

# What's Next for the Bioeconomy in the EU and Central and Eastern Europe?

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**CEE2ACT Final Conference - 4 December 2025** 

## The Bioeconomy as a Strategic Opportunity



17.1 million jobs in the EU in biomass producing and converting activities - generating 5% of GDP

### Up to EUR 2.7 trillion

estimated value of the EU bioeconomy including goods and services

## 18% per year growth rate

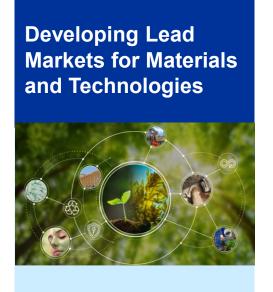
for the global biotechnology sector, worth over EUR 720 billion

**2.9 additional jobs** are generated in the EU for every job created in the bioeconomy



## Bioeconomy Strategy: Strategic pillars

Scaling up Innovation and Investments: from Lab to Deployment







Joining forces with Member States, local and regional actors, private and public stakeholders



## The Bioeconomy Strategy aims to:

Removing barriers

Stimulating innovation and investments



Efficient use of biomass

Enablers for bioeconomy lead markets across sectors: public procurement and voluntary industry alliances

Lead markets for materials and technologies



Reducing the need for primary biomass: relying on secondary feedstocks and circularity

Towards resilient and sustainable ecosystems and value chains

Primary biomass supply



Facilitate wider access to global markets for the EU's bio-based technologies, innovations, biomaterials and applications

Shaping the global sustainable bioeconomy agenda



such as plastics, fibres, textiles, chemicals, fertilisers, plant protection products, construction materials, biorefineries, advanced fermentation and permanent storage of biogenic carbon



## **CORDIS** results pack on innovative bioeconomy solutions



CORDIS Results Pack on innovative bioeconomy solutions Strengthening the EU's prosperity through sustainable and circular bioeconomy innovations

### Advancing bioeconomy in Central and Eastern Europe

With support of the CEE2ACT project and expert knowledge from across Europe, 10 CEE countries are moving their bioeconomy forward.

CEE2ACT'S

participatory

bottom-up

approach' is

a response to

the urgent need

to accelerate

the current

development of

effective national

bioeconomy

strategies and

builds on successful

strategies from

more advanced

or experienced

Despite being rich in biomass resources and bioeconomy potential, many countries from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have lacked comprehensive national strategies to hamess

The EU-funded CEE2ACT project has been working to change this scenario by helping 10 nations - Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia develop their own bioeconomy roadmaps.

What sets the project apart is its emphasis on cooperation, leveraging the experience of Belgium, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria Finland and Sweden to share effective governance models and best practices.

"CEE2ACT's participatory 'bottom-up approach'

is a response to the urgent need to accelerate countries. the current development of effective national bioeconomy strategies and builds on successful strategies platforms that bring together stakeholders through workshops, from more advanced or experienced countries," states Daniel training sessions, forums and other activities. Ganszky CEE2ACT project coordinator

Learning from expertise

the policy paper 'Best Practices for Stakeholder Engagement: Co-others - build partnerships Creating National Bioeconomy Strategies'

Another example of joint effort was the site visit organised and hosted by Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands for CEE partners. and stakeholders. Participants learned about the cross-sectoral governance models and circular Netherlands, and gained practical insights into stakeholder engagement and policy design, which they are now using for developing their National Bioeconomy Roadmaps," reports Cansaliv.

The visit also enabled stakeholders from all 10 CEE countries to exchange knowledge and experiences, reinforcing the project's splitt of cooperation.

**Building capacity** through digital tools

established National Bioeconomy Hubs, which are

to build their bioeconomy capacity. An e-learning platform offers interactive exercises and online courses, while an online emerged. Finland demonstrated the importance of inter-ministerial projects. A self-assessment tool enables administrative bodies at coordination, while Sweden emphasised involving the private | local, regional and national levels to evaluate their bioeconomy sector Germany highlighted the need to engage citizens through development status and receive recommendations. Finally, innovative means, and Spain applied this principle through electronic there is a business-to-business matchmaking tool that helps communication tools. These and other lessons can be found in stakeholders - SMEs, large companies, research institutions and

15 EU-funded research and innovation projects in the field of bioeconomy, showcasing a wide range of benefits, from reducing environmental impacts to generating jobs

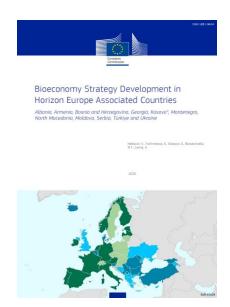


- Dedicated bioeconomy strategy at national level
- Dedicated bioeconomy strategy at national level under development
- Other policy initiatives dedicated to the bioeconomy
- Other related strategies at national level
  - Data not collected

Source: EC's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy
Administrative Boundaries:
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# Status of national bioeconomy strategies and related policy initiatives in Europe

- National and regional bioeconomy strategies are becoming more numerous throughout Europe
- Central and Eastern European countries have made significant progress in rolling out bioeconomy initiatives





Source: EC's Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy, September 2025



## Council conclusions on a potential Europe-wide R&I initiative

- Central and Eastern European countries have a comparative advantage in the bioeconomy due to its abundant biomass resources, which are however largely untapped
- 11 BIOEAST countries gathered political support for "a potential Europe-wide R&I initiative"
- The Council conclusions have been adopted in November 2024 in the Competitiveness Council
- The initiative aims towards enhancing competitiveness by advancing sustainable natural resource management, food system security and the deployment of the bioeconomy by harnessing the potential of CEE Member States, Western Balkans, and candidate countries, while supporting the potential accession of Ukraine
- A dedicated initiative could help making this macro region competitive in bioeconomy, benefitting whole Europe



Brussels, 29 November 2024

16181/24

RECH 521 AGRI 835 COMPET 1159 COWEB 191

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS	
From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	29 November 2024
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	15304/24 + COR 1
Subject:	A potential Europe-wide R&I initiative on advancing sustainable natural resource management, food systems security and the deployment of the bioeconomy, harnessing the potential of Central and Eastern Europe - Council conclusions (29 November 2024)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on A potential Europe-wide R&I initiative on advancing sustainable natural resource management, food systems security and the deployment of the bioeconomy, harnessing the potential of Central and Eastern Europe, approved by the Council at its 4063rd meeting held on 29 November 2024.

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### Draft report on gaps, needs and potential

- The draft report is based on the outcomes of discussions at dedicated SCAR meetings and the Hungarian Presidency event:
- Relevant contributions from the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Circular Bio-Based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU), and Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC)

### **Key outcomes (biomass):**

- The Central and Eastern European countries, Western Balkans, and candidate countries have high and untapped potential in terms of biomass
- Despite high resource potential, effective bioeconomy development in these regions remains underexploited

**Key insights:** Abundant resources, Modernisation gap, Innovation divide, Need for customised actions, Collaboration and capacity building, Role of R&I, Governance and SMEs

## EU value added

## **Boost biomass** valorisation

→ More efficient and sustainable use of biological resources





## Advance industrial capacity in rural areas

→ Job creation, local economic growth, and rural depopulation mitigation

## Develop a more integrated common market for biomass

→ Enhanced crossborder cooperation and resource flow





## Strategic autonomy and food security

→ Leverage also the biomass potential of Ukraine and other candidate countries

## Strengthening the European Research Area by enhancing the bioeconomy research and innovation ecosystem in BIOEAST countries

Cluster: Horizon Europe, Cluster 6 Work Programme 2025

**Type of Action:** Coordination and Support Actions

**Objective:** Enhancing research and innovation capacities in the bioeconomy within the BIOEAST macro-region and beyond

Call budget: 4 million €

**Evaluation ongoing** 

### Cluster 6



#### **Mission Soil**



EU Missions Info Days 2026 20-21 January

#### Cluster 6 Info Days 2026

22-23 January (hybrid)

#### **Registrations open**

Brokerage event on 21 January 2026



# A Strategic Framework for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy

Excerpt from the New EU Bioeconomy Strategy

"The EU will launch a research and innovation initiative to develop and deploy sustainable bioeconomy solutions in regions with high biomass potential, including in BIOEAST countries, Moldova, Ukraine and the Western Balkans. This initiative will mobilise capital and strengthen industrial ecosystems beyond EU borders for the benefit of Member States and EU accession countries and ensure that all efforts are underpinned by robust environmental and social safeguards".

- A targeted approach to enhancing the bioeconomy in regions with significant biomass potential, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe
- These countries, including those part of the BIOEAST initiative, are recognized for their high biomass potential
- An opportunity for countries to enhancing their bioeconomy solutions
- Potentially leading to sustainable development, economic growth, and stronger regional cooperation

## **EU Bioeconomy Youth Ambassadors**



- 15 Young bioeconomy enthusiasts based all over Europe
- 2-year programme (2025-27) to make positive change, promote sustainable bioeconomy and engage and represent youth
- Selected and supported by the Commission, acting independently
- Find more about them <u>here</u>
- If you wish to involve the BYAs in your activities, contact <u>bioeconomyouthambassadors@gopa.eu</u>



## A Vision for Agriculture and Food: 4 priority areas



An **attractive** and **predictable** agri-food sector where incomes enable farmers to thrive, attracting future generations



An agri-food sector that is **competitive** and **resilient** in the face of rising global competition and shocks

**ATTRACTIVENESS** 



A **future proof** agri-food sector that is functioning within planetary boundaries





An agri-food sector that values food, fosters fair working and living conditions and vibrant and well-connected rural and coastal areas

**FAIRNESS** 

**SUSTAINABILITY** 

**Enabling environment**: putting research, innovation, knowledge and skills at the heart of Europe's agri-food economy



## Bioeconomy as an opportunity for primary

producers

#### Vision for Agriculture and Food

- Leveraging the opportunities of innovation that reward:
  - Accelerating the commercialization and scaling up bio-based and circular solutions
  - Enabling diversification of value streams, valorisation of farm residues
  - Significant potential for the economy of rural areas
  - Using knowledge, research and innovation as catalysts for change



### Working group on primary producers

- Empower primary producers to play an active and rewarding role in circular bio-based value chains.
- Ensure they benefit from the economic, social and environmental opportunities these systems offer.
- Currently 10 <u>members</u> from CEE countries
- CBE-JU Stakeholder Forum:
   24 March 2026, Brussels >
   Register here



More information on CBE JU



## EU R&I enabling the goals of the Vision for Agriculture and Food and the Life Sciences Strategy

- Developing a new EU strategic approach to R&I to improve the competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and rural areas. This will be paramount to target investments efficiently, align future priorities with scientific developments and grasp new opportunities.
- Revamping the <u>2016 Strategic Approach to EU agricultural R&I</u>
- Complementary action announced in the Life Sciences Strategy, the Commission will develop
  a strategic R&I agenda on food systems to promote a holistic approach to the life sciences
- Revamping the <u>FOOD 2030 R&I Initiative</u>
- Considering the future European Competitiveness Fund and future Horizon Europe
- Planned for end of Q2 2026











**Ensuring food** security for the future

**EU** Agricultural Outlook conference

**Agri-Digital Day** 

Day 1

11:30-12:35 - Policy Session 2

The future of EU agri-food: Data & innovation for food security

This session will kick off the preparation of the new strategic approach for agricultural research and innovation. The discussions will allow to explore how R&I can better address food security and farmers' needs by providing innovative solutions, including digital ones, to enhance their competitiveness and sustainability. It will also cover deployment aspects, focusing on private sector collaboration to valorise R&I results and strategies for bringing solutions closer to **farmers** from an EU and global perspective.

Panel discussion and Q&A



Live web stream available: 15 - 17 December 2025

## Thank you



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