

**BIOEAST - CENTRAL AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN INITIATIVE
FOR KNOWLEDGE-BASED
AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE
AND FORESTRY IN THE
BIOECONOMY**

ROADMAP v.27/02/2018

2017-2018

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Background

In October 2016 the Visegrad Group agriculture ministers of Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and additionally Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia committed to cooperate and to contribute to the development of the European Research Area in agriculture, including bioeconomy. In a common declaration¹ they expressed the willingness to work together and to present the common needs and proposals from the CEE macro-region's countries and to fill the gaps in the HORIZON 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020 under the Societal Challenge 2. In September 2017 the Agricultural Ministers of the Visegrad Group as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia signed a second joint declaration² on broadening the remit of the BIOEAST initiative beyond HORIZON2020.

The declarations of the ministers were preceded and followed by several meetings and expert level workshops. In the context of global challenges and related research and innovation gaps, it had become clear that a cross-sectorial research and innovation initiative was needed to develop a deeper cooperation. Several other countries outside the Visegrad Group - like Estonia and Lithuania, and European Union (EU) neighbouring countries research institutes - expressed the willingness to join the initiative.

The Central-Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Aquaculture and Forestry in the Bioeconomy – BIOEAST – could offer a shared strategic research and innovation framework for working towards the development of a sustainable bioeconomy in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. The comparative advantage in the EU of the CEE countries, namely the sustainable biomass production and processing, could lead to the benefit of the society by creating jobs and growth in the private sector. The macro-region's environmental, economic, societal, geopolitical, cultural and historical homogeneity and complexity could provide the framework conditions favourable to development of a sustainable circular bioeconomy. However, to achieve this goal, the traditional primary production and processing sectors must be modernized through a robust research and innovation initiative in bioeconomy. In fact, the research and innovation capacities of these countries are facing significant internal disparities, thus creating a barrier to the full completion of a European Research Area. Joint efforts are thus required to address present and future challenges successfully.

On these bases, it is critical to develop a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) that would address the following issues:

1. Food-, energy-, job- security in each country
2. Macro-regional economic, environmental and societal sustainability
3. European solidarity between EU13 and other member states (knowledge transfer)
4. Cooperation with EU institutions to strengthen the synergies with other EU instruments and initiatives

¹ 26 October 2016 Warsaw, Poland Common Declaration of the Agricultural Ministers of the Visegrad Group as well as Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia

² 21 September 2017 Visegrad, Hungary: Common Declaration of the Agricultural Ministers of the Visegrad Group as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia

Setting-up the Initiative

The BIOEAST Initiative represents the joint efforts by Visegrad Group and other CEE countries. The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda should lead to enforced policy making at national level, enhanced cooperation with other EU countries and forward-looking participation in the European Research Area (ERA).

Governance

The Central and Eastern European countries are strongly committed to keep the BIOEAST Initiative high on their political agenda. Two political declaration were signed by Agriculture Ministers of the enlarged Visegrad Group Countries (BG, CZ, HR, HU, PL, RO, SK, SI) on launching the Initiative. Other Member States (EE, LT) also signalled their interest to participate.

The enlarged meetings of the Visegrad Group Countries' Agriculture Ministers including other CEE countries will provide the political discussion platform for the Initiative. However, the topics of the BIOEAST initiative could possibly cover broader subjects and several other sectors and ministries. Due to the lack of national level horizontal approaches to the bioeconomy related sectors in most of the MSs, it is difficult to coordinate a common viewpoint.

The positive experience of the SCAR (Standing Committee of Agricultural Research) and Horizon 2020 Programme Committee meetings is a good setup to be considered, where the representatives of different ministries are discussing together.

The proposed way forward is to include in the communication all the ministries and their viewpoints from the outset by providing a contact person/or contact persons for coordinating in each involved ministry. The solution would be to nominate one national contact point or number of national contact points due to the division of competences among national ministries (i.e. agriculture, aquaculture, forestry).

The national contact points form the BIOEAST Working Group, through a process of national nomination, become BIOEAST Working Group members.

This setup can be changed in function of the Initiative's interests. At this stage the BIOEAST General Secretary, who will liaise with the BIOEAST Working Group will coordinate the BIOEAST Initiative. Barna Kovács is appointed as the General Secretary.

The European Commission will be updated formally on the results of these discussions via the Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 2 Programme Committee and the Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (SCAR). The Council of the European Union will be updated formally in the frame of the different Council meetings, while the European Parliament will be kept in the loop via the interested Members of the European Parliament.

Next steps

The BIOEAST Initiative will:

1. further clarify on the governance of the Initiative
2. start to work on Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda

The Vision Paper identifies the key challenges to address and frames the objectives and goals of the initiative with a broad action plan. The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) will be a tool for addressing the challenges. The SRIA will detail the scope, level and duration of specific joint actions to be taken in order to achieve a particular goal falling within a key challenge. It will be

designed to be a living document offering a handbook for interested implementing bodies, bearing in mind that the BIOEAST initiative:

- allows for different types of action to be taken at different levels, as regards geographical coverage, critical mass, joint funding, coordination of national/regional efforts or the use of EU instruments;
- is designed to involve relevant players and stakeholders such as national ministries, regional authorities, international organisations, organisations that undertake research, research infrastructure, academia, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and the general public.

Schedule

Date 2017-2018	Event	Action
June-September	EC proposed technical meetings between BIOEAST and DG RTD's DIR F	BIOEAST advisor, with the support of the EC, tasked to develop the draft roadmap and the draft Vision Paper
June-September	BIOEAST internal discussions	To prepare the draft roadmap and draft Vision Paper
June-September	Hungarian BIOEAST discussions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prepare the BIOEAST Secretary post 2. To prepare a dedicated website
20-24 September, Hungarian National Agricultural Fair	Bioeconomy Conference for policy makers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt and promote the EU Bioeconomy definition including all the sectors 2. Involve all relevant Ministries, Regions, public/private partnerships, industrial/consumers Associations 3. Promote interconnection of sectors 4. Include circularity elements of the Bioeconomy 5. Setting-up the Vision Paper
20-24 September, Hungarian National Agricultural Fair	Visegrad Group Agricultural Ministers meeting	Adoption of a declaration on broadening the scope of the initiative beyond HORIZON2020
September - October	Remote	Discussion on Roadmap Concept note for EC workshop on preparing the Roadmap and on setting the governance structure
October	EC Brussels Workshop	Discussing the internal structure and division of competences within the BIOEST Initiative governance structure Drafting the Roadmap and Vision Paper Focusing the Initiative Develop a first draft to be discussed in a dedicated meeting
November	Brussels	Endorsement of the BIOEAST Roadmap
20-21 November 2017, Lodz, Poland	Lodz Region Bioeconomy Conference	Mobilizing the policy makers:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the local promotion of the Initiative, its inclusion in reg./nat. agenda, alignment Networking/cooperation with other initiatives. Alignment priority/actions <p>Align policies, R&I funding strategies and funds and infrastructures</p>
December	Brussels	Endorsement of the BIOEAST Position Paper on RUR9
December Tallinn	EC -EE workshop	Discussion of the draft Vision Paper
30 January Brussels	BIOEAST-EC workshop	Discussion of the draft Vision Paper
30-31 January Brussels	SCAR SG and SC2 PC	Presentation of the milestones of developing the Vision Paper
February	Remote	Adoption of the Vision Paper
March	SC2 PC	Presentation of the Vision Paper
March-May	Remote	Discussion on BIOEAST Governance
April	BIOEAST workshop	Drafting the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
April	Hungarian national CASA SCAR event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotion at national level for the SCAR and SC2 PC activities promotion of bioeconomy thinking and the BIOEAST vision
June-November (tbc)	Polish national CASA SCAR event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotion of the Initiative discussion on the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda discussion on the role of Bioeconomy and circular economy within SCAR activities
June	HU BIOEAST conference	Start to work on the SRIA with goals, actions, detailed level, scope and duration
2018 June	AGRIFISH Council	Informing on the Vision
September - November Brussels	BIOEAST workshop	Discussion on a potential BIOEAST CSA
2019 April-June (tbc)	SK V4 Presidency: BIOEAST conference	Promotion of initiative activities, bioeconomy thinking, regional cooperation
2019 June	AGRIFISH Council	AOB, informing of the conference