



Overview of the BIOVOICES Focus Group

Rationale

The implementation of bioeconomy solutions and related value chains depends heavily on the market acceptance of bio-based products and the development of technologies with a sustainable feedstock supply. A recent pan-European study under the BIOWAYS EU-funded project revealed that even though consumers have a positive perception of bio-based products (BBPs), they have little awareness and knowledge about them. Moreover, cooperation within bio-based value chains and along bio-based value chains is still unusual. In order to target research in BBP science, technology and innovation and to meet the views and expectations of society, a broad, inclusive assessment of the challenges and opportunities at hand is necessary. Furthermore, multi-actor approaches are needed to identify and address both the risks and different stakeholders' interests and aspirations and eventually maximise the benefits of new bio-based business models within society.

In this context, BIOVOICES aims to ensure the engagement of all relevant stakeholder groups to tackle bio-based related challenges, by animating open dialogue through a Mobilization and Mutual Learning (MML) approach.

Scope of the BIOVOICES Focus Group and expected contribution of its members

The **BIOVOICES Focus Group** constitutes a **community of (external to the project's consortium) experts in the bioeconomy field** acting as a "consultation body" that will:

- Validate and improve the identified barriers and opportunities for the development of bio-based value chains and the mapping of bio-based products (applications) based on stakeholders' interests and expected benefits, that has been conducted by the consortium to set the contextual framework of the BIOVOICES MML activities;
- Test and validate the BIOVOICES MML approach, before applying it in national, regional and European events; and
- Provide best practices, lessons learnt, knowledge and advice related to the uptake of bio-based products and the evolvement of bioeconomy.



Who should be involved

The BIOVOICES Focus Group will be formed by **multi-disciplinary experts in the knowledge fields of bioeconomy representing consumers/ general public, business community, research community, policy and public administration** from organizations such as:

- Regional authorities (e.g. municipalities)
- Advisory bodies
- Executive government and administration
- Legislative bodies
- CSOs and NGOs
- Consumers associations
- Research centres
- Universities and educational institutions
- Cooperative research networks
- Scientific- technological parks
- Collaborative projects and initiatives at both national and European level
- Bio-based products industry
- Technological platforms and business clusters
- Investors, creditors and financial entities
- Chambers of commerce

Operational framework

Interaction with the members of the BIOVOICES Focus Group will be done during the **BIOVOICES Focus Group Workshop** that will be organized on **13-14 November 2018 in Rome, Italy**. The scope of the Workshop is to discuss and validate the project's findings on the key challenges that must be addressed at European and national level, drawing in this way the framework of the MML activities that will follow (e.g. MML events, online platform, etc.). **All travel costs of the Focus Group members to attend the workshop will be covered by the BIOVOICES project.**

Important notice: *The exact structure, content and agenda of the Focus Group Workshop will be finalised by the end of September.*



About BIOVOICES

The BIOVOICES project is a three-year Coordination and Support Action funded by the EU under the H2020 Research and Innovation Programme with the overarching aim to support pro-active discussion and co-creation among the bioeconomy relevant stakeholders (civil society/consumers, business community, research and education community, public administration and policy making) to tackle societal, environmental and economic challenges towards the uptake of bio-based products (BBPs). Following a mutual learning and co-creation approach (MML- Mobilization and Mutual Learning), a variety of activities are foreseen to promote the collaboration among stakeholders, such as:

- Define a framework for Mobilization and Mutual Learning in bioeconomy, by reviewing barriers, opportunities for the development of bio-based value chains and by mapping bio-based products (applications) based on stakeholders' interests and expected benefits;
- Involve the stakeholders within the bio-based value chain (policy makers, researchers, the business community and the civil society) in co-creation events, at European, National and Local/Regional levels;
- Create a multi-stakeholder's community, supporting and enabling discussion, workshops, mobilisation and mutual learning (MML) events (live and online), knowledge exchange and co-creation of knowledge and action plans;
- Create a social platform and online mutual learning activities to foster the multi-stakeholders' community activities and deliver related knowledge and contents to the different stakeholders; and
- Transform the experience of the BIOVOICES community into Actionable Knowledge for the different stakeholders by publishing recommendations and policy briefs to address the challenges related to development and delivery of the bioeconomy