



SCALE^{UP}

community-driven
bioeconomy development

How should the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and its upcoming review address challenges arising from bioeconomy-related trade-offs?

WS7 Session #3:
Minutes of the training session
12 December 2024



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On 12 December 2024, the final training session of Work Stream 7, titled “Strategies to Address Social, Ecological, and Economic Trade-Offs in Regional Bioeconomy Development,” was held. The session was attended by 72 bioeconomy stakeholders from SCALE-UP’s focal regions and beyond.

Zoritza Kiresiewa (Ecologic Institute) welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the agenda and objectives of the final training session. She emphasized that the session has two main objectives. First, to discuss key topics central to the future of the bioeconomy in the EU, including the update of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and approaches to addressing trade-offs in the bioeconomy, while concluding the final Work Stream of the training program. Second, to reflect on the training program, reviewing the main outcomes of the discussions over the past months and their relevance for the upcoming update of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

Laura Liepina (DG Agriculture and Rural Development) kicked off the training session. In her presentation she emphasized the bioeconomy’s importance for farmers, foresters, and rural communities, highlighting opportunities to generate income, reduce costs, and create jobs through sustainable practices like biofertilizers and biopesticides. However, challenges persist, such as limited integration of producers into value chains, resource pressures, and regulatory barriers. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy update, led by DG Environment and supported by multiple directorates, aims to scale up bioeconomy solutions, address regulatory challenges, and promote circularity and sustainable biomass use. It will involve a public consultation process in 2025, gathering stakeholder input to shape its final delivery by the end of 2025. Additional discussions focused on integrating producers, improving sustainability in agriculture and forestry, and addressing issues like land use competition, biomass availability, and the balance between local and imported bio-based feedstocks. Recommendations from the SCALE-UP program included fostering rural platforms, addressing research gaps, and ensuring biomass sustainability while facilitating the transition from fossil resources. In the following Q&A sessions, several questions were posted. A question was raised on how the update of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy connects with other policy such as the Circular Economy Act, Biotech Act, and Clean Industrial Act. The response highlighted that several working groups and initiatives are in place to ensure alignment. Another inquiry focused on incorporating the youth perspective into the strategy update process, to which the EU Youth Bioeconomy Ambassador initiative was presented as a solution. Regarding the progress of the 14 actions outlined in the Bioeconomy Strategy, it was confirmed that all actions are on track.

Subsequently, **Maria Teresa Borzacchiello** (EC Joint Research Centre, Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy) covered in her presentation the JRC’s work aligned with the five EU Bioeconomy Strategy objectives. She emphasized the importance of a robust knowledge base and a fit-for-purpose monitoring system for adaptive and effective governance. She further stressed that the EC’s Knowledge Centre for Bioeconomy and the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System are essential tools for deploying a sustainable EU bioeconomy. The monitoring relies on data from Member States, highlighting the importance of continued development and collaboration. A question was raised from the audience on how the EU’s global leadership in bioeconomy advocacy is being shared with regions outside the EU, particularly with countries like Brazil and Colombia, which are developing their own bioeconomy strategies. In response, the JRC highlighted global partnerships where the European Commission contributes, such as the G20 Bioeconomy Initiative led by Brazil, which resulted in global bioeconomy principles. Relevant [resources](#) and [dashboards](#) showcasing bioeconomy trends and indicators were also referenced, including the EU Bioeconomy Monitoring System.

Afterwards, **Jens Günther** (German Environment Agency, UBA) emphasized the need to address the triple planetary crisis by balancing limited sustainable biomass potential with increasing demand, highlighting conflicts in biomass use and competing land needs. He stressed the importance of determining sustainable biomass potential to support climate and biodiversity protection, prioritizing food security, energy, and resource fairness within the 2030 Agenda. To resolve competing uses, he advocated for reduced energy and raw material needs, cascading biomass use, eliminating bioenergy from primary biomass, and cutting food waste. He concluded with the need for global governance and funding mechanisms to ensure equitable resource access and sustainable land management. There was a question from the audience why the environmental impact of fossil-based materials appears lower compared to biomass. The response clarified that the analysis focuses on ready-to-use materials and excludes greenhouse gas emissions covered under other industries. It was also noted that the biomass impact is dominated by food production, particularly animal farming, dairy, and milk production.

After the coffee break, Info Ball (WIP) opened the plenary discussion, which focused on the results of the SCALE-UPs training program. The outcomes were organized around the three main action areas of the Bioeconomy Strategy: **Area 1** – *Strengthen and scale up the biobased sectors, unlock investments and markets*; **Area 2** – *Deploy local bioeconomies rapidly across Europe*; and **Area 3** – *Understand the ecological boundaries of the bioeconomy*. To illustrate these results, regional partners presented good practice examples, including the **BioFuel Region** in Northern Sweden, the **Central Hub for Circular Bioeconomy** (BIOHUBCAT) in Catalonia, Spain, and the Terres de Sources Program in the Brittany Region, France. The **BioFuel Region** is a regional stakeholder network that connects key market actors and fosters collaboration to drive bioeconomy development. BIOHUBCAT serves as a central hub for Catalonia’s circular bioeconomy by linking companies and entrepreneurs to resources that create economic value from renewable organic materials. The Terres de Sources initiative in Brittany promotes and implements sustainable water solutions. It stands out as an example of how water resource protection, particularly through hemp cultivation, has contributed to developing new value chains in the region.

The discussion concluded that often at regional level bioeconomy activities depend on a few individuals—so-called champions or ambassadors—who not only have a track record, well-maintained contacts, and a good reputation but also the willingness and skills (beyond technical expertise) to mobilize people in the region. Participants emphasized also the importance of identifying regional opportunities and leveraging the available frameworks to support effective implementation.