a flexible way to support emerging bioeconomy initiatives by ring-fencing funds in specific Focus Areas and adopting specific selection criteria for projects' funding.

The Latvian Bioeconomy Strategy 2030

Laura Liepiņa, Ministry of Agriculture, Latvia



The Latvian [Bioeconomy Strategy](#), approved in 2017, sets three strategic goals to be achieved by 2030: promoting and preserving employment in bioeconomy sectors, mostly in rural areas, to up to 128 000 employees; increasing the added value of bioeconomy products to at least 3.8 billion EUR; and increasing the value of bioeconomy export production to at least 9 billion EUR.

The Latvian RDP currently supports bioeconomy with calls for projects in EAFRD measures for cooperation, investment in physical assets and LEADER. Latvia is also fostering rural bioeconomy through the Baltic Sea Network, facilitating transnational cooperation and promoting the use of the EAFRD for achieving the bioeconomy objectives of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR).

INPUTS BY THE PARTICIPANTS AND NEXT STEPS

Through break-out groups, the participants discussed existing opportunities, barriers to overcome and links to strengthen, and the role of public measures - including RDPs - to contribute to an enabling environment for economically and environmentally sustainable bioeconomy [value chains](#) in rural areas.

Realising the opportunities of bioeconomy value chains in rural areas requires consistency between policies at various levels, suitable logistics and infrastructure, and a regulatory framework promoting circularity and valorisation of by-products and residues. Overall, producers and consumers should be better engaged through awareness-raising and communication.

Public measures, including RDPs, can contribute to creating an enabling environment for bio-based value chains in rural areas that are economically and environmentally sustainable. Better support from local authorities should be complemented by business initiatives. Reducing the risks connected to bioeconomy investments is a key area for stronger action, calling for synergies between different forms of support to be addressed.

The final discussion showed the group's interest in three main topics related to bioeconomy: ways to make better use of RDPs and pursue synergies between policy instruments; territorial and local approaches to rural bioeconomy; and education, engagement and communication approaches to involve stakeholders. The TG work will continue working on these topics with two more live meetings, constant online engagement and a Rural Bioeconomy portal on the ENRD website, as well as a concluding seminar on bioeconomy in June 2019.



ENRD resources and tools

Thematic Group on Bioeconomy

Information on TG meetings and related thematic outputs are uploaded on the ENRD website on a regular basis https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/bioeconomy_en

Rural Bioeconomy Portal

The ENRD's new tool focusing on the challenges and opportunities for bioeconomy in rural areas https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/bioeconomy/rural-bioeconomy-portal_en