

Joint strategy and action plan containing policy recommendations to stimulate the bio-based economy in North West Europe

Introduction

BioBase4SME carried out a survey of SMEs about perceived barriers to business in the bioeconomy. The design of the questionnaire was taken from a previous project, Bio Base NWE, which allowed a comparison of the current situation to that of 4 years previously.

Based on the results of this questionnaire, a report was compiled. The report can be found here:

http://www.nweurope.eu/media/7055/needs-and-challenges_final.pdf

Based on this report, project partners from each region decided on policy strategies that they would prioritise when communicating with stakeholders.

Joint strategy and action plan

Each partner compiled several action points containing recommendations to stimulate the bio-based economy in their region. These action plans are summarized below for each country.

Ireland

- Improve stakeholder understanding of the substantial positive impacts that developing the bioeconomy has on the economy and social wellbeing.
- Ensure the bioeconomy is developed as an add-on to the existing bioeconomy and that it does not damage the primary production sector.

Netherlands

- Additional finance/funding, support for scale up, better engagement with value chain partners and more demand-side policy. This will progress the bioeconomy from 'show cases' to 'business cases'.

- Review the knowledge & research infrastructure available in the bioeconomy (including research programs & labs, pilot facilities, application centres, scale up space etc.) and identify gaps that must be closed to demonstrate products or processes at scale.
- Further enable and stimulate cross-border cooperation and innovation.

France

- Improve infrastructure for storing and transporting feedstocks.
- Balance industrial specifications and agricultural constraints.
- Create platforms to improve collaboration between academia, industry and agriculture.
- Amend existing regulations to take biobased products or materials technical specifications into account.

Germany

- Support scaling up processes.
- Address regulatory issues such as waste/product legislation.
- Develop Public Procurement requirements for biobased products.
- Improve consumer awareness/communicating the bioeconomy.
- Improve labelling (too many labels, too complicated for consumers to understand).

United Kingdom

- Develop mechanisms and incentives to enable and attract building of demonstration of first-of-a-kind facilities in the UK.
- Establish/re-establish funding schemes for technology development and process scale up for industrial biotechnology.
- Increase the use of compostable materials in food packaging and serveware, introduce clear labelling, and put appropriate collection and processing systems in place.
- Improving the level of communication and consistency of terminology when discussing biobased products particularly biobased plastics.

Belgium

- Introduce biobased products into green public procurement policies.
- Enable cross-sectoral project funding between the sectors of industry and agriculture (rather than treating them as two separate industries).
- Enable the collection of biodegradable plastics with household organic waste collection.
- Improve collection/distribution of agricultural waste to enable use of these bioresources.
- Improve consistency of terminology and stakeholders' awareness to avoid the bioeconomy becoming a vehicle for greenwashing.

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