

# BIOECONOMY

## FROM A VISION TO A REALITY

The bioeconomy, which in the EU is worth an estimated €2 trillion employing 9% of the workforce, is the production and use of renewable resources from land and sea, and the use of waste to make value added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products and bioenergy.

It is a concept that provides a blueprint for a more competitive, renewables-based future for Europe: a future of appreciating the value of the many sectors that make up the EU bioeconomy and enabling them to become more competitive through better use of renewable resources. This, in turn, will help create new jobs, growth and environmental benefits for Europe.

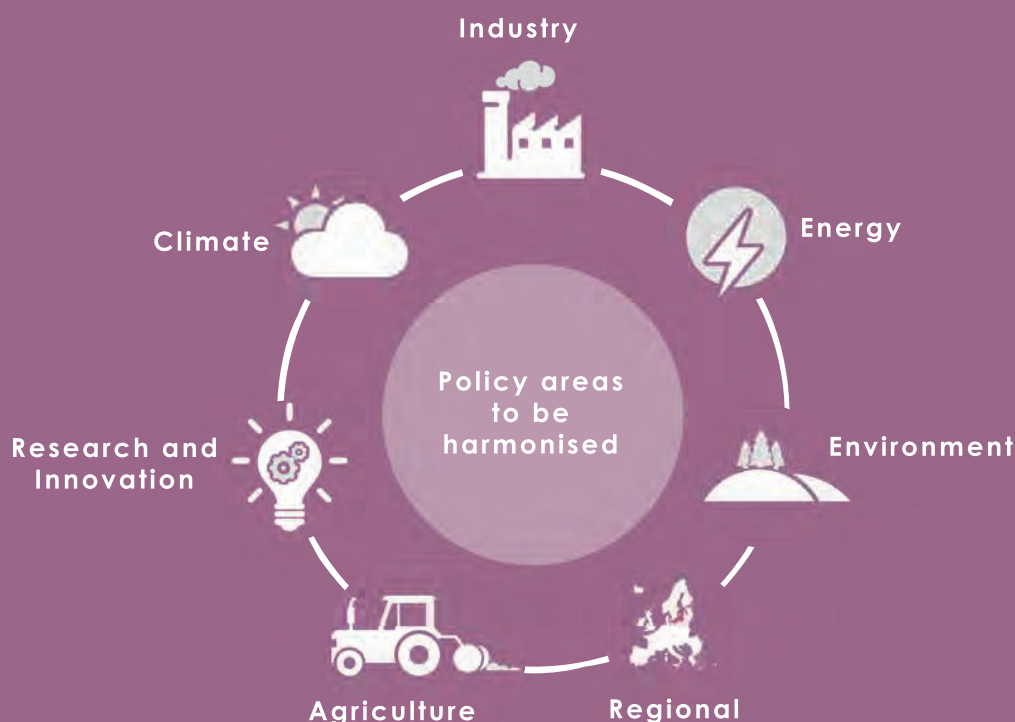
Industrial biotechnology, which can help convert the renewable resources into everyday products, is an essential component in developing the bioeconomy. It is also one of Europe's strengths, with this continent home to world leading research and innovation in the sector.

But the race is on. The potential of the bioeconomy to create innovative renewables-based products, jobs and economic growth has been recognised globally, with supportive measures and incentives for biobased industries to commercialise new products in places such as the US, Brazil, Canada and South East Asia.

The EU needs to make bold political moves and guarantee long-term commitment to sustainable, emerging industries in order to stay ahead of the game and realise its vision. Implementing measures that support the bioeconomy will also be essential to establishing a resource efficient circular economy.

### The need for a harmonised, coherent approach

A key defining feature of the bioeconomy is its encompassing of many sectors. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy, adopted by the European Commission in 2012,<sup>1</sup> identifies a critical need for existing and new policies to be implemented across all contributing sectors in a harmonised way. The European industrial biotechnology industry has been at the forefront of developing both the first ever EU Biobased Industries Joint Undertaking for €3.7 billion and the European Bioeconomy Alliance, bringing different sectors together including Europe's farmers, forest owners, the pulp and paper sector, bioethanol, starch, sugars and vegetable oil producers amongst others.



#### References:

1. Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe, European Commission, 2012

## 5 priorities that would make a world-leading EU bioeconomy a reality

**1. Develop concrete measures to bring innovative, biobased products to the EU market**

Finalise a set of standards for biobased products (using work already undertaken by the European Committee for Standardization) so that consumers can have confidence in the sustainability of their products

Specifically, adopt a clear definition of biobased products which considers the biobased content

Set up an EU-wide public procurement system for biobased products

Adopt binding targets for advanced biofuels

Support introduction of mandatory separate collection for biowaste by 2020

Adopt binding measures in order to gradually replace food packaging with bio-based materials in accordance with European standards

**2. Enable combined financing initiatives for first commercial operations, such as biorefineries**

Address barriers to investment

Align existing funding mechanisms in support programmes like H2020, CAP, EIB and regional development funds

Reform state aid rules to allow national support at the necessary levels for investment in intensive flagship biorefineries

**3. Ensure reliable access to sustainable, competitively priced feedstocks**

Develop measures to support the collection, harvest, storage and transportation of agricultural residues

Cultivate agricultural areas that are currently out of production

Apply a smart and sustainable approach towards biomass use<sup>1</sup>

Launch an EU initiative to map the available feedstock in Europe

**4. Engage more with civil society**

Encourage and facilitate dialogue on the development of the bioeconomy and the best ways to develop it in a smart, sustainable and inclusive way within society

**5. Develop a coherent policy for the bioeconomy throughout the value chain**

Integrate the bioeconomy strategy into the policy frameworks that cover all sections of the value chain including those that relate to climate, energy, environment, transport, industry, research and innovation, agriculture, regional policy and the circular economy



## References:

1. See EuropaBio's factsheet on the smart and sustainable use of biomass