

Citizens' summary

Innovating for sustainable growth: a bioeconomy for Europe

The European Commission has published a strategy to help our societies and economies make better use of renewable biological resources.

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Oil and coal reserves are dwindling and the global population is booming. At the same time, renewable biological resources, such as plants, microbes and animals, are becoming increasingly important, both to satisfy demand for safe, healthy food & feed and to provide materials, energy, and other bio-based products.

We need an effective bioeconomy – with secure, sustainable supplies of biological resources being used to produce food, feed, energy and other goods. But the land and water required for this are finite, and needed for many other purposes too. So bioeconomy systems are needed that produce more from less – including from bio-waste such as food waste or forest residues – while limiting negative impacts on the environment (such as greenhouse gas emissions).

To ensure the sustainable production and use of biological resources, research and innovation are essential to bring new ideas and technologies to the market.

WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- **Farmers, fishermen, industry** – new opportunities, particularly in rural and coastal areas, to produce biological raw materials and convert them into innovative products and processes. The bioeconomy will make the EU economy as a whole more competitive.
- **Scientists and researchers** – new opportunities for research and innovation. In the [Horizon 2020 research programme](#)  [55 KB] alone, €4.7 billion has been set aside for the bioeconomy, food security, sustainable agriculture and marine & maritime research. This could generate 130,000 jobs and €45 billion in added value in bioeconomy sectors by 2025.
- **The public** – a responsible bioeconomy calls for participatory models that involve citizens and end-users, to provide a sound basis for policy making and informed societal choices.
- **Europe and the rest of the world** – the bioeconomy will help address challenges facing societies around the world: reliability of food supplies, climate change, sustainable natural-resource management and Europe's dependency on non-renewable resources.

WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

Only the EU has the resources and authority to take effective action since:

- the challenges that need tackling are European and worldwide (see above)
- a number of EU policies are highly relevant to industries related to the bioeconomy, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food & pulp & paper production, segments of the chemical, biotechnological and energy industries.
- the research and innovation needed to develop the bioeconomy require a critical mass of expertise that goes beyond the national level.

HOW WILL THE STRATEGY WORK?

The EU bioeconomy strategy includes 12 concrete measures to be taken by the EU, national governments and regions – organised around 3 main themes:

- 1) investment in research, innovation and skills
- 2) reinforced policy interaction and stakeholder commitment
- 3) enhancement of markets and competitiveness in bioeconomy sectors.

[Innovating for Sustainable Growth: a Bioeconomy for Europe](#)  [88 KB]

WHEN WILL THE STRATEGY TAKE EFFECT?

The strategy has immediate effect. It proposes a broad set of actions – which the European Commission has already started implementing – and calls for national governments, regions, the scientific community, industry and civil society to get involved.