

Ms 5

Interview guidelines
for mapping
education needs

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Disclaimer

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Abbreviations

BIOEAST	Central and Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-based Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture in the Bioeconomy
CEE	Central and Eastern European
CR	Czech Republic
D	Deliverable
EC	European Commission
M	Month
NCP	BIOEAST National Contact Point
T	Task
TWG BE EDU	Thematic Working Group on Bioeconomy Education

Introduction to the project

***BOOST4BIOEAST** is a Coordination and Support Action funded by the European Commission developed to support the BIOEAST Initiative with the aim of empowering national stakeholders in the Central Eastern European and Baltic countries for the development of national Bioeconomy action plans and to build long-lasting structures and spaces of dialogue for national and macro-regional cooperation. The project will enrich knowledge on the Bioeconomy and stimulate related research and innovation across the macro-region.*

1 Introduction

It is of paramount importance that policymakers play an active role in the education of future generations in the field of bioeconomy. This involvement is essential for the advancement of awareness, the provision of guidance on the development of curricula, and the promotion and the implementation of bioeconomy initiatives.

One of the key objectives of BOOST4BIOEAST project is to enrich and enhance bioeconomy related knowledge in the BIOEAST macro-region by assessing the educational needs of the BIOEAST countries and boosting dialogue among relevant ministries on how to support bioeconomy transition. Within T5.1, D5.1 will consolidate the mapping results of the bioeconomy-related knowledge, education materials and needs in the BIOEAST countries gathered by the HUBs by M16 (April 2025). This will serve as a basis for T5.2 to further discuss the bioeconomy education needs of the BIOEAST countries in the national inter-ministerial groups in the form of interviews. T5.2, with the support from the members of the Thematic Working Group on Bioeconomy Education¹ (TWG BE EDU), the Network of Bioeconomy Universities in the BIOEAST macro-region² (BIOEAST UniNet) and the national BIOEAST HUBs (HUBs), can contribute to achieving this goal by facilitating the involvement of ministries responsible for education in addressing bioeconomy-related issues within the BIOEAST macro-region. TWG BE EDU coordinated by the BIOEAST HUB CR³ (CR HUB) as a macro-regional body of the BIOEAST Initiative is suitable to implement this task as its members are experienced in engaging with relevant ministries. The BIOEAST UniNet will support T5.2 through the analysis and validation of interview results done by a three-members committee consisting of educational experts from BIOEAST universities. The HUBs that are being established by the end of 2024 can benefit from this effort and advance upon the collaboration with the ministries responsible for education. As a preparation, the general plan in involving ministries responsible for education from the BIOEAST countries was already discussed with the BIOEAST Secretary General, the BIOEAST Board and TWG BE EDU during April and June 2024.

This report “Interview guidelines for mapping education needs” was prepared within T5.2 by CR HUB with the aim to provide a step-by-step guideline for the TWG BE EDU members and HUB Coordinators on how to involve and conduct interviews with the ministries responsible for education on national bioeconomy education related issues such as mapping educational needs, existing educational tools and strategies. Specifically, this report contains:

¹ <https://bioeast.eu/education-2/>

² <http://www.bioeastuni.net/>

³ <https://www.bio-hub.cz/en/>

- Suggestions for approaching and inviting representatives / policy officers from ministries responsible for education for the interviews.
- Key questions to be used in the interviews.
- Indications on how to conduct the interviews and how to deal with the outcomes.
- Outlook of next steps after the interviews.

2 Guidelines for conducting the interviews

Interviews are envisaged to be conducted by HUBs and/or TWG BE EDU members with policymakers and representatives of ministries responsible for education in each BIOEAST country between M18 and M22 (June – October 2025).

As a preparation for the interviews, the outcomes of the mapping results of bioeconomy related knowledge, education materials and needs in the BIOEAST countries (D5.1) will be shared by T5.1 leader (EFI) and the formulated guidelines (this milestone report) by T5.2 leader (CR HUB) with both BIOEAST HUBs and BIOEAST National Contact Points (NCPs) in the respective countries by M17 (May 2025). The whole procedure related to conduct the interviews is briefly represented in Table 1 and described in more detail below.

Table 1. Timeline of activities

Activity (What?)	Date (When?)	Responsible partner (By who?)
Bioeconomy education mapping results (D5.1) and the interview guidelines shared with HUBs and NCPs	M17 (May 2025)	T5.1 leader (EFI) and T5.2 leader (CR HUB)
Interviews		
Step 1. Establishing contact with ministries <i>Note: Initial contacts can start earlier from partners in various countries on a case-by-case basis</i>	M16-M18 (April – June 2025)	HUBs / TWG BE EDU members with the support of NCPs
Step 2. Formal invitation	M17 -18 (May - June 2025)	HUBs / TWG BE EDU members
Step 3. Conducting interviews	M18 – M22 (June – October 2025)	HUBs / TWG BE EDU members
Step 4. Summary reports of the interviews sent to CR HUB	M22 (October 2025)	HUBs / TWG BE EDU members
Next steps		
Webinar (peer reviews)	M23-M27 (November 2025 – March 2026)	CR HUB
D 5.2 - Stakeholder interview outcomes and peer review report submitted	M30 (30 June 2026)	CR HUB with support from BIOEAST UniNet

Step 1. Establishing contact with the relevant ministry responsible for education

National HUBs and/or respective TWG BE EDU members will be responsible for initiating contact with the respective ministry representative between M16-M18 (April – June 2025). This process, which can start in a non-formal basis even earlier, should be supported by the NCPs in order to get a full profile and picture per country. It is highly recommended that each HUB Coordinator, therefore, directly approaches their respective NCP to find the appropriate ministry representative for conducting the interview.

Step 2. Official approach with a formal invitation to the interview

Between M17-18 (May - June 2025) the HUB Coordinators or TWG BE EDU members will approach the respective ministry representative in a formal letter. The letter should be written in national language, therefore HUBs and/or TWG BE EDU will do the translation. An example of an invitation e-mail is below. The sample email should be completed with the information specific to the HUB/TWG BE EDU. If the HUB approaches the policymaker, then information on TWG BE EDU in brackets should be deleted and vice versa.

Email (example)

Dear Ms./Mr,

I hope this email finds you well.

Your colleague, *[name of the NCP]*, recommended I should reach out to you concerning national bioeconomy education matters. My name is *[name of email sender]*, I am coordinating/representing the *[country]* BIOEAST HUB (or the Thematic Working Group on Bioeconomy Education) which is a national network of wide-range of stakeholders working towards enhancing bioeconomy across *[country]* as part of the BIOEAST Initiative (<https://bioeast.eu/>). (or macro-regional network of experts and policymakers from the 11 Central Eastern European countries participating in the BIOEAST Initiative (<https://bioeast.eu/>)).

Learning more about circular bioeconomy education in our country is a main priority of the Initiative supported by the BOOST4BIOEAST, Horizon Europe funded project, which aims to empower national stakeholders in the Central Eastern European and Baltic countries for the development of national bioeconomy action plans and to build long-lasting structures and spaces of dialogue for national and macro-regional cooperation.

We are currently mapping national priorities, needs and activities that can support bioeconomy education from the perspective of policymakers in 11 countries in order to contribute to the better planning of activities in the field of bioeconomy education reflecting on national and macro-regional development.

We would highly appreciate your knowledge and insight on bioeconomy education therefore, we'd like to schedule a date for an in-person interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes.

Please advise me about your time availability. We are also happy to join an online call if that works better for your schedule.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Looking forward to your reply.

Kind regards,

XY

Step 3. Conducting the interviews

The interviews will be conducted in person or remotely by the HUBs or TWG BE EDU members between M18 – M22 (June – October 2025). An in-person interview would be preferable, but if would not work out, an online meeting can also be scheduled. Interviews should be conducted in national languages. It is important to share the interview questions (provided below) and a consent form (available in the *WP1/ETHICS/Consent form* folder on Sharepoint) with the policymakers beforehand. The consent form should be completed, signed and sent back by the policymakers and uploaded to WP5/T2.5 folder on the project's Sharepoint.

Interview Questions

Thank you very much for dedicating your time to this interview.

Theme 1. Exploring ministry priorities for education

1. Is bioeconomy or circular bioeconomy education listed among the strategic priorities of your ministry?

If so, are you aware of any bioeconomy-related course/programme offered by educational institutions? What are the experiences with these courses?

If not, can you elaborate on why not?

2. Is education related to wider sustainability topics such as *sustainable biomaterial production, food systems, fisheries, forestry, bioenergy or agroecology/organic farming* within your strategic priorities? Why are these prioritised?
3. Does your ministry dispose of adequate capacities to implement these priorities? What are the most emerging issues?

4. (If not addressed or only partially addressed in the previous answer) According to your opinion, what are the key obstacles?

Theme 2. Good practices and implemented measures

5. Does the ministry have a strategy/action plan for education or any policy document that support its development? Please provide, if any.
6. Does the ministry have specific measures implemented for the adoption of bioeconomy in education? Please list them, if any.
7. Do you have any funding dedicated to the adoption of bioeconomy in education? Please list them, if any.
8. Is your ministry implementing any good practices (e.g., events) that support the widespread adoption of bioeconomy (or mentioned priorities in Question 1) in education? Please elaborate on these practices and provide any relevant material or link?
Would you be willing to share these with other BIOEAST countries?

Theme 3. Stakeholders and networks in education

9. Who (which institutions) are the key players in (bioeconomy) education in the country? Please name the organisations.
10. What is the relationship (communication, involvement in policy support, etc.) of the ministry with these players?
11. Is there any group of stakeholders (NGOs, industry, government, other ministries, educational institutions) that require your support in circular bioeconomy education? If so, what kind of support is needed?
12. Are you aware of any inter-ministerial group (even informal ones) that is supporting bioeconomy? If so, are you a member of that group? (if not a member, why not?) How often do you meet, discuss what and who else attends?
13. If not, should such a group be established, would you be interested in participating?
14. Are you aware of any national network of stakeholders interested in bioeconomy? If so, are you a member of that network? (if not a member, why not?) How often do you meet, discuss what and who else attends?

15. If not, should such a network exist, would you be interested in cooperating with them?
16. Which specific topic would you prefer to analyse with your counterparts from other ministries of education in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries?
17. Are you aware of any European Commission based platforms and/or frameworks facilitating such initiatives? If so, would you be interested in participating?

Thank you for supporting our efforts to boost the bioeconomy in the macro-region.

Step 4. Summary reports of the interview results

Summary reports about the interviews from the 11 BIOEAST countries will have to be provided (containing a short synthesis of each answer) by the HUB Coordinator in English for CR HUB by the end of the M22 (October 2025).

3 Outlook

The interviews will serve as a basis for following activities in T5.2, i.e., the discussion of three key topics of bioeconomy education that are relevant for each country in the BIOEAST macro-region. The interview outcomes will be discussed during a peer-review webinar organised between M22-M26 (October 2025 – February 2026) to support mutual learning and exchange of experience. The target audience will be policymakers and experts from the education sector – including the members of the BIOEAST UniNet – across the BIOEAST countries.

All the collected data and results from T5.1 and T5.2 will be analysed by the CR HUB, validated by TWG BE EDU and BIOEAST UniNet members and shared with the HUBs. Consequently, CR HUB will formulate policy recommendations - applicable at macro-regional and national levels - for decision-makers on how to support the development of bioeconomy education described in D5.2 at M30 (June 2026).

Boosting the bioeconomy transformation for the BIOEAST region



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