

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

Bio Base NWE developed a specific set of **questions targeted to SMEs**, as part of the SME needs assessment survey. The design of the questionnaire was coordinated by bio-based transition expert Dirk Carrez (www.cleverconsult.eu) in close collaboration with the bio-innovation agents.

Based on the results of this questionnaire, **a report was compiled**. The report was co-written by the coordinating expert and the bio-innovation agents. It addresses needs and actions related to bottlenecks in the innovation chain, models for cooperation, research and innovation support, research funding, support and financing mechanisms for entering the bio-economy market. The report can be found here:

http://www.biobasenwe.org/media/96429/BBNWE-analysis-report-on-bottlenecks-SMEs-encounter-in-bioeconomy_final.pdf

Based on this report, roundtable discussions were organized in each partner region (Belgium, Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands and United Kingdom). These round tables explored and aligned the different policy and development aims for the future years. They brought together stakeholders (policy makers, researchers, companies, end-users, consumer organizations, civil society ...) in the bio-based economy.

Joint strategy and action plan

Based on the roundtable discussions each partner compiled an action plan for its country containing recommendations to stimulate the bio-based economy. These action plans are summarized below for each country. It shows that needs and priorities among countries are different, however, there is an overall need for financial support in development stage (piloting and demo activities).

- **Germany**
 - Define start-up and business models specific for the bio-economy, enhance entrepreneurial mindset and stimulate interaction among industry and academia to increase entrepreneurship
 - Create a favorable environment for corporate development in the bio-economy, i.e. business incubators, piloting, operational venturing, clear regulatory framework
 - Funding framework for different development stages, i.e. research, piloting, demonstration, start-up in order to bridge the gap with venture capital investments at later stage. EU state aid law is considered a hurdle in this regard

- UK
 - Convert underutilized wastes as sustainable resources for the bio-economy into high value products
 - Develop the legislative framework to enable the use of wastes as resource
 - Develop incentive schemes to stimulate the production of energy and chemicals from waste and review regularly to avoid overcompensation
- The Netherlands
 - Central governments working towards more harmonized filing and protection rules on EU level to protect inventions
 - REACH and other standardizing activities should be supported financially by funding schemes as it is considered as a financial hurdle for SMEs making new products
 - Operating grants (e.g. for renewable energy production) are considered only effective for viable business case that can operate without support on the long term
- Belgium (Flanders)
 - Develop a cluster organization or light umbrella organization that unites stakeholders in the bio-based economy
 - Specific support for development and innovation, next to research, i.e. piloting and demo activities by means of testing grounds
 - Flanders goes for 100% sustainable public procurement and 3% innovative procurement. Bio-based is considered part of sustainable public procurement
- Ireland
 - A strategic analysis of the bio-economy of Ireland will be made including SWOT analysis and intake interviews with experts from industry and other stakeholder groups
 - Identification of value chains that will become drivers of the Irish bio-economy, based on current resources in Ireland

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