



European Network for
Rural Development

Bioeconomy

WORKING DOCUMENT

**ENRD Thematic Group on
'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy'
2018-2019 (Year 5)**

Workplan

November 2018



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Objectives of the Thematic Group, focus and links with other CP activities	3
3. Main activities, expected outputs and workplan	5
Annex 1: Summary of TG topics based on priorities voted by TG members	9

1. Introduction

The development of a sustainable bioeconomy relying on renewable natural resources to produce food, energy and bio-based products and services, can offer several possibilities for the economic development of rural areas across Europe, while preserving eco-systems.

In November 2017, the release of the Commission Staff Working Document on the review of the 2012 European Bioeconomy strategy, gave renewed impetus to the topic. The growth of the bioeconomy into a sustainable business model is one of the priorities for the CAP post-2020, identified in the [Commission Communication on the Future of Food and Farming](#) and reflected in the [legislative proposals for the new CAP](#). Finally, an Updated Bioeconomy Strategy "[A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment](#)" was published by the European Commission in October 2018, providing an action plan leading the way towards a sustainable, circular bioeconomy in Europe.

Taking into account the current policy priorities and in response to stakeholders' demand and interest in the topic, the ENRD CP will launch and run a new Thematic Group (TG) on 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy', which will be operative as of September 2018 until June 2019.

2. Objectives of the Thematic Group, focus and links with other CP activities

The main objective of the Thematic Group (TG) is **"to encourage the development of sustainable bioeconomy value chains in rural areas** in order to promote employment and economic growth, while preserving eco-systems."

To this end the TG will identify opportunities to support the development of bio-based business models through Rural Development Programmes and will produce a set of recommendations for improving sustainable rural value chains in the bioeconomy through RDPs. This will be achieved by identifying and considering the different areas of value chains that can benefit from the development of the bioeconomy, how these benefits can be delivered in rural areas, and how they can be made sustainable and self-supporting.

The priority areas for focussing the TG's work include:

- Making use of RDP measures, and synergies between RDPs and other policy instruments, to deliver the bioeconomy in a way that balances the objectives of viable food production, sustainable management of natural resources and balanced territorial development in rural areas;
- Territorial and local approaches to developing sustainable bioeconomy value chains and clusters in rural areas;
- Education, engagement and communication approaches to involve rural bioeconomy stakeholders.

The choice of the priority themes is based on preferences indicated by the TG members in its first meeting¹, and of the background analysis conducted by the ENRD Contact Point in preparation to the meeting.

This new thematic work comes under the overarching ENRD priority 5 on 'Greening the rural economy'² and builds on past analytical work carried out by the ENRD Contact Point on the transition to a green economy, resource efficiency and on the sustainable management of water and soils.

There can be some important linkages to the ENRD CP work on Smart Villages, in particular regarding innovative and sustainable energy solutions and local/settlement level sustainability initiatives making use of bio-based materials.

The TG can relate to, draw on and contribute to the wider ENRD activities. More specifically, the following ENRD activities and work strands are linked to the work of the TG.

In terms of the ENRD CP's work with national/regional rural network support units, the TG will endeavour to encourage active participation of NRNs in its activities related to the collection of relevant information, identification of stakeholders, 'finding out' about specific MS level initiatives. At the same time, NRNs can/will be important partners in the dissemination of findings and introducing specific and practical recommendations to relevant stakeholders at the EU MS level.

The connection to the work on LEADER is important in terms of focusing on the community level and in the case of initiatives that require the cooperation of a group of rural communities. In terms of thematic focus, several local action groups have set sustainability objectives relevant to the work of the TG in their local development strategies. Moreover, sustainable development/greening/bioeconomy-related initiatives and projects have already been developed and supported through the LEADER approach (and by Local Action Groups). The ongoing research that ENRD CP launched to identify 'high-performing' local action groups in various local development themes includes a specific theme relating to sustainability and bio / green economy.

Also, the collection of good practices and projects funded by the EAFRD may provide a number of relevant examples to be showcased and analysed (possibly after further research) in the framework of the TG.

Follow up on these work strands of the ENRD CP will be continuous throughout the work of the TG and relevant findings will be identified and utilised as required.

Finally, the analytical work of the TG will feed into the ENRD publications such as the Rural Review and/or the Projects Brochure and, where appropriate, other communication products.

¹ See annex 1

² ENRD priority 5 embraces both EU Rural Development priorities 4 (Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry) and 5 (Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors).

3. Main activities, expected outputs and workplan




The Thematic Group is stakeholder-driven and its outcomes and work methodologies are expected to be developed based on a participative process. The process includes three main meetings, continuous day to day interactions between TG members and one concluding seminar. The regular engagement of TG members will be pursued throughout the year and in between meetings, also by the use of online tools and social media (including webinar or videoconferencing tools, Facebook, Twitter and a dedicated web portal on the ENRD webpage), to facilitate the interaction in between the meetings and to encourage the exchange of draft documents and case studies, as well as to develop ideas and disseminate relevant information, news, documents, etc. Complementarity and synergy will be sought with activities of the EIP-AGRI network on bioeconomy.







The TG will identify good practice examples, resulting from case study analysis and exchanges during TG meetings, and will formulate recommendations on how the CAP can better support the development of bio-based value chains, both under the current programming period 2014-2020 and looking ahead to the future CAP Strategic Plans.

The outputs will be disseminated through factsheets and other publications and are intended to be of help not just to TG members but to all those who seek to improve the way in which the RDPs in particular and CAP support overall can be used to deliver environmental benefits.

The following charts present respectively the core activities of the Thematic Group (Table 1) and the indicative work plan (Table 2).

Table 1: Main activities and outputs of the ENRD Thematic Group on 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy'

ACTIVITIES	
 <p>Background research</p>	Background research on bioeconomy and the development of bio-based value chains in Europe, with a focus on: policy perspective, stakeholders' initiatives and existing barriers.
 <p>Three TG meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st TG meeting (9 October 2018) – Identifying priority topics • 2nd TG meeting (17 January 2019) – Territorial and local approaches to developing bioeconomy in rural areas • 3rd TG meeting (April 2019 – date to be confirmed) – Education, engagement and communication approaches to involve rural bioeconomy stakeholders
 <p>Two Twitter chats</p>	Subject to interest of TG members, Twitter chats (max 90') might be used as a communication tool to keep TG members involved and to collect useful ideas and inputs from additional stakeholders active on the topic in Europe and worldwide.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Twitter chat (November 2018) – Warming up discussion on the topic of the 2nd TG meeting • 2nd Twitter chat (February 2019) – Warming up discussion on the topic of the 3rd TG meeting
<p>Two (or more) short video-conferences</p> 	<p>Short Videoconferences or webinars (max 90' – 120') on specific sub-themes related to the priority topics (to be confirmed).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st video-conference (December 2018) • 2nd video-conference (March 2019)
<p>Comparative regional and RDP analysis</p> 	<p>Analysis and summary factsheets of the Rural Development Policy framework to identify how the combined use of various policy instruments – primarily EAFRD measures – can support the development of sustainable bioeconomy value chains or clusters in rural areas This theme could also clarify how the environmental indicators of the RDPs can be synergetic to measuring the environmental sustainability of the bioeconomy.</p>
<p>ENRD Seminar</p> 	<p>A Seminar will be organised in June with the aim of disseminating the outcomes of the TG work and the lessons learned.</p>
OUTPUTS	
<p>Inventory of relevant case studies</p> 	<p>Identification of relevant initiatives/projects supported under Rural Development Programmes as well as through other funding sources, primarily LIFE, H2020, EIP-AGRI, Interreg and national/regional initiatives.</p>
<p>Bioeconomy web portal</p> 	<p>A dedicated webpage on the ENRD website, bringing together the info collected by the TG during its activity, and serving as a hub for collection and dissemination of any other relevant information, including policy documents, national/regional strategies, relevant events and news, projects, multimedia content, etc.</p>
<p>Video</p> 	<p>A short video will be produced for communication purposes, to showcase the economic opportunities and environmental benefits of bioeconomy value chains in rural areas and the role of EAFRD support and Rural Development Policy in promoting them (to be confirmed).</p>













<p>Contributions for ENRD Publications</p> 	<p>Including a Rural Review and/or a Projects Brochure on 'bioeconomy value chains' and, where appropriate, other communication products.</p>
<p>Final report</p> 	<p>Presenting the TG's work and key findings. The main outcome of the TG will be a set of recommendations on 1) how to maximise the use of current RDP measures to support bioeconomy value chains, and 2) how to stimulate the development of the bioeconomy in the drafting of CAP strategic plans post-2020, moving from the lessons learned in the current programming period.</p>
<p>Factsheets</p> 	<p>Presenting highlights of the analytic work in a visual, reader-friendly way for broader dissemination.</p>

Table 2: Indicative work plan

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Draft Scoping paper & Workplan circulated to the Group											
Development of a Bioeconomy web portal											
Contributions for ENRD publications											
1 st Meeting: Refine scope & research questions		 (09/10)									
Finalisation of scoping paper & workplan											
Video production (tbc)											
Research & analysis											
1 st twitter chat											
1 st videoconference (tbc)											
Preliminary findings circulated											
2 nd Meeting: Territorial and local approaches to developing											



bioeconomy in rural areas											
2 nd twitter chat (tbc)											
2 nd videoconference (tbc)											
Recommendations developed into final report and products											
3rd Meeting: Education, engagement and communication approaches to involve rural bioeconomy stakeholders											
Draft final report & products <i>circulated</i> to the Group											
TG recommendations finalised & Seminar preparation											
Seminar on Bioeconomy											
Final report											
Factsheets with highlights of the analytic work											

Annex 1: Summary of TG topics based on priorities voted by TG members

Poll on themes – 1st meeting (theme + score)

- Synergies between policy instruments (13)
- Territorial and local approaches (12)
- How to roll out pilots and innovations (12)
- Education, engagement, communication (12)
- Business opportunities in rural areas not linked to primary production (11)
- Attract more investment to rural BE (11)
- Promoting synergies between value chains and clusters (10)
- Business models delivering environmental benefits and measuring results (9)
- Integration of primary agricultural and forest producers to BE value chains (8)
- Promoting infrastructure and logistics (3)

<p>Overarching activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main outcome of the TG will be a set of recommendations on 1) how to maximise the use of current RDP measures to support bioeconomy value chains, and 2) how to stimulate the development of the bioeconomy in the drafting of CAP strategic plans post-2020, moving from the lessons learned in the current programming period. • Inventory of case studies relevant to the three selected topics, including a collection of successful communication approaches to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable BE value chains (for farmers, rural SMEs and for communities). • For the creation of the inventory and throughout the analytical work, a guiding principle will be the 'environmental sustainability' of the selected projects. • It is suggested to produce a video to demonstrate examples of competitive and sustainable BE business models in rural areas, that are contributing to rural development (employment creation etc) - the video in itself is also a communication tool for stakeholders. • Seminar (June 2019): presenting the TG work findings and recommendations.
<p>Topic 1</p>	<p>Making use of RDPs and synergies between policy instruments for better BE results</p> <p><i>Exploring how the combined use of various policy instruments – including EAFRD measures – can support the development of sustainable BE value chains or clusters in rural areas. This theme could also explore and clarify how the environmental sustainability (or environmental benefits) of bioeconomy can be planned, ensured and measured, including within the RDPs/future CAP Strategic Plans. The role of public support measures – in particular EAFRD measures - in acting as an enabler or lever for attracting investments (through private investors, bank credit, etc.) in order to commercially roll out bioeconomy innovative business models in rural areas can also be analysed.</i></p> <p>Main activity and outputs</p> <p><i>Analytic work including in-country analysis through geographical experts and with the support of NSUs. Case studies</i> <i>2 videoconferences (or webinars - format tbc) on specific aspects, with specific stakeholders (focus on: environmental sustainability, employment creation...)</i></p>
<p>Topic 2</p>	<p>Territorial and local approaches to developing bioeconomy value chains in rural areas</p> <p><i>Exploring how the development of bio-economy – primarily small- and medium-scale businesses and sustainable value chains – can be supported by building on the involvement of local stakeholders (farmers, municipalities, citizens, educational institutions, etc.) within well-defined territorial boundaries (e.g. sub-regional, micro-regional, community, etc. levels) in deploying related regional BE/rural development strategies.</i></p> <p>Main activity and outputs</p> <p><i>Twitter chat November 2018 Case studies, background research, meeting report, factsheet</i> <i>2nd TG meeting January 2019</i></p>
<p>Topic 3</p>	<p>Education, engagement and communication approaches to involve rural bioeconomy stakeholders</p> <p><i>Identifying efficient educational, awareness-raising and communication approaches, strategies and tools promoting sustainable BE value chains and engaging key actors in rural areas, to communicate to various target groups including farmers, communities and citizens, public and private funding bodies, policy-makers and other stakeholders in the RDP delivery chain – at local and national level.</i></p> <p>Main activity and outputs</p> <p><i>Twitter chat February 2019 Case studies, background research, meeting report, factsheet</i> <i>3rd TG meeting April 2019</i></p>