



FTP written input to the new EU Bioeconomy Strategy

Introduction

The **Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)** is a [European Technology Platform \(ETP\)](#) dedicated to the forest-based sector. It is the meeting place for industry, forest owners, researchers and public authorities, to discuss and build up a critical mass of knowledge on common research and innovation needs for the sector, and to decide on the best ways to cooperate. In this way, FTP delivers sound, scientific, strategic and EU-relevant information to public funding providers, thus facilitating opportunities for targeted investments in research, technological developments and innovation (RTDI).

The main aim of FTP is to develop, promote and implement a [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#), to advance competitiveness and sustainability of the forest-based sector through innovation.

Today, a significant majority of energy and materials comes from fossil sources. To achieve lower GHG emissions and lower environmental pollution, the use of non-renewables must be both reduced and step by step replaced with renewable carbon sources.

Sustainable Forest Management is an enabler of such substitution through its provision of biomass, while also offering a wide range of additional services to society, such as enhancement of biodiversity, protection against calamities, clean air and water, et cetera.

The European upstream forest value chain offers significant potential for sustainable forest-sourced primary biomass. Today's supplies to the European market amount to around 500 million cubic metres, whilst having the average uptake of annual increment between 56-90%, depending on the local context.

The bioeconomy can drive the transition away from a petroleum-based society and should therefore be considered a core pillar of the EU's industrial policy. Supporting high-quality research and innovation in the forest-bioeconomy must be a key objective of the forthcoming new EU Bioeconomy Strategy. This will be for the benefit of greater EU resilience and autonomy, global competitiveness as well as climate and environment.

As a first step, the Bioeconomy Strategy must set the right direction by:

- Ensuring a level playing field for biomass availability and use by a simplified and coherent legal framework.
- Support research, innovation and skills development— both in sustainable forestry and in advanced wood processing, circular design, and bio-based materials.

Removing barriers and creating a level playing field

The EU must take steps to ensure the availability and use of domestically and sustainably sourced biomass:

(1) EU policies and legislation impacting the availability and use of biomass must be reviewed with a view to addressing inconsistencies, gaps and/or cumulative impacts.

(2) The new CAP and other financial instruments, such as regional development funds and Horizon Europe, must incentivise **forest-sector** entrepreneurship as well as enable funding for new innovative technologies, including their deployment at scale.

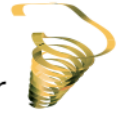
(3) The EU Bioeconomy Strategy must enhance market transparency, to **ensure comparability with fossil-based products and materials**, and thus increase trust along the supply chain, including the final consumer.

Examples include:

- Faster permitting procedures for the building of new plants, e.g. biorefineries, and related infrastructure.
- Access to finance, e.g. via public-private partnerships, to help overcome the phase from successful pilot project to supplying the market at scale.

(4) Complementing the above, the EU can promote demand for biobased products through the following measures:

- In addition to the carbon sequestered within wood products, it is essential to acknowledge the substantial contribution of the **substitution effect**, i.e. renewable materials replacing energy-intensive, fossil-based materials, for the carbon benefits to be correctly calculated. In particular, it is important that the



new EU Bioeconomy Strategy recognises the new **ISO 13391** standard that was recently published and that provides a framework for value-chain calculations of the greenhouse gas dynamics for wood and wood-based products.

- Assess effective strategies to inform and educate consumers on the environmental benefits of biobased products, grounded in robust evidence and aligned with the Directives on Green Claims and Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition. Combined, these measures will serve to fast forward market access for biobased products which will decrease dependence on non-renewable resources further the EU resilience and growth, whilst contributing positively to climate and environment.

Support research, innovation and skills

The new Bioeconomy Strategy should secure further public funding for bioeconomy-related research and innovation to mobilize private investments in Europe.

Since 2004, the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform has helped to advance the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector through innovation. Led by a jointly agreed [Vision](#) and [Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda](#) of the forest-based sector in the European Research Area.

Going forward, the EU has the chance to continue building on this path and recognise and support this recognised organisation for industry actors, forest owners, researchers and public authorities. This collaboration allows to advance competitiveness and sustainability in the forest-based sector, driving both research and innovation and strengthening EU resilience and competitiveness.

Examples include:

- Continue to recognise the agreed research and innovation priorities of forest managers and owners, woodworking industries, pulp & paper industries and the research community, as provided by FTP to the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF).
- Secure under the next MFF a similar or higher budget for the bioeconomy compared to the current MFF, e.g. Cluster 6 and others funding sources.

- Continue funding of successful partnerships, such as the Circular Bio-Based Europe JU, beyond 2028.
- Support the set-up of the Important Project for Common European Industries related to the bioeconomy.

The Bioeconomy Strategy should promote skills development and jobs

A skilled and trained labour force is crucial for the success of the bioeconomy in contributing to the EU's greater resilience, sustainable growth and global competitiveness.

- Diversify educational pathways in forest-based industries, forestry and forest management for students to seize the opportunities of bioeconomy and gain a more diversified skill set in line with the diversification of needs on-field, e.g., through the creation of dedicated curricula in schools and universities.
- Develop intergenerational cooperation, taking advantage of the innovative and transformative mindset of new generations and combining it with the experience of older generation.

A Broad Scope for the Biotech Act

The European Biotech Act, as currently outlined in the Commission's Call for Evidence, focuses primarily on medical, pharmaceutical, and select agricultural or industrial biotechnology applications. While important, this scope underrepresents the full breadth and transformative power of biotechnology within the wider bioeconomy—particularly in sectors such as the forest-based sector.

FTP urges the Commission to broaden the Biotech Act's scope to reflect the ambition of its own 2024 Communication on "Boosting Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing," which rightly identifies biotechnology as a key enabling technology across multiple industrial ecosystems. To be effective, the Biotech Act must fully integrate high-potential sectors like the forest-based bioeconomy that are already deploying industrial biotechnology at scale.



More specifically:

- Remain **‘technologically neutral’** i.e. not limit the Act only to biotechnological conversion, but include also chemical, mechanical and physical conversions as relevant to scaling up bio-based products.
- A broader scope for the Biotech Act that includes **all high-potential bioeconomy sectors**, including pulp and paper.
- Full integration of **biorefineries** and **industrial biotechnology applications** into the EU’s regulatory and R&I framework.
- Recognition of the **forest-based sector** as a key actor in FP10, CBE JU, IPCEI and other innovation programmes.

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