

## **Charter for the European Community of Practice for Bioeconomy Education (CoP Bio-Ed)**

### **Background**

The bioeconomy covers all sectors and systems that rely on biological resources (animals, plants, micro-organisms and derived biomass, including organic waste), their functions and principles. It includes and interlinks: land and marine ecosystems and the services they provide; all primary production sectors that use and produce biological resources (agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture); and all economic and industrial sectors that use biological resources and processes to produce food, feed, bio-based products, energy and services. To be successful, the European bioeconomy needs to have sustainability and circularity at its heart. This will drive the renewal of our industries, the modernisation of our primary production systems, the protection of the environment and will enhance biodiversity<sup>1</sup>.

In order to efficiently support the expansion of the circular Bioeconomy educational and vocational training programmes that fit the quickly evolving skill demands are required. In addition to technical skills, strong interdisciplinary competences, systems thinking and the ability to understand the subject matter of all stakeholders in the value chains are of increasing importance. Both the professionals in the working field themselves as and the future professionals should be educated to understand and develop these new and challenging domains. Several universities have been actively developing innovative programmes during the last years. However, trans sectoral collaboration on the topic of Bioeconomy education as well as the collaboration of actors from different European regions will be needed to develop a European Bioeconomy Education Ecosystem. This needs to include university degree programs, perspectives for up-skilling and life long learning as well as vocational education and entrepreneurship. Moreover, the regional differences and priorities regarding their Bioeconomy strategy and educational systems must be considered.

### **Goals**

The goal of the **Community of Practice for Bioeconomy Education (CoP Bio-Ed)** is to enhance the quality, offer and diversity of education for the circular Bioeconomy in Europe, by bringing educational actors in contact with each other, both virtually and face to face. Together, they form a professional network, where

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec\\_bioeconomy\\_strategy\\_2018.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec_bioeconomy_strategy_2018.pdf)

- educational projects (e.g. to develop and evaluate new educational materials, strategies and innovative training concepts) can be started, and
- experiences and good practices can be shared (e.g. among educational actors coming from different educational sectors and regional perspectives), and
- consultation with industry and stakeholders (e.g. about skills demands and educational outcomes) can be organized.

A combined effort of professionals working on related goals will enhance the outcomes of education and training for the circular bioeconomy. The CoP Bio-Ed will address experience exchange, up-skilling and training among faculty and teachers, which is a first and necessary step to promote the education of an adequately skilled workforce for the Bioeconomy.

### **Communication and sharing information within the CoP Bio-Ed and with other stakeholders**

Dedicated trans- and interdisciplinary events, cross-sectoral, on Bioeconomy education will be organized to facilitate networking and training among faculty and teachers. Besides its substantial contribution to the specific domain of Bioeconomy, the established network shall contribute to the New Skills Agenda for Europe and improving the job market in Europe. Towards this goal we will establish a digital platform, where educational resources and materials can be stored and exchanged.

The CoP Bio-Ed will also provide a means for academia of interacting with industry partners and policy makers to identify skills demands early and to enhance the quality of Bioeconomy education. The educational perspective will be aligned with European priorities for growth, offering a good potential for improvement in all levels (technological, economic social and regulatory).

### **How to participate**

Individuals that act as educators in the bioeconomy world of CoP Bio-Ed. The criterium to join is that the member can show educational practice in relation to the Bioeconomy or in related fields that it is anticipated will be expanded towards the bioeconomy. There is no membership fee.

The CoP Bio-Ed initiative is currently organized as a network managed by a Core Working Group. Working groups and projects dedicated to specific themes will be established. The aim is to raise funds for specific projects and for the overall management and marketing of the initiative.

There are two categories of participant:

Full members

Individuals: Educators are invited to join the CoP Bio-Ed on a personal basis. They should be really involved and have a certain background in the bioeconomy. They should show their involvement by entering their names and expertise in the database which will be the link

between all the members.

Associate members

Existing networks and consortia: Networks and consortia are necessary partners to spread the word and to reach out to as much as possible people. We kindly ask the network partners as well as consortia in the world of bioeconomy to help us in reaching out to the individual educators and stimulate them to be part of our CoP Bio-Ed.

Institutions related to Bioeconomy Education (Higher Education Institutions, Universities, Research Centres, Public and/or Regional Administration Private Entities). In the long term we expect membership of the CoP Bio-Ed to develop on the basis of educational institutional membership.

The initiators of the Community of Practice for Bioeconomy Education, who also form the Core Working Group, are:

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