Position Paper

Bioenergy Europe's Position on the Revised Bioeconomy Strategy

Bioenergy Europe supports the revision of the Bioeconomy Strategy to accelerate the development of bio-based products and materials, reducing Europe's dependency on fossil-based alternatives. As biogenic resources use increases so will the availability of forest residues, wood by-products and post-consumer feedstocks for bioenergy. This creates a virtuous cycle, in which expanding the bioeconomy not only reduces fossil reliance but also supports a more renewable and circular system.

Sustainable bioenergy plays a key role in the overall bioeconomy by valorising underutilised feedstock along the value chain and supplying reliable, around-the-clock energy. As a fundamental component of the Bioeconomy, bioenergy should be fully integrated into the upcoming Strategy, also considering its role in supporting rural economies. Collaboration between industries should further be encouraged to drive increased efficiencies and valorise all biomass uses.

01 Sustainable bioenergy is already fuelling the Bioeconomy

Several actors in the bioeconomy have invested in bioenergy as a pillar of their decarbonisation strategy. Bioenergy can replace fossil fuels in heating, power generation, and industrial applications, reducing the carbon footprint of bio-based industries. For example, most of the renewable energy used by the pulp and paper industry comes from bioenergy.

The European Commission expects a 70-80% additional need from biomass in the EU system. However, these needs should not come at the expenses of the defossilisation of our energy and the overall climate targets. It is crucial that the Strategy ensures positive synergies and efficient feedstock use while avoiding end-use competition. Economic, social, and energy security factors should be duly considered in the Bioeconomy Strategy.

Sustainable bioenergy is a fundamental component of the transition and must be a key pillar of the upcoming Bioeconomy Strategy.

02 Optimisation of local sourcing and use of biomass

The highest value of biomass must consider several factors including economic impact, energy needs, and environmental sustainability. In line with the cascading use principle, poly-generation offers a complementary approach by simultaneously producing multiple energy and material streams—such as electricity, heat, and bio-based products—from a single biomass input, thereby enhancing overall resource efficiency.

Regional differences in infrastructure, energy needs, and priorities must be respected as the most appropriate and valuable use of biomass is context dependent: a one-size-fits-all approach would overlook important local dynamics.

In multiple cases, using biomass for local energy production supports the local economy, addresses nearby heating or electricity demand, and avoids emissions linked to transport. However, in other cases, imports will be necessary where local supply is insufficient, such as for large biochemical industries in ports or riversides.

Bioenergy Europe calls on the European Commission to respect regional differences in infrastructure and energy needs to ensure the most valuable use of biomass in different contexts.

03 A biomass mobilisation programme

An ambitious mobilisation programme will be essential to address untapped resources, infrastructure and logistical challenges. In this context, agroforestry holds significant untapped potential, offering sustainable biomass sources while enhancing biodiversity, soil health, and resilience in rural areas.

At present, local circulation of biomass is hindered by a lack of awareness, high costs, and complex logistics. Targeted incentives are needed, such as building local biomass hubs and implementing clean forest initiatives, as seen in Spain and Greece, to collect forest residues, prevent wildfires, and use the material where needed.

A strong mobilisation programme should be developed with targeted incentives to ensure that all the untapped potential of biomass is unleashed.

04 Promote the uptake of biogenic CO_2 to replace fossil alternatives

The Bioeconomy Strategy should favour the use of Biogenic CO_2 in industrial processes. Biogenic CO_2, unlike fossil-based CO_2, is part of the short and closed carbon cycle and does not increase atmospheric carbon. Prioritising biogenic CO_2 supports carbon circularity and decarbonisation.

End-of-life of bio-based products should also be addressed: biodegradable products should not end in landfill if they can be used for bioenergy. Routing them to bioenergy production allows for full energetic potential to be harnessed. Bioenergy combined with carbon capture and storage (bio-CCS) can further enhance this by enabling negative emissions.

Biogenic CO_2 should be prioritised over fossil CO_2 in industrial processes to support the switch to a fully de-fossilised economy.

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