



BIOEAST

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Central-Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry in the Bioeconomy

About

BIOEAST is a political initiative started by the Visegrad Group Countries in 2015: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and joined by Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Estonia, Romania, Slovenia. BIOEAST offers a shared strategic research and innovation framework for working towards the development of a sustainable bioeconomy in the Central and Eastern European countries. The Central and Eastern European countries are strongly committed to keeping the BIOEAST Initiative high on their political agenda. Four political declarations were signed by Agriculture Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries (CZ, HU, PL, SK) Baltic States (EE, LT, LV) and BG, HR, RO and SI on supporting the Initiative.

Mission and vision

The mission of the BIOEAST initiative is the development of 'knowledge and cooperation based circular bioeconomies' to enhance inclusive growth in the BIOEAST countries and also create new value-added jobs especially in rural areas, maintaining or even strengthening environmental sustainability.

The BIOEAST Initiative's mission is to assist Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to operationalise their vision for 2030 drawing on their potential and offering opportunities for:

- A sustainable increase of biomass production, to become competitive and leading, high quality, food and feed producers worldwide;
- A circular ("zero waste") processing of the available biomass, to become key players in the development of new bio-based value chains;
- Viable rural areas: to develop an innovative, inclusive, climate-ready growth model.

Challenges

The BIOEAST Initiative has identified five challenges to be addressed:

- Research and Innovation deadlock: the macro-region still suffers the drawbacks of poor R&I infrastructure. The uptake and deployment at full scale of research results into practice and the inputs of practitioners into research need to be improved.
- Stalemate in the bio-based value chains: Neither the traditional nor the innovative value-chains are fully exploited, the opportunities for creating value added processes locally are low or missing. The local rural development model should be based on small-scale investments and on small-scale biomass processing.
- Governance impasse: A more systemic and integrated approach in decision-making is necessary to agree on a set of common principles for sustainable production and consumption.
- Societal indifference: The rural communities of the CEE countries need to be strengthened economically and socially to fully exploit the potential of a knowledge-based, sustainable circular economy.

- Financial barriers: Low access to finance and low level of synergies in public-private funds and investments – CEE countries are characterized by low level of private support to research and innovation and by low level of synergies between public and private funds and investments.

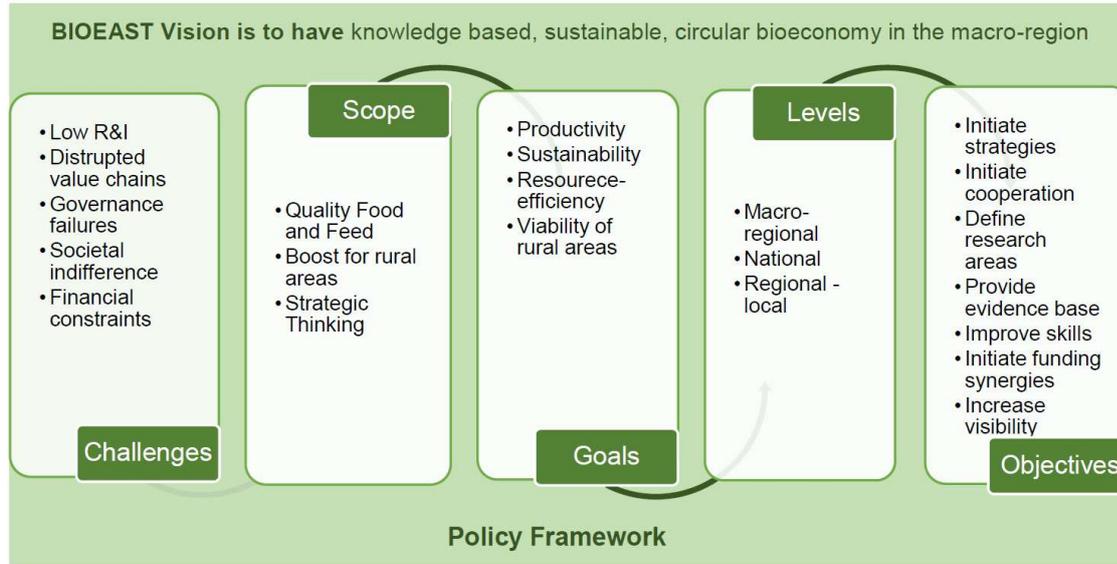
Scope, goals and research topics

The challenges defined by BIOEAST were used to set the following scope in the areas of Agriculture and Forestry, Freshwater aquaculture, Bio-based waste, Economy and Society, Energy, and Climate and Biodiversity:

- Strategic thinking in bioeconomy:
 - Develop bioeconomy strategies to tackle specific environmental and climatic challenges facing the CEE countries.
 - Facilitate evidence-based policy making by developing bioeconomy-relevant statistical and administrative data.
 - Support stability and socio-economic development in the CEE macro-region, within the framework of a reinforced solidarity between EU Member States and the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy.
- Quality Food and Feed for Europe and for the World: To jointly develop and implement innovative solutions (or reinforce already existing ones) to improve the efficiency and sustainability of biomass production system.
- Industrial boost for rural areas:
 - To facilitate the creation of new value-chains and value-added jobs and competences in the CEE macro-region.
 - To boost knowledge and innovation in rural communities, ensuring that they participate in the knowledge economy and maximize opportunities arising from advances in research.

Within this scope, long-term goals were set by BIOEAST to address the challenges to achieve the overarching mission:

- Productivity: Sustainable increase of biomass production, by becoming competitive and leading high-quality food and feed producers worldwide.
- Sustainability: Developing biodiversity and biosecurity, by maintaining and strengthening natural values and defending the rest of Europe from the transboundary plant and animal diseases.
- Resource efficiency: Circular and value-added use of the available biomass, by becoming key players in the development of new bio-based value chains.
- Rural development: Increasing viability and attractiveness of rural areas and society, by developing an innovative, inclusive, climate-ready and sustainable bioeconomy growth model by 2030.



The intervention logic of the BIOEAST initiative. *From: BIOEAST vision paper 23-02-2018*