

# Reflection on the benefit of learning communities in implementing the Commission's policy in transforming to the bioeconomy

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*Learning Communities for the transformation to the bioeconomy: innovation by dialogue between*

*Thursday 20 and Friday 21 November 2025 at the Irish College Leuven,  
Janseniussstraat 1, Leuven, 3000 Belgium*

# Structure of the presentation

- Last year workshop report on bioeconomy education.
- Lesson learnt from the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe.
- Learning communities.
- What benefit for the policy making?
- Future project. Future communities.



## Workshop Report

Bioeconomy education to enable the transition to a competitive, regenerative, and fair (bio)economy. Building the next union of skills in the bioeconomy.

### a. *Industry-academia collaboration*

A key gap highlighted is **the insufficient collaboration between universities and industries**, limiting the practical application of academic knowledge and delaying industry innovation. This fragmentation hinders the creation of industry-relevant curricula, practical placements, and efficient pathways to introduce bioeconomy to students. Opportunities for enhancing industry collaboration, including the development of living labs and real-world projects, are underutilized. **The lack of connections between academic research and small or medium enterprises further exacerbates this issue, calling for better technology transfer mechanisms and an entrepreneurial mindset** in academia.

### a. *Awareness and stakeholder engagement*

Despite the growing significance of bioeconomy, its **awareness remains limited**, with bioeconomy topics still being considered niche. One of the core needs is to raise awareness among both the general public and specialized sectors. This includes translating scientific and policy perspectives into formats suitable for broader audiences, such as simple factsheets. **There is also a need for an open dialogue between academia, policy makers, and industry actors, as well as opportunities to engage local enterprises in co-creating bioeconomy solutions**. Awareness-building initiatives are particularly important in empowering younger generations and informing policy action. Active lobbying for political engagement and support is also crucial for ensuring bioeconomy's incorporation into broader policies and educational frameworks.



# Horizon Europe at MIDTERM

Delivering High Returns for  
Citizens and the Economy

April 2025



## ECONOMIC IMPACT AND HIGH VALUE FOR MONEY

- **€1 of EU** contribution to projects is expected to generate up to **€11** in economic growth by **2045**
- **€1 of costs** to EU society delivers up to **€6 in benefits** for EU citizens by 2045



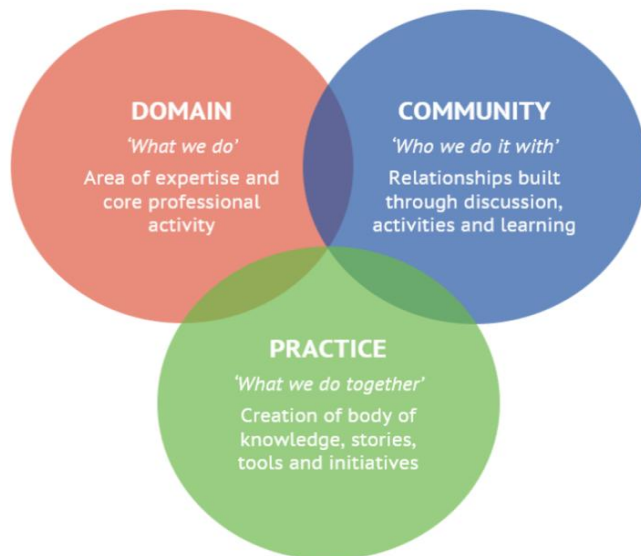
## KNOWLEDGE VALORISATION REMAINS A CHALLENGE

- **Only one third of patented inventions** registered by European universities or research institutions are commercially exploited
- Persistent between EU and USA funding gap, especially in the scale-up phase

# Meaningful connections



## Community of Practices



Source: University of Oxford

teachers & students



land managers



citizens



private sector



farmers



local authorities

**Living  
Labs**



# How the learning community concept is being embedded



Awakening Soil Curiosity to catalyse  
Soil Literacy

The CURIOSOIL Community of Practice (CoP) is a platform for **stakeholders from diverse backgrounds** to come together and contribute to the development, **piloting and implementation of soil education initiatives**.



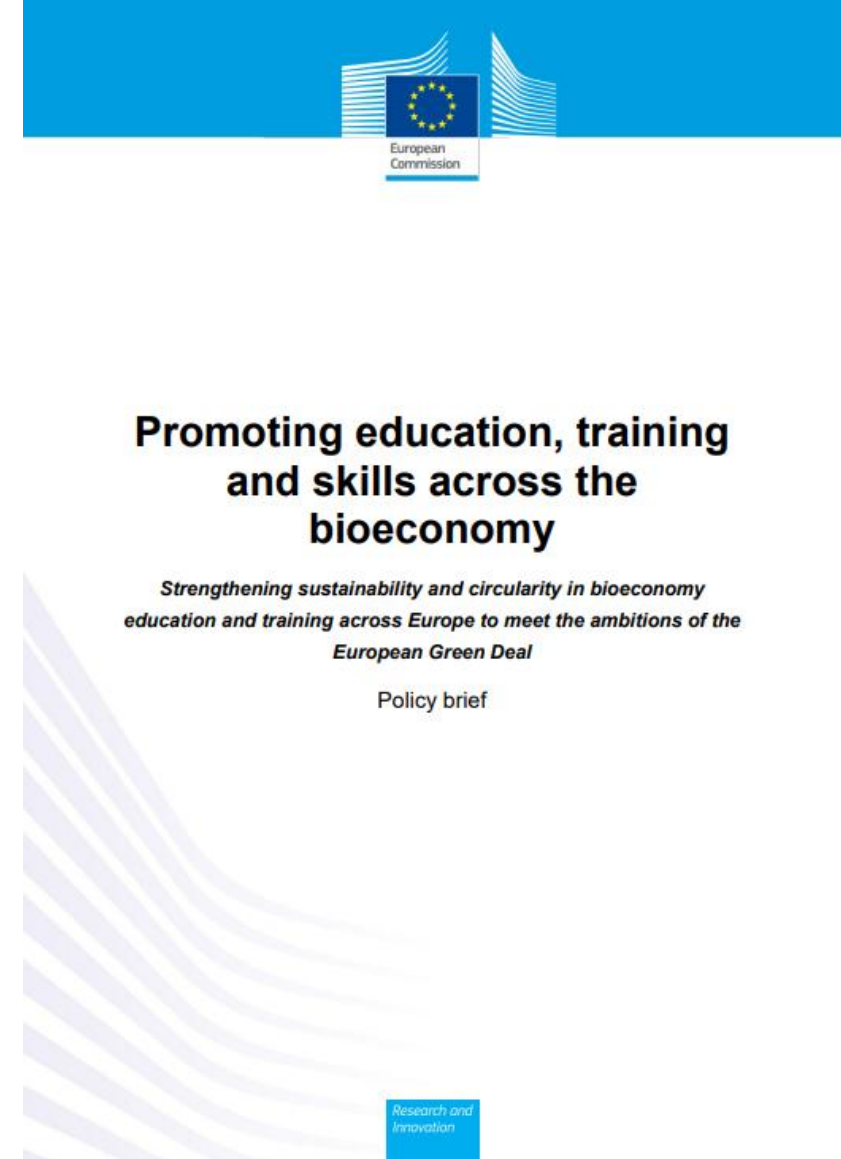
**Nature-Based Solutions Education Network**

NBS EduWORLD will create an **NBS community** that facilitates synergies between **NBS professionals and education providers** and ensures free and easy access to NBS knowledge and resources for all.

## Recommendations for policy makers

### 1. Make long-term skills commitments in bioeconomy- and related strategies to strengthen skills related initiatives.

These commitments should build on existing **policy framework and networks**, including those developed at the EU level, such as European Commission's Pact for Skills, The Erasmus+ Blueprint Programme on Sector Skills Alliances, and the **BioEast Initiative**. **Regions and local areas** – particularly those with high biomass potentials – should consider how these national commitments should be tailored and implemented to meet their needs and contexts (for example, following the model adopted by some federal German states in adopting their own dedicated bioeconomy strategies). To ensure that the strategies can continually evolve in line with emerging skills needs, **they should include plans that bring different stakeholders together to share knowledge and best practice, including those from education and training institutions**. For example, one option for national governments could be to establish a national advisory board including experts from HE and VET to support policy making.



# What benefit for the policy making?

- **Better informed and evidence-based policies**
  - Real-world insights from practitioners.
  - Faster identification of viable vs. impractical policy ideas.
- **Higher policy relevance and practicality**
  - Barriers and unintended consequences are spotted early.
  - Solutions are tailored to regional realities (e.g., agricultural practices, biomass availability, infrastructure).
- **Enhanced policy coherence across sectors**
  - Trade-offs (e.g., land use, resource allocation).
  - Opportunities for synergy (e.g., waste-to-resource loops)
- **Accelerated innovation and implementation**
  - Faster scaling-up of new technologies (biorefineries, bio-based materials)
  - Sustainable practices (circular systems, regenerative agriculture)







# Strengthening and connecting bioeconomy networks

- Liaise and collaborate with bioeconomy education institutes for improved skills development initiatives and networks to develop and deploy innovative interactive bioeconomy education material in support of both the informal and formal education at all levels;

# Thank you!

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**2018 EU Bioeconomy Strategy**



**EU Bioeconomy Progress  
Report 2022**

**CORDIS Results Pack on  
microbial  
blueprints for  
bioeconomy**



**Microbiomes  
and holobiomes  
as drivers of a  
sustainable circular  
bioeconomy**

**innovative  
bioeconomy  
solutions**



**Strengthening the  
EU's prosperity  
through sustainable  
and circular  
bioeconomy  
innovations**