



The videoconference was organised as an opportunity to engage the Thematic Group members beyond the live meetings and to organise a specific discussion on the sustainability aspects of the bioeconomy, based on the on-going work of selected Thematic Group members.

The objective was to share some of the current thinking around the systems to monitor the sustainability of bio-based value chains.

Event Information

Title: Thematic Group Videoconference

Date: 12 February 2019

Organiser: ENRD Contact Point

Participants: 14 Thematic Group members

Presentations: Joachim Kreysa/Joint Research Centre; Anne Bogdanski/FAO; Davide Viaggi/University of Bologna; Bernhard Wolfslehner/European Forest Institute

Website: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/bioeconomy-videoconference_en

How to monitor the bioeconomy

As the bioeconomy becomes an objective of European and global public policies, it becomes necessary to monitor the sustainability of overall biomass management and the accumulated impacts of the multiple sectors and activities involved in the bioeconomy. Coherent ways to track and demonstrate the sustainability of bioeconomy value chains are needed to monitor whether they evolve in the right direction; to provide basis for further policy decisions; to ground market tools that are expected to orient consumers and investments towards more sustainable choices; and to enable schemes that incentivise sustainable practices in production and management of natural resources. Systems and tools to ensure the sustainability of bioeconomy are being developed at different levels and by diverse actors.

Multiple actors – shared principles

The EU is developing a system to monitor the achievement of the objectives set by its [Bioeconomy strategy](#), led by its [Joint Research Center](#). The [FAO](#) is developing global guidelines on sustainable bioeconomy development. Various research projects are exploring ways to track and stimulate sustainable development in specific bioeconomy value chains or sectors, such as agriculture or forestry. What is common to all discussed approaches is the recognition of the interlinked dimensions of sustainability – social, economic and environmental – and the need to build on existing indicators and systems instead of creating new ones.

Ensuring the sustainability of rural bioeconomy initiatives

Assessing simultaneously the development of social, economic and environmental impacts of the bioeconomy is particularly important in the rural development context. Given that most existing indicators and available data are meaningful in a broad context such as the national level, it seems difficult to apply them to rural bioeconomy initiatives within a limited territory. It might be that at local and regional levels, efforts to ensure the sustainability of the bioeconomy are best targeted at orienting and encouraging local initiatives towards sustainability. Managing Authorities designing Rural Development interventions can ring-fence and condition funding for activities that can demonstrate compliance with certain sustainability indicators and apply suitable mixes of result-based and practice-based payment schemes. Creating awareness and market pull for sustainable bio-based goods and services will also orient practices towards sustainability.

