

Policy Brief

BBioNets

The Circular Bioeconomy in Europe: What is Needed to Foster the Growth of Bio-Based Technologies

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A Strategic Agenda for Policy Recommendations

Point of Attention	Target Audiences	Funding Instruments	Timeline
Weak and uneven market demand	EC, public buyers, industry	Product standards, Green Public Procurement, market-pull incentives	Short–medium term
Limited CAP integration and producer incentives	EU and National CAP authorities, farmers & foresters	CAP Strategic Plans	Post-2027 programming
Investment risk and unequal access to finance	EIB, financial institutions, cooperatives and SMEs	Blended finance, public-private co-investment and de-risking	Short–medium term
Clarify and harmonise waste and by-product classification criteria & rules	EC and Member States	Waste Framework Directive → waste and by-product harmonised standards	Medium term
Increase joint engagement between practitioners and policymakers	Policymakers, Living Labs, EIP-AGRI OGs and rural networks	Multi-actor governance, facilitators and Lighthouse Farms	Immediate and continuous
Skills and knowledge gaps	Education authorities, universities, advisers and producers	Vocational training and peer learning, also under CAP	Medium–long term

CAP: Common Agricultural Policy; EC: European Commission; EIB: European Investment Bank; EIP-AGRI: The European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability; OGs: Operational Groups; SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises;

1. Policy Context

Europe has a mature but fragmented bioeconomy policy landscape. Bio-Based Technologies (BBTs) can convert agricultural and forestry biomass, residues and by-products into higher-value materials and services, strengthen rural value chains and support circularity. Yet scaling remains constrained by uneven market demand, incentives that favour bioenergy or fossil alternatives, regulatory uncertainty, restricted circulation of secondary raw materials, complex access to CAP support and insufficient investment in rural processing. Coordinated EU action is therefore needed to provide a coherent market, regulatory and investment framework while enabling territorial delivery.

2. Stakeholder Priorities

Stakeholders prioritised six connected needs: create reliable demand for bio-based products; integrate bioeconomy objectives and producer incentives into the CAP; mobilise affordable finance and fair cooperative business models; harmonise waste, by-product and biodegradable-product rules; connect policymakers more closely with practical innovation networks; and strengthen education, advisory capacity and peer-to-peer learning.

3. Methodology

The evidence combines regional analyses from Italy, Ireland, Spain, Poland, Greece and the Czech Republic and stakeholder mapping based on the quintuple-helix model. Regional workshops validated and prioritised Points of Attention through Action Planning, facilitated dialogue and interactive tools. Their results were compared and consolidated at the European Policy Workshop held in Brussels on 27 May

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2026, which translated territorial experience into shared recommendations for European policymaking.

4. Priority Areas for Policy Action

Europe needs an enabling ecosystem that links market creation, producer incentives, investment, regulatory certainty, multi-level governance and skills.

1. Market development and regulatory framework. Create common ground through content requirements, Green Public Procurement, certification and labelling, while rebalancing incentives toward biomaterials and biomanufacturing. Harmonise waste, end-of-waste and by-product rules, facilitate safe cross-border reuse, and set EU standards for soil-biodegradable products.

2. Primary production and rural value chains. Embed bioeconomy measures in national CAP Strategic Plans, support sustainable residues and by-product valorisation, and reduce administrative burdens so farmers and foresters can participate in bio-based value chains.

3. Investment and fair business models. Mobilise blended finance and public-private co-investment, including collaboration with the EIB. Support cooperatives, bio-hubs and platforms, rural biorefineries and decentralised or hybrid processing models that distribute risks and benefits fairly.

4. Governance and capacity building. Strengthen links between policymakers and territorial partnerships, Living Labs and EIP-AGRI Operational Groups (OGs); support facilitators and Lighthouse Farms; and enhance advisory services, professional training and peer learning.

In summary...

Scaling BBTs across Europe requires a coordinated package rather than isolated measures: predictable markets, accessible CAP incentives, risk-sharing finance, harmonised rules, place-based governance and skills that allow farmers, foresters and SMEs to participate fully in bio-based value chains.

Main Recommendations for Europe

Recommendations	Categorisation
Market interventions and market pull mechanisms	Market development
Integration with the CAP and incentives for primary producers	Policy coherence & regulatory simplification
Investment support, finance, and FAIR business models	Access to public & private support
Regulatory harmonisation and waste management	Policy coherence & regulatory simplification
Multi-level governance, Living Labs, and OGs	Policy coherence & regulatory simplification
Education and skills	Communication and information

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