

Connecting knowledge for regional action towards a sustainable bioeconomy for Europe

Pioneering regions in Spain, Finland and Germany are taking the lead on promoting sustainable development and decarbonisation of our economy with the launch of a new European Bioregions Facility.

The Bioregions Facility connects forward-thinking regions across Europe to work together to unlock their regional potential through international exchange on the forest circular bioeconomy. In this initiative, coordinated by the European Forest Institute (EFI), the three pioneer regions are Basque Country (Spain), North Karelia (Finland), and North Rhine-Westphalia, (Germany).

The Bioregions Facility kicks off with a launch event on 9 March held in Bilbao, Spain, and which will be opened by the President of the Basque Government, **Iñigo Urkullu**. EFI Director, **Marc Palahí**, and high-level representatives from the European Union and the three pioneer regions will be joined by leading speakers from the fields of business, finance and research.

Peter Wehrheim, Head of the Bioeconomy and Food Systems Unit represents the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation while **Philippe Mengal**, Director of the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU), will speak on public-private partnerships for the bioeconomy. **Adrian Enache**, Forestry Sector and Rural Development Specialist at European Investment Bank will discuss investing in the circular bioeconomy and **Nick Lyth**, CEO of Green Angel Syndicate presents the investor perspective on the bioeconomy. **Ulrika Landergren**, Chair of The Commission for Natural Resources (NAT) of the European Committee of the Regions, will speak about the role of regions in achieving a circular bioeconomy.

The event is the starting point to launch practical action and cooperation on a transformation towards a forest-based circular bioeconomy. Alternatives to high carbon, energy intense and non-renewable products like plastics, concrete or steel are urgently required in the face of the climate crisis where administrations are under increasing pressure to meet Paris Agreement targets and to find real solutions for carbon neutrality.

Intelligent, efficient and sustainable use of ecosystems and biomass can produce biomaterials, products and services that can replace carbon dependency but these must be relevant for local contexts. Such regional variances include natural ecosystems, availability of forest and other bioresources as well as existing technological and socio-economic conditions. However, to succeed and scale up, regional action should be based on international cooperation within a joint European vision, which is what is offered by the Bioregions Facility.

Following the launch event, the call will be open for other regions to join the initiative and there is already interest from several other regions, some of which will send representatives to the launch event to learn more.

“Regions offer the first meaningful scale to connect all relevant actors, rural and urban, primary producers and industries, innovation centers and political institutions” comments EFI Director, Marc Palahí. “All of them are needed for a successful and sustainable



bioeconomy. Therefore, regions are key building blocks to unlock the potential of the bioeconomy and I am delighted that EFI is launching this initiative which supports science-informed collaboration between regions to bring the bioeconomy to action in Europe”.

The launch event will be followed by an operational day where the three pioneer regions will begin work on plans for joint strategies and actions, capacity building, partnering and exchanging experiences.

The Bioregions Facility launch event takes place on 9 March 2020 at the Palacio Euskaduna, Bilbao, Spain.

Press passes to the event are available. Please contact:

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