Joint Policy Overview Document

"Co-Creating Policy Recommendations for a Rural Bioeconomy"

Brussels, Belgium & Online, 27/05/2026

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Summary of Process & Outputs

Identification of needs and resources

- 🔹 Validated Needs
  - 🌍 Italy: Shift to sustainable materials (e.g., thermoplastic starch).
  - ⚖️ Spain: Greater focus on financial & policy support for circular bioeconomy.
  - 📚 Greece: Farmer education & access to technology prioritised.
  - 🔗 Czech Republic: Value chain development & biomass innovation.
  - 🐄 Ireland: Shared infrastructure & funding for collaboration.
  - 🌲 Poland: Optimising forestry resources & carbon-rich biomass.

Match BBTs to regional dynamics and potential

- Inventory of Bio-Based Technologies and Practices
- Bio-Based Technologies Assessment Tool

Raise awareness and increase capacity of AKIS actors

- Educational materials
- Online knowledge platform
- Knowledge Transfer activities

Secure long-term sustainability of project outcomes

- SLRT & Collaborations
- Policy recommendations

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Strategic planning programs & policy recommendations

- 👩‍🏫⚡ **Italy:** Focus on policy integration & coordination (agriculture-energy), with financial support from banking foundations and stronger forestry knowledge networks.
- 📚🗓️ **Ireland:** Emphasizes education & collaboration, proposing longer EIP-AGRI projects (3–5 years) and regional bioeconomy hubs led by cooperatives.
- 🌲🗺️ **Spain:** Prioritizes sustainable forestry & biomass valorisation, including updated biomass mapping and tech feasibility studies to advance innovation.
- 📜♻️ **Poland:** Calls for a national strategy with clear monitoring, simplified AKIS, and integration of BBTs into CAP eco-schemes (e.g., biostimulants).
- 🏛️🎓 **Greece:** Promotes "Democratization of Innovation" via lighthouse farms, biomass energy communities, and incentives to reduce biomass waste.
- 🏭🔬 **Czech Republic:** Targets better institutional coordination, stronger SME access to testing infrastructure, and increased visibility of innovation groups

Policy Evidence & Barriers

80.1% of farmers identified economic constraints as the main barrier to adopting sustainable soil management practices.

52.7% highlighted policy frameworks as a major obstacle, showing current regulations and support schemes are not sufficiently enabling adoption

Although **awareness of sustainable practices exceeds 90% for many methods**, implementation remains significantly lower, revealing a major implementation gap

53.9% of Operational Group participants reported administrative overload, indicating excessive bureaucracy in innovation support systems

OGs' operational experiences: **141** feedbacks
SSM practices technical survey: **391** feedbacks

The most requested improvements were:

- simplification of application procedures,
- faster payment processes,
- less administrative burden,
- longer-term financing mechanisms.

Policy Evidence & Barriers

Policy alignment

9/10

average score

12 OGs assessed
7 very high | 5 good

No moderate / low cases

Policy evidence

a) EU water acquis + CAP are **coherently reflected** in OG outcomes.

b) **Strongest evidence**: irrigation efficiency, digital control, groundwater/nutrient protection.

c) Existing policy and innovation systems **more easily support** solutions aimed at **improving irrigation performance** and **crop adaptation** than those focused on soil-water regeneration, ecosystem functions or circular water systems

Barriers to uptake

a) Fragmented and instable rules & permitting for reuse / controlled drainage.

b) **Technical complexity** and **high upfront investment costs**.

c) Scaling needs **CAP** + **investment aid** + **cooperation** and **advisory** support.

Country policy alignment work

Italy
ND/GD/WFD/CAP
Nitrates Ferrara/INNOVARE/ INNOVALEGUMI: groundwater protection, nutrient control and precision irrigation.

Spain/CAT
WRR/UWWTD + RD 1085/2024
REAQUA/GRANGES: water reuse, alternative water sources, livestock systems

Belgium/FL
WFD, VLAREM, MAP, Watertoelating
Waterketen/Healthy Water for Happy Cows /WaterReserve: livestock water quality, controlled drainage, water reuse and retention.

Poland
Water Law, CAP, WRS
Water for Kuyavia/Nova Trawa/SatAgro : digital irrigation planning, satellite DSS, nutrient management and drought-resilient crops.

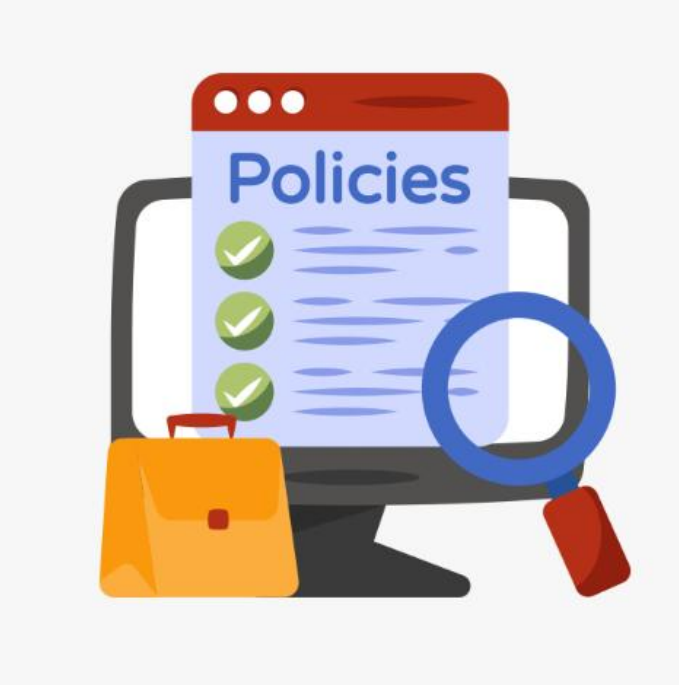
Cyprus
RBMP, CAP, Drought plan
OLIVER Nicosia Vegs: soil regeneration, soil-water retention, lower irrigation needs and fertiliser reduction.

Key fundings:
innovation remains more established for S1 Water Use and S2 Water Smart Crops,
while S3 Water-Soil Interface and S4 Water Reuse require stronger support, clearer rules, pilot funding and advisory accompaniment.

DATA SOURCE

- D2.1 policy mapping and OG alignment matrix (12 selected Operational Groups) (WP2 Task 2.1)
- Regional Social Labs (WP2 Task 2.3)

EU policies impacting bio-based business models



- Bioeconomy is increasingly framed as a competitiveness, industrial resilience and rural development agenda.
- The 2025 Bioeconomy Strategy reinforces scale-up, regional deployment, biorefineries and sustainability boundaries.
- So far demand-side measures remain weaker for bio-based materials compared with bioenergy.
- Targets, procurement criteria, standards and finance must converge to create lead markets.

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Policy Evidence & Barriers

Based on early-stage research on bioeconomy strategy and CAP measures, using online questionnaires with case study owners, primary producers, and C4B Panel stakeholders:

- Stakeholders are generally aware of the **EU Bioeconomy Strategy**, especially in institutional and project roles, but understanding of **CAP measures** is uneven.
- **Bureaucracy, limited funding, unclear eligibility**, and **fragmented policies** hinder engagement with bioeconomy initiatives. While **financial incentives, stakeholder engagement, and regulatory clarity** are key drivers enabling bioeconomy development and innovation.
- **Sustainable biomass production, circular farming, bio-based innovation**, and **rural bioeconomy development** are clear priorities for future CAP and related policies.
- **Bioeconomy targeted CAP measures** are needed, alongside simplified administrative processes, greater policy coherence, and funding focused on bio-based innovation and circular systems.
- **Awareness** and **capacity-building** initiatives can improve uptake of CAP opportunities.
- The upcoming **CAP 2028–2034 reform** offers opportunities for better coordination and value-chain development but also risks increased competition for resources and reduced income support budgets, which could limit bioeconomy investments without compensatory measures.

Policy – relevant aspects

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MAIN DOSSIER/PROPOSAL

- CAP reform
- Soil monitoring law
- New EU Bioeconomy strategy
- PPWR
- Revision of the Fertiliser Regulation
- Circular Economy Act
- Pilot for boosting the circularity of plastics
- Standardization landscape

RISKS

- Regulatory uncertainty and fragmentation
- Lack of harmonized monitoring framework and data
- Member State uneven implementation
- Lack of harmonized and missing standard

Policy Evidence & Barriers

Regulatory and Enabling Environment Challenges Identified Through Implementation

- Regulatory complexity impacting market access
- Limited harmonisation slows implementation and replication potential
- Economic viability linked to regional conditions, local infrastructure and availability of stable biomass supply chains
- Investment and operational barriers when engaging in bio-based value chains
- Sustainability validation can create implementation complexity
- Stakeholder engagement and local governance structures
- Demonstration-scale implementation essential to reduce uncertainty among farmers, cooperatives, and regional stakeholders
- Need for tailored policy support mechanisms for decentralised and cooperative rural bioeconomy models

Thank you!

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