GLOBAL BIOECONOMY SUMMIT 2026

Bioeconomy for socio-economic transformation and climate action

Workshop Summary Report

Building an enabling environment for place-based bioeconomies to succeed.

International Advisory Council on Global Bioeconomy

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

1. Event details

Field	Details
Workshop title	Building an enabling environment for place-based bioeconomies to succeed.
Lead organiser and partners	Climate KIC (Lead) ZEF/Uni Bonn ERRIN European Committee of the Regions Jaffe Policy Consulting Forschungszentrum Jülich Schmidt Sciences Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Beam Circular
Date and venue	Tuesday 20th October 11:15 – 12:45 Wicklow Hall 1
Purpose and intended audience	The overarching objectives for the workshop are: • Demonstrate the value of place-based bioeconomy approaches • Produce actionable recommendations for how regional and local authorities can be better supported • Exploring acceleration pathways for the implementation of circular bioeconomy solutions • Developing communities of practice that share lessons learned • Connect people and organizations interested in developing regional circular bioeconomy systems • Generate synergies within regions and stakeholders and between bioeconomy regions • Apply the Two-Loop Model of systems change to identify what needs done to for a circular bioeconomy to take root.

<table>
<tr><th>Field</th><th>Details</th></tr>
<tr><td>Main contributors</td><td>The main contributors are in the table below
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Speaker</th><th>Organisation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Welcome to the workshop</td><td>Denyse Julien</td><td>Climate KIC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Strategic Context – Importance of Regional & Place based approaches</td><td>Piotr Całbecki</td><td>European Committee of the Regions</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Table Topics Introductions</td></tr>
<tr><td>System transition, the 2-loop model</td><td>Denyse Julien
Karen Gallagher</td><td>Climate KIC</td></tr>
<tr><td>Regional Governance and Ecosystem orchestration</td><td>Gianpiero Petruzziello
Randi Johanne Hoseth</td><td>ERRIN</td></tr>
<tr><td>Policy Frameworks Across Levels - What Turns National Bioeconomy Goals into Subnational Strategies</td><td>Daniel Braun</td><td>ZEF/Uni Bonn</td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementation tools, networks and capacity building</td><td>Denise Gider
Ulrich Schurr</td><td>Forschungszentrum Jülich</td></tr>
<tr><td>Integration and collaboration across sectors</td><td>Genevieve Croft
Blake Simmons</td><td>Schmidt Sciences
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory</td></tr>
<tr><td>Implementation in practice: insights and lessons learned</td><td>Gregory Jaffe
Karen Warner</td><td>Jaffe Policy Consulting
Beam Circular</td></tr>
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2. Participation and reach

Measure	Number or description
Please note that no overarching attendance sheet was taken, given the format of a World Café people were moving between tables frequently and so the responses below are our best guess/estimate.	
Actual attendance	70-80 people (estimate)
International reach	Participants from Europe, North America, South America, and Asia
Participant mix	A wide range but this was not documented

3. Summary for the Summit report

Discussion tables at the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026 in Dublin converged on one conclusion: circular bioeconomies take root where policy, funding and local communities are aligned from the start. Regional and local authorities have a central part to play, as enablers of innovation and drivers of market transformation.

1. Change needs three moves at once. Stop what causes harm, build the conditions for new solutions, and scale what works.
2. Align policy and governance across levels. Contradictory rules between policy texts and sectors, such as end-of-life criteria that decide whether a material is waste or a by-product, slow implementation, and regulatory barriers can hinder the scaling of innovative bio-based solutions. Mapping tools can show where national and regional policy diverge, and regulatory sandboxes offer a way to test new approaches and help regulation adapt. Coordination between regional, national and supranational priorities, backed by predictable funding, is needed to turn local potential into lasting impact.
3. Start local and bottom-up. Bottom-up approaches take longer but give stronger results, more longevity and local buy-in. Engage communities and indigenous groups early, and fit solutions to regional context: territories differ in natural resources, industrial structures, research capacity, infrastructure and socio-economic conditions. Embedding the bioeconomy in regional strategies, including Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3), gives long-term direction and helps mobilise funding and align investment. A dedicated bioeconomy strategy is helpful but not always

necessary: in Värmland (Sweden), for example, the broader regional strategy, S3 and cluster organisations support a bioeconomy that reportedly accounts for about 18% of regional gross product.

4. Collaborate across sectors and regions from day one. Scientists, primary producers, industry, policymakers and communities each hold knowledge the others lack. Engage regulatory expertise early, not after a project is built. Cross-sectoral partnerships and interregional collaboration connect complementary capabilities, support knowledge exchange and help build shared value chains. Learning visits, shared research results and datasets, and a library of regional policy best practices help regions learn from each other, as long as solutions are adapted to context rather than simply replicated.
5. Fund the leap from pilot to industrial scale. Early funding frees entrepreneurs to pursue wider social and environmental benefits. Pathways from R&D to full-scale sites need mapping, with support matched to each phase. Public procurement can add to this by creating demand for innovative solutions and helping bio-based markets develop.
6. Build the people and supply side. Rural bioeconomy jobs need real progression. Biomass potential and collection logistics from many small producers need detailed mapping, and consumers need clear information, including on the "ick factor".
7. Give implementation a clear owner. Regional and national strategies and shared objectives often exist, but no organisation is responsible for coordinating activities or setting an implementation timeline. Gaps also remain in awareness and education, access to finance, research-industry collaboration and demonstration objects, such as for bio-based building materials.
8. Engagement with the local community is essential to developing common objectives and ensuring that the benefits of the new biobased product supply chain are channelled to that local community. It also is important that all stakeholders agree on a common “north star” objective so that everyone is working for the same goal.

4. Key messages and contribution to the Summit

Key message	Example or evidence and Summit relevance
Policy alignment across national and local levels is key to reducing complexity and supporting implementation.	Participants reported contradictory requirements between policy texts and sectors, for example end-of-life criteria that decide whether a material counts as waste or as a by-product. Regulatory barriers were also seen to hinder the implementation and scaling of innovative bio-based solutions. Proposed remedies were streamlined requirements, mapping tools that show whether national and subnational policies align, formal instruments for regional-national cooperation and regulatory sandboxes, which let new approaches be tested and support regulatory adaptation. Better coordination between regional, national and supranational priorities, with predictable funding and supportive regulatory frameworks, would give regions and investors the predictability and long-term perspective participants found missing.
Top-down goals need bottom-up levers and feedback from the regions.	Where local funding is missing, customers are expected to pay for bio-based products. Participants saw subnational procurement and funding as levers for regions to act proactively and motivate industry. Public procurement can create demand for innovative solutions and help bio-based markets develop, making regional authorities enablers of innovation and drivers of market transformation. They argued for a stronger role of regions in national policy development, and for embedding the bioeconomy in regional strategies and Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). A clear regional vision gives long-term direction, helps mobilise funding and aligns priorities and investment. Regional testing, demonstration and implementation produce concepts that other regions can take up, which speeds up adoption.

Key message	Example or evidence and Summit relevance
	A dedicated bioeconomy strategy is supportive but not always necessary: regional clusters, networks, research organisations and Smart Specialisation Strategies can drive implementation by building on regional strengths and capacities.
Ground solutions in the local context.	Participants called for more weight on communities, culture and other contextual factors and named urban-rural conflicts as a barrier. Territories differ in natural resources, industrial structures, research capacity, infrastructure and socio-economic conditions, and these assets only become opportunities through effective governance and collaboration. Measures should be fine-tuned to regional specifications and embedded in regional industrial strategies, supported by intermediaries and local hubs. Integrating the bioeconomy across relevant economic and industrial sectors strengthens regional innovation ecosystems and makes better use of local assets. Knowledge and information transfer easily between regions, but national interests and priorities often differ, and transfer depends on involving industry and primary production. Interregional and cross-sectoral partnerships can connect complementary capabilities and build shared value chains.
Moving from strategy to action needs practical support and clear responsibilities.	Regional strategies and shared objectives often exist, but participants noted that no organisation is responsible for coordinating activities or setting an implementation timeline, at regional or national level. Gaps named were coordination, awareness and education, access to finance and support for high-TRL technologies to reach commercialisation, research-industry collaboration, practical demonstrations (for example, a lack of demonstration objects for bio-based building materials) and stakeholder consultation before and during development. Participants also proposed that governments map each region's potential and local knowledge.

Key message	Example or evidence and Summit relevance
	Support and responsibilities need to reflect regional capacities and needs, which makes this relevant to policy and to the organisations that fund and support delivery.
Interregional collaboration can accelerate implementation.	No single solution works everywhere, but regions can learn from each other's experience. Suggested routes were sharing research results and datasets, aligning regional goals, learning visits, demonstration areas and a library of regional policy best practices. Seeing other regions act can encourage others to start, but solutions need adapting to each region's context rather than simply replicating. Participants also asked for better tools to identify shared gaps and scale solutions, and for local communities and key stakeholders to have a voice. This supports international cooperation and gives regions a practical route to scaling solutions. A selection of existing networks and tools was shared as a starting point.
Engagement with the local community, listening to their concerns, and obtaining their support is essential to a successful regional initiative	Regional initiatives, such as BEAM Circular in California, are successful when they engage with and listen to the local community, understand their needs, and include them in all parts of the initiative. An example is ensuring that newly generated jobs are performed by community members not people hired from outside, which often means engaging with educational institutions to help with training and skill development.

These messages draw on all the table discussions, and point to contributions to regional development, sustainable resource use, jobs and cooperation between regions. Participants proposed starting with a good rather than an optimal solution, with monetisation as a second step, to foster acceptance, but left open what counts as a good solution. All points are proposals from the discussions, not agreed positions, and concern regional development in particular.

5. Outputs and outcomes

Knowledge exchange. The World Café format produced extensive knowledge exchange between participants. Because each table covered a different topic, the lead partners prepared their own summaries; those received are attached below.

Regional governance and ecosystem orchestration looked at how regions and local communities can turn their specific assets and capabilities into tangible bioeconomy opportunities. Four outcomes emerged from the discussion:

- **Regional authorities as enablers and market shapers.** Regulatory sandboxes can help test new approaches and adapt regulation, and public procurement can create demand for bio-based solutions.
- **Bioeconomy embedded in regional strategies and S3.** A clear regional vision gives long-term direction, helps mobilise funding and supports coordinated action across sectors.
- **Stronger collaboration within and between regional ecosystems.** Cross-sectoral and interregional partnerships connect complementary capabilities and support shared value chains.
- **Effective multilevel governance.** Coordination between regional, national and supranational priorities, with predictable funding and supportive regulatory frameworks.

Implementation tools, networks and capacity building discussed the need for regional experiences and identified existing implementation approaches, common gaps and opportunities for interregional collaboration. A selection of international networks and initiatives and practical tools were discussed and shared with participants.

These are outcomes of the discussions rather than agreed commitments; no partnerships or recommendations were formally agreed at the workshop. Individual summaries from the different Table discussions are attached to this report.

6. Follow up actions and recommendations

Action or recommendation	Owner or proposed lead	Timing and status
To submit summaries of the Table discussions to Climate KIC	All	Wednesday 28th October
Establish a coordinating platform connecting existing bioeconomy	International and regional bioeconomy networks and relevant	Proposed; timing not set

Action or recommendation	Owner or proposed lead	Timing and status
networks and actors to facilitate matchmaking between regions, across the full range of transition challenges and established solutions, from research, technology and innovation to governance, policy and capacity building.	coordinating organisations (proposed)	
Facilitate interregional peer learning through best-practice exchanges, learning visits and demonstration sites.	Regional bioeconomy networks and initiatives (proposed)	Proposed; timing not set
Strengthen regional implementation capacities through clearer responsibilities, stakeholder engagement and improved access to expertise and support.	Regional and national policymakers and support organisations (proposed)	Proposed; timing not set

7. Lessons and supporting materials

The organization of the presentation, technical support in the room was excellent.

As organisers we only knew the number of people registered and so had no idea of the mix of people attending. Some demographic information from GBS organisers would have been helpful.

Also given the number in the room and the rotations it was not feasible to consider signing an attendance sheet or getting permission to use photos etc. This could be something that is collected by the GBS organisers as part of the overall registration (permission to use images) and then provide the workshops with necessary information if there are participants that do not want to be in photos.

To capture this level of detail and permissions was impossible to manage with the numbers involved and especially because of the dynamic format of the workshop design.

8. Accuracy and publication check

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