



European  
Commission

 <p><b>SCAR</b> Standing Committee on Agricultural Research</p>	<p><b>Bioeconomy Strategic Working Group</b></p>
 <p><b>BIO</b> east</p>	



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Joint-workshop  
Policy Support Facility (PSF) on Bioeconomy  
*Wednesday 13 March 2019, 13:00 – 16:00*

**Brief Workshop Report**

## Background

Dedicated bioeconomy strategies or other policy initiatives exist or are being developed in many of the EU Member States and their regions. However, the Central and Eastern European Member States lag behind, despite their huge biomass potential. To address this gap, several high-level initiatives call for more action at EU, national and regional levels, including initiatives rooted in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries such as the BIOEAST initiative (see <http://www.bioeast.eu/>) which has recently set the vision and highlighted opportunities for 2030 to develop knowledge and cooperation based circular bioeconomies in CEE. As part of this initiative, 11 CEE countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) plan to develop a dedicated Bioeconomy Strategy. Other countries like Greece and Portugal are also lagging behind.

There is a need to organize a platform for discussion of the challenges in developing a dedicated Bioeconomy Strategy. Primarily the countries mentioned above could benefit from a Policy Support Facility (PSF) as it was proposed in the EC communication “A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe”, the updated bioeconomy strategy. A functional PSF however, could prove useful also for countries that have already developed their bioeconomy strategy since it could facilitate cooperation, mutual learning, innovation in addressing policy implementation and future monitoring and follow-up.

A first workshop was co-organised by the European Commission (DG RTD.F.1), the SCAR – Bioeconomy Strategic Working Group (SCAR-BSW) and the BIOEAST Initiative. The Coordination and Support Action CASA supported the process.

This report is a brief record of the presentations made at the workshop and the ensuing discussions and includes as annexes the agenda and list of participants. Presentations will be sent to participants. Nearly 50 persons attend the workshop.

## Scope and objectives of workshop

The scope of the workshop was to foster an open dialogue between the EC and Member States (MS) representatives (members of the SCAR-BSW and BIOEAST) in order to learn from existing knowledge and instruments and provide policy advice and recommendations to the Commission on possible options for a Policy Support Facility for Bioeconomy.

The overall aim of a PSF on bioeconomy would be to assist MS in developing and implementing national/regional bioeconomy strategies across Europe.

The workshop’s specific **objectives** were:

- To initiate discussion on the needs/gaps of the MS which do not have a national Bioeconomy Strategy yet.
- To learn from already existing knowledge/instruments of the EC (general EC RTD PSF).
- To examine various options for the PSF implementation (instruments, roadmap, next steps).

The workshop included presentations by the Head of Unit F1 in DG RTD Waldemar Kütt and Policy Officer Marta Truco Calbet DG RTD A4. These were followed by facilitated discussions.

## Introduction to the Policy Support Facility tool

Waldemar Kütt, DG RTD, Head of Unit F1, Strategy-Bioeconomy, briefly presented the scope of the updated Bioeconomy Strategy<sup>1</sup>, what it aims to achieve and what the planned actions are. Under Action 2.3 – “Set up an EU Bioeconomy policy support facility and a European Bioeconomy Forum for Member States” – the Policy Support Facility (PSF) tool is offered as a possible tool to support the development and implementation of Bioeconomy Strategies in both EU member states and associated countries.

Marta Trucot Calbet, DG RTD, Policy Officer Unit A4, presented the general PSF as a tool for tailor-made advice on how to bring together science and innovation challenges of member states and to achieve more impact (see video at <https://rio.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/policy-support-facility>). The PSF was launched in 2015; it enables member states and associated countries

- To strengthen quality and efficiency of their Research & Innovation (R&I) system.
- To improve the design, implementation and evaluation of R&I policies.
- To support evidence based policy making, by
  - o *Peer reviews* of national R&I system.
  - o *In-depth assessment* of the national R&I systems carried out by a panel of experts and leading to concrete recommendations to the national authorities on reforms necessary to strengthen their R&I system.
  - o *Mutual Learning Exercises (MLEs)* focussed on specific/operational R&I challenges of interest, and draw on a hand-on project-based exchange of good practices, lessons learned and success factors.

A challenge and bottleneck study on the current PSF features has been carried out, based on recommendations and learnings of experts that have used PSF. This has resulted in a new framework contract being developed aimed to provide a more flexible supportive tool, i.e. PSF 2.0, by early 2020. This improved version can also play a more important role in helping countries to achieve sustainability, and for BIOEAST to accelerate the process of developing and implementing national and/or regional bioeconomy strategies. The scope of PSF applications is thus being broadened, based on what is already there like name and brand. There will be an element of learning by doing with Bioeconomy in the new PSF.

## View of SCAR-BSW on supporting bioeconomy development

Jan van Esch, Co-chair of SCAR-BSW, noted that the bioeconomy is important as it offers solutions for pressing ecological, economic and societal challenges. The group focuses on contributing towards those solutions and/or the realisation of the bioeconomy in Europe and the EU MS. BSW follows a “CLUES” approach, standing for *Cooperation* (how to organise stakeholders, clusters); *Leader* who takes you by the hand, *Urgency* (for strategy), *Energy* (someone who is the ‘engine’ of the process), and *Science* (what kind of circular bioeconomy is needed? What are the best solutions?). SCAR BSW and the EC help to show how countries have developed their bioeconomy, and how current projects are supportive (e.g. Power4bio) or have been helpful.

## View of BIOEAST Initiative on supporting bioeconomy development

Barna Kovacs, secretary general of BIOEAST initiative, briefly summarised what the BIOEAST initiative is and why it was initiated in 2016. A survey conducted in last year’s meeting on bioeconomy concluded that not so much has been developed in terms of national bioeconomy strategies and action plans in the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec\\_bioeconomy\\_strategy\\_2018.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none](https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec_bioeconomy_strategy_2018.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none)

Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries yet (no action plans; if any, then they contain only informal strategies; there are no inter-ministerial discussions).

Gaps/mismatches found in knowledge and perceived importance between

- Different ministries: on policies, priorities, strategies and action plans.
- Sectors: silo-based approach.
- Level of administration and political decision makers.

Need for building capacities in the public administration for bioeconomy strategy development, which:

- Is tailor-made to address country's needs (what do you want to achieve, where to do you want to go), at a) administrative level and b) policy decision maker level.
- Should provide a unique combination of expertise (from EC, EU states, international organizations).
- Should strengthen the inter-ministerial relation with a learning exercise having the objective to raise the knowledge of public administrators (both policy and decision making level) of different ministries to the same level of understanding of each other's policies and the overarching EU policies and strategies, with the aim to build up the cross-sectoral bioeconomy strategy and action plan.

Some preliminary thoughts on using PSF in CEE countries to bridge the gaps:

- Bring together a group of administrators from different ministries at the same level of knowledge about all the current EU sustainability and climate neutrality guidelines concerning the bioeconomy strategy development.
- Bringing together dedicated policy decision makers from different ministries and providing with good examples and current EU policy guidelines on overarching bioeconomy policy issues.

## Lessons learned about existing general PSF tool (discussion)

*Topics addressed by EC participants:*

- For the MLEs, an initial scoping exercise is very important. It is a complex issue, i.e. inter-ministerial. Understand the topics to agree on from the very beginning. It is important to engage countries that have strategies as well as those which haven't yet developed them, so that the mutual learning experience can be of greater value. Start with one delegate per country to discuss the bioeconomy scope. The challenge is that this person should have an overview of the various ministries involved.
- To build a bioeconomy strategy it requires political commitments from all potential decision makers concerned in the various relevant ministries in the member states.
- There is no one blueprint for a PSF. All member states are in different stages of development of their bioeconomy; i.e. some have limited ideas what bioeconomy is, while others are further.
- It is important to identify first the concrete topics and get a common understanding of these.
  - o Use MLEs for exchanging good practices; involve countries with a bioeconomy strategy as well, for mutual learning.
  - o Start from the needs and address the gaps.
  - o More in-debt look into the application of instruments, e.g. PSF ones like MTL.
- JRC's BioEconomy Knowledge Centre brings together knowledge on Bioeconomy (see [https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/bioeconomy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/bioeconomy_en)): interactive dashboard with data (up to 2018), member state mappings, scoping studies providing start information as base for further strategy making process. It helps to understand the different systems across countries.
- Strategy making is both a top-down and a bottom-up process. We are already further than the first stage of defining the bioeconomy and setting the scope (the top-down issue is already there).

In general, raising awareness of countries has already been done: “waste should be transferred into value”.

- Use experience of successful states to understand strengths and opportunities in a country: what are technologies? Are there already start-ups?
- An enabling framework is required, e.g. clusters and/or bioeconomy platforms
- Align with instruments for encouraging innovation and sustainability in the new CAP 2020.
- Use opportunities that are under structural funds

*Topics addressed by participants from BIOEAST and SCAR:*

- There is doubt about the EC proposal to start with only one country representative involved in the scope discussion (see first bullet point under *Topics addressed by EC participants*) within a member state-broad surrounding. Better to start with scoping at the national level, together with people from different ministries. For example, Poland will organise a round table on the bioeconomy with engagement of people from several ministries. It is very important not only to address the policy maker (officer) level but the decision making level in the Ministries.
- The MLE could be broadened. For each country there is a need for policy support within the country itself, to support the policy development process, starting with educating decision makers and stakeholders on the concept of bioeconomy. It is important to bring the ‘EC noise’ into the country and to teach people. EC-RTD, however, has not the intention to teach in member states itself.
- Start with country based roadmaps for working groups; with participants of core related ministries involved. Then develop country reports on their:
  - Definition and scope of the bioeconomy.
  - Bioeconomy potential.
- For constructing the bioeconomy strategy there are three types of challenges. Each challenge needs a specific type of support service from the PSF or other tools available at EU or country level:
  - Bioeconomy is a cross-sectoral policy; different ministries have to negotiate their agendas and priorities and having common understanding where the strategy aims. Support needs to be provided for the process of building consensus on bioeconomy. Understanding the bioeconomy is a bottom-up process which is different between countries.
  - The strategy will have to focus on contributing to circularity and sustainability in general. It is not always obvious that a measure/intervention will generate sustainability (economic, environmental as well as social sustainability). The support needed here is for ex-ante evaluation and/or assessments.
  - The continuity of the process. Ensuring that the bioeconomy is streamlined and becomes part of the new economic system of each country; this is a difficult issue.

The discussion focussed on what the **current PSF** (PSF 1.0) is and what it is not (see table):

PSF is	PSF is <b>NOT</b>
Facilitating tool to set up the process	Technical assistance tool
Member state, bottom-up approach; demand driven; voluntary nature; practical focus; tailorability / no ‘one-size-fits-all’	Flexible enough for addressing/ facilitating bioeconomy related policy changes
Policy learning approach; raising political profile of R&D as driver of growth; supporting policy changes	Evaluation tool of EC
MLE where member states can exchange knowledge and learn from each other; raising knowledge and experience levels	Teaching tool of EC in the countries

## Needs and gaps for developing bioeconomy strategies (discussion)

### *Needs for overview of state-of-the art per member state*

- It must be sure that that the right steps will be taken:
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> step is to identify the Bioeconomy strategy at country level:
    - Focus and scoping is essential.
    - Common understanding of bioeconomy at multi-sectorial level.
    - It must be supportive to sustainability and circularity.
  - o 2<sup>nd</sup> step is to develop an action plan for implementing the strategy.
- A template could be completed by representatives to get the country based overview of
  - o what is already done and there (on mappings, on SWOTs, etc.)?
  - o what are the needs?
  - o what are the gaps?
- As there is already experience in developing strategies in EU member states (8 already have their national bioeconomy strategy formalised):
  - o It would help to take their lessons and good practices into account.
  - o Overview to be gathered will also provide input for Mutual Learning Exercise topics on which member state representatives need to exchange views and ideas, and to get commitment on. This could be done in a next workshop.

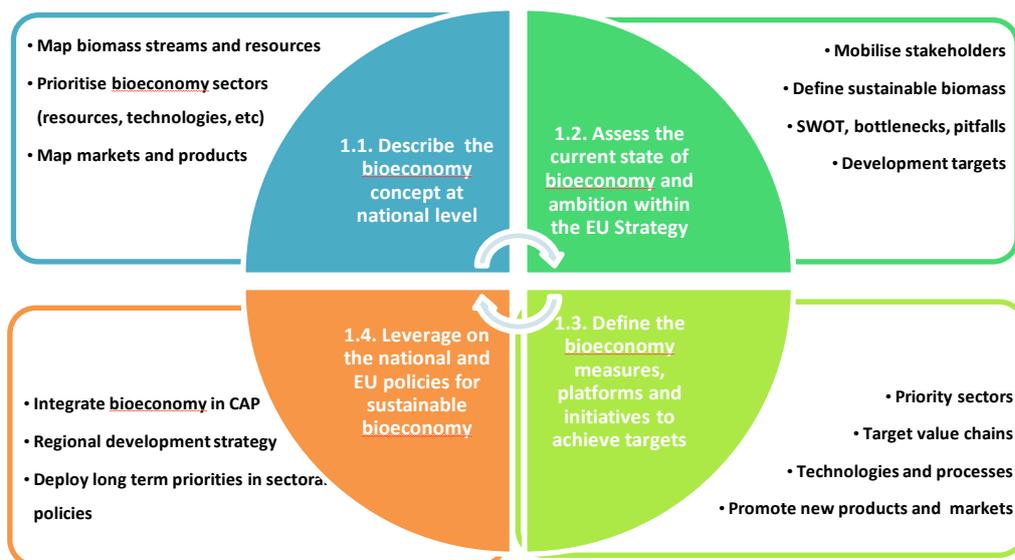
### *Needs for more collaboration*

- Commitment and engagement needed at inter-ministerial level
- When the new BIOEAST CSA project has been approved (after summer 2019), CEE members will be able to cooperate more intensively on the bioeconomy strategy development. It will also provide a better opportunity to achieve the objectives of this CSA project by integrating and using the PSF tools.

### *Need for members state to identify policy support for a roadmap towards developing a bioeconomy strategy*

- *Alexandru Marchis, external expert*, presented stepwise methodology to identify the policy support needs. Each step will constitute an input in building the country support needs evaluation (fact sheets).

The methodology is based on the concept of four building blocks creating the pathway towards bioeconomy strategy (see picture below). For each of the building blocks, the type of supportive facilitating tools must be sorted out. It could be a PSF for the one building block and could be another instrument for the other.
- After this presentation, the discussion concentrated on following issues:
  - o what is target group of this concept?
  - o Is it really possible to mobilize the administrative people as indicated in this concept? There is the feeling that approach might be over-ambitious. It is important to remain realistic about achievements.



## Need and aims for a next workshop(s) (discussion)

Pros and cons of the PSF tool have been discussed during this workshop. There was a common agreement that another workshop is needed in order to elaborate further the PSF's potential usefulness in developing bioeconomy strategies in CEE states.

*Place of venue:* Brussels, the exact venue is to be decided

*Date:* probably early May 2019; exact date to be decided

*Organisers:* BIOEAST Initiative and SCAR-BSW with support from CASA. RTD will be kept informed of progress

*Target group:* probably around 50-60 participants, different ministries (not only agriculture) and different stakeholders

### *Aims of workshop:*

The exact aims will be developed in the near future, but are likely to include:

- To obtain a qualified overview in the CEE states: what is there already? What are the needs and gaps for taking rights steps in developing bioeconomy strategy
- To obtain more clarity on the process to follow, i.e. the roadmap and actions required for developing strategy.

### *Actions required*

- CASA with external expert/BIOEAST/BSW will develop the workshop and preparation will likely include developing a set of templates/factsheets for collecting and harmonizing the required input from member states in advance of the next workshop:
  - On state-of art, needs, gaps and a (draft) roadmaps of developing bioeconomy strategies in member states
  - Consolidated preparations and thoughts in advance will benefit the outcomes of next workshop.

- BIOEAST representatives must fill the template/factsheet on existing knowledge (mappings, SWOTs, etc.) and present it in next workshop.
- BIOEAST representatives must present their first thoughts and ideas in the next workshop on:
  - Is PSF tool really useful? If yes, how to use it in the future?
  - Which good practices from developed EU member states are useful for Mutual Learning Exercises?
  - How could JRC's Bioeconomy Knowledge Centre support?
  - If awarded, how could the submitted H2020 BIOEAST CSA proposal support?

## Annex 1 List of Participants

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## Annex 2 Agenda

### Joint-workshop Policy Support Facility (PSF) on Bioeconomy

Wednesday 13 March 2019, 13:00 – 16:00

DG Research and Innovation, CDMA -1/SDR2, 21 Rue du Champ de Mars, 1050 Brussels/Belgium

#### Scope and objectives:

The workshop is co-organised by the European Commission (DG RTD.F.1), the SCAR – Bioeconomy Strategic Working Group (SCAR/SWG) and the BIOEAST with the scope to foster an open dialogue with the Member States (MS) representatives (members of the SCAR SWG and BIOEAST) towards providing **policy advice and recommendations** to the Commission on the Policy Support Facility (PSF) action of the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy<sup>2</sup> (implementation options, next steps). The overall aim of the PSF on bioeconomy is to assist MS to develop and implement national/regional bioeconomy strategies across Europe.

#### The workshop's specific objectives:

- i. To initiate discussion on the needs/gaps of the MS that do not have a national Bioeconomy Strategy yet
- ii. To learn from already existing knowledge/instruments of the EC (general EC RTD PSF)
- iii. To examine various options for the PSF implementation (instruments, roadmap, next steps)

### AGENDA

13:00 – 13:20	Welcome - introduction  PSF under the EU Bioeconomy Strategy: context and scope <i>Waldemar KUTT – Head of Unit, RTD.F.1: Strategy – Bioeconomy</i>
13:20 – 13:40	<b>Presentation:</b> “The general RTD Policy Support Facility: lessons learned and possible use on Bioeconomy” <i>Marta TRUCO CALBET – Policy Officer, RTD.A.4</i>
13:40 – 14:00	SCAR BSG intervention - <i>Jan VAN ESCH – SCAR BSW Chair</i> BIOEAST intervention - <i>Barna KOVACS - BIOEAST Secretary General</i>
14:00 – 15:50	Discussion <i>Moderator: Alex PERCY-SMITH - CASA CSA / WP2 leader</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Does the existing general PSF instruments of RTD “fit the purpose”?</li> <li>o Which are the needs/gaps of the EU Member States that wish to have a dedicated national bioeconomy strategy? How they should be motivated and get organised?</li> <li>o Next steps (actions, factsheets template, next workshop(s)?)</li> </ul>
15:50 – 16:00	Closing remarks - conclusions <i>Waldemar KUTT – Head of Unit, RTD.F.1: Strategy – Bioeconomy</i>

## [Background information](#)

### The Policy Support Facility (PSF) action of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy on Bioeconomy: (action 3.2.3.i of the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy)

#### **Description**

This action will provide support to develop and implement bioeconomy strategies across Europe (Horizon 2020). This will include a focus on Central and Eastern Europe through the BIOEAST initiative.

#### **Objectives**

- To activate a support mechanism for Member States, drawn among others on good practices and independent high-level expertise and guidance, peer reviews, and/or other customised support.
- To increase the number of EU Member States with a dedicated bioeconomy strategy– especially in moderate/modest innovator Member States where there is not yet such a strategy.

#### **Expected impacts/outcomes**

- National and regional policy-makers adopt the bioeconomy principles and cross-cutting objectives of the EU bioeconomy strategy that creates growth and jobs at local level.
- Development of dedicated national bioeconomy strategies and regional bioeconomy strategies or other national Circular Economy strategies in EU Member States.
- Alignment of national bioeconomy strategies and EU policy coherence
- Exploitation of the underexploited biomass potential of the new MS (mainly Central and Eastern European Countries - BIOEAST).