

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

NEWSLETTER 2

Bioeconomy in the European Union Strategy
for the Baltic Sea Region

At the summit in Iceland on 27 May 2014, the Nordic Prime Ministers underlined the value of Nordic co-operation in meeting challenges facing the Nordic region, Europe and the World. They gave highest priority to the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers in areas such as bio-economy and health, and to strengthening the position and competitiveness of the region.

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

The countries around the Baltic Sea Region are well endowed with biological resources, many innovative farms and firms, many highly capable research and technology institutions, and supportive authorities at local, regional, national and macro-regional level. The countries are therefore in a good position to start a journey from today's pockets of bioeconomy smartness to becoming genuinely smart in the bioeconomy.

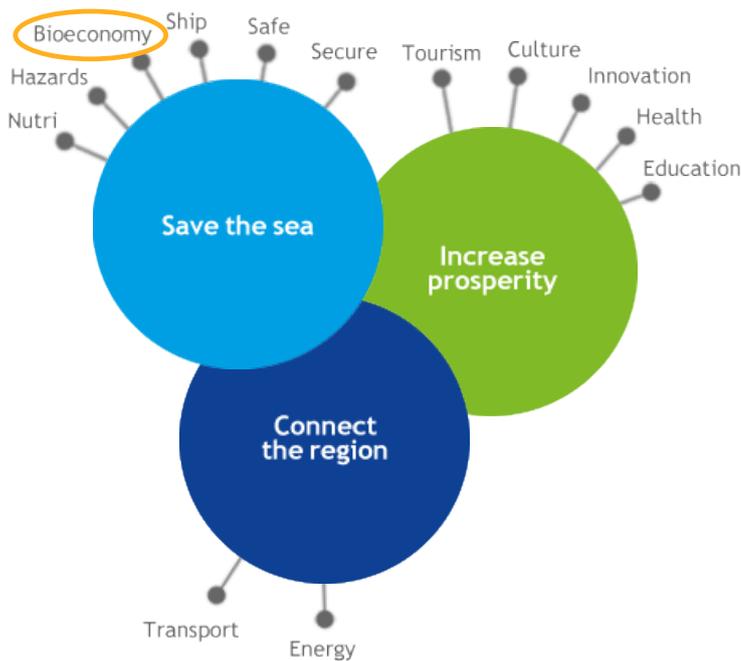
The bioeconomy is highly complex. Realising the potentials of the bioeconomy will call for joint efforts in the search for solutions that link knowledge, expertise and long traditions rooted in forestry, agriculture and fisheries together with innovation, research, new technologies and investment. This highlights the importance of a constructive dialogue between the often diverging interests of exploitation and conservation of our natural resources. It will call for public and private (companies and citizens alike) to work together in new ways, across sectors, and often outside the stakeholders' usual sectors / comfort zones.

Through a large number of activities in the Arctic, Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, the Nordic Council of Ministers is committed to significantly accelerating the pace of the transition towards the bioeconomy. The Nordic Council of Ministers will: seed the bioeconomy by providing intelligence to showcase opportunities and inspire joint efforts; fertilise the bioeconomy by providing meeting places and platforms for stakeholder engagement and cooperation; and grow the bioeconomy by supporting development of tangible and visible cooperation activities with potential to make an impact on the attainment of the bioeconomy.



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The European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)



The EUSBSR and its Action Plan provides the structure and platform for the efforts of the Nordic Council of Ministers in overcoming challenges and to realise bioeconomy opportunities in the Baltic Sea macro-region. 'Bioeconomy' is one of 13 Priority Areas of the EUSBSR Action Plan. The Nordic Council of Ministers acts as Priority Area Coordinator, together with the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

In this capacity the Nordic Council of Ministers provides an access point and support function for stakeholders that wish to pursue bioeconomy cooperation activities that support overall objectives of the EUSBSR, namely Save the Sea, Increase Prosperity and Connect the Region.

Spatial Planning	Neighbours	Capacity	Climate
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New flagship projects



10 Steps Towards the Bioeconomy

This is an umbrella project in which the Nordic Council of Ministers has helped stakeholders develop and test the feasibility of collaboration that is important for realising a transition towards the bioeconomy. Eight of the ten steps towards the bioeconomy are:

- Local capital
- Protein - The Green Gold of the Baltic Sea Region
- Developing cross-sectoral stakeholder involvement for realising the bioeconomy
- Baltic Phoenix, about tightening the phosphorus cycle
- Markets for woody biomass and wood-based energy
- Bio-resources for innovative and sustainable non-food uses
- Blue Bioeconomy
- Nordic-Baltic Plant Protein Arena

The '10 Steps Towards the Bioeconomy' flagship project will provide a platform for these partnerships to develop further their cooperation activities and also engage with new partners, with the aim of generating more and larger project cooperation activities.

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region



BSR Bioeconomy Policy Dialogue Forum

Some regions and countries in the Baltic Sea Region have already developed rather holistic policies and others are on the way to developing such policies. In other regions and countries the bioeconomy policies and strategies are being pursued through sector policies, such as bioeconomy strategies in research policy, while others pursue the bioeconomy through broader sector policies for e.g. agriculture, fishery, forestry, regional development, environment and innovation. The flagship project 'BSR Bioeconomy Policy Dialogue Forum' will provide a reference point for policy makers and practitioners on bioeconomy policy and policy coherence in the Baltic Sea Region.

Bioeconomy and Circular Economy Business Forum

The bioeconomy essentially calls for new ways of producing and consuming biological resources. Consequently, realising the bioeconomy goes hand-in-hand with the private sector embracing the business opportunities. This involves agriculture, forestry, horticulture, fisheries and aquaculture, plant and animal breeding, food and beverage, wood, paper, leather, textile, chemical, pharmaceutical and branches of energy industries.

In an effort to encourage the private sector to embrace the bioeconomy and circular economy business opportunities, it is proposed to establish a private sector-led forum for exhibiting bioeconomy and circular economy business solutions. The business forum will also aim to provide opportunities for business matchmaking.



Cross-overs into other development and policy areas

Innovation and accelerating competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are fundamental for realising the opportunities embedded in the bio- and circular economies. As Priority Area Coordinator for Bioeconomy in the EUSBSR Action Plan, the Nordic Council of Ministers will therefore cooperate closely with Priority Area Innovation, both generally in terms of policy development and by coordinating efforts in various flagship projects.



Karin Nygård Skallman

Programme Director
Vinnova & EUSBSR Priority Area
Coordinator Innovation

As Priority Area Coordinator for PA Innovation, I share the view that realising the bioeconomy essentially calls for new ways of producing and consuming biological resources - in other words it calls for innovation.

Within PA Innovation, a number of flagship projects relating to the bioeconomy are already unfolding. One example is BSHR HealthPort. This flagship project aims to strengthen the BSR health economy by providing business acceleration support and training that bridges innovative SMEs and health care organisations.

Furthermore, a strong network of partners are currently developing a proposal for a continuation of the BSR Stars flagship project, with innovation in the bioeconomy as one of the key components. If the project application is successful, this project will very directly link together EUSBSR cooperation efforts under PA Innovation and PA Bioeconomy.

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

Working towards the bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region under EUSBSR Priority Area Bioeconomy - rather than, as until recently, as part of EUSBSR Horizontal Action Sustainable Development and Bioeconomy - is a result of the revised EUSBSR Action Plan. The updated EUSBSR Action Plan will be presented at the Annual Forum in Jurmala on 15-16 June 2015. Priority Area Bioeconomy will essentially integrate cooperation activities under the former Priority Area Agriculture with the bioeconomy activities formerly implemented under Horizontal Action Sustainable Development and Bioeconomy.

As former Contact Person, Priority Area Coordinator for EUSBSR PA Agriculture, I am looking forward to collaborating with the Nordic Council of Ministers as co-lead for the new PA Bioeconomy. The bioeconomy refers to economic activities based on optimal utilisation of maritime and terrestrial biological resources - in other words from agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

I strongly believe that some of the activities initiated under PA Agriculture, such as improving the recycling of nutrients in agriculture and adding value in fisheries and aquaculture industries, will provide many positive synergies to the Nordic Council of Ministers' efforts to facilitate cooperation within the bioeconomy.

I therefore welcome the revision of the EUSBSR Action Plan in this area - it provides an improved macro-regional cooperation framework for realising environmental, social and economic sustainable development.



Leena Antilla

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