



AFF – HLG Monthly Monitoring of EU Forest Value Chains

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This monthly newsletter, produced by the HLG on Forestry & Biomaterials with support from SAPPI, aims to stimulate joint thinking on the research and development of a climate-neutral bioeconomy.

The High-Level Group on EU Policy Innovation: Forestry and Biomaterials (HLG-FB) is one of the independent public-private think tanks which operates as advisory body for the European Union institutions. A partnership involving the HLG-FB and the African Forest Forum (AFF) is evolving.

The AFF is an association of individuals who share the quest for, and commitment to the sustainable management, use and conservation of the forest and tree resources of Africa for socio-economic wellbeing of its peoples and for the stability and improvement of its environment.

SAPPI, a leading company in woodfibre-based renewable materials in Africa, is dedicated to advancing the bioeconomy and promoting sustainable forest management. With a focus on innovation and sustainability, SAPPI is committed to foster a thriving, biobased circular economy by prioritising responsible processes.

This partnership aims to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties to further their shared goals and objectives regarding African forestry and its support to socio-economic wellbeing of Africa's peoples and for the stability and improvement of the environment.

As a first token of this cooperation, AFF members will receive in future a regular newsletter from the HLG on Forestry and Biomaterials, with the purpose to stimulate joint thinking about the research and development of a climate neutral bioeconomy.



European Parliament, Plenary Session, Brussels. May 2023/Photo credits: © European Union 2023 – Source:EP

WITH THE SUPPORT FROM SAPPI

*EUROPEAN UNION REGULATION ON DEFORESTATION-FREE PRODUCTS
(EUDR) - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS*

Council remains divided on EUDR amendments

During last week's COREPER meeting, concerns were raised regarding the European Parliament's amendments to the EUDR. While certain Member States, such as Italy, expressed support for the amendments, others opposed them, particularly the introduction of a "no-risk" category, citing potential implications.

Additional apprehensions were voiced about the absence of an impact assessment and the uncertainty surrounding the potential consequences of the proposed changes.

As a result, trilogue negotiations between the Commission, Parliament, and Council are ongoing to reach a consensus and facilitate the implementation phase of the regulation next year.

European Parliament agreed to postpone EUDR enter into force

Following concerns raised by EU member states, non-EU countries, traders and operators about the feasibility of meeting the requirements by the end of 2024, the European Parliament agreed to address the EUDR postponement's proposal under the urgency procedure (Rule 170(6)) and formally approved on the 14th of November the temporary suspension, alongside other amendments, with 371 votes in favour, 240 against and 30 abstentions.

Under the revised timeline, large operators and traders must adhere to the regulation starting 30 December 2025, while micro- and small enterprises have until 30 June 2026.

This extension is designed to ensure a smooth implementation without compromising the regulation's objectives.

Parliament also approved amendments introducing a new "no risk" category for countries with stable or increasing forest coverage. This category, alongside the existing "low", "standard" and "high" risk classifications, would impose fewer requirements on "no risk" countries due to their negligible deforestation risks. The European Commission must establish a country benchmarking system by 30 June 2025.

Next steps

The regulation has been referred back to committee for interinstitutional negotiations. For the amendments to take effect, the final text must be endorsed by both the Council and Parliament and published in the EU Official Journal within 30 December 2024.

"No risk" classification under criticisms

The new amendment proposed by the European Parliament, which introduces a "no risk" category, has been criticised by several organisations as potentially harmful.

The Confederation of Agriculture and Livestock of Brazil, which represents over five million small and medium-sized enterprises and farmers, labelled the amendment as "discriminatory," highlighting concerns over the wider issues with the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). Similarly, an associate of the Fern NGO, dedicated to forest rights protection, echoed this criticism, pointing out the risks associated with the "no risk" category. They warned that EUDR could be seen as a potential "green protectionism" measure, *de facto* shifting trade in favour of forested countries where deforestation rules are not enforced.

Criticism has also been raised regarding the political motivations behind the amendment, with some suggesting that the changes serve more as a political leverage tactic than a genuine attempt to improve the EUDR. Many organisations are now calling on the European Commission to withdraw the proposal for a postponement, citing the lack of consultation with affected businesses.

Trase, a transparency initiative focused on international trade and agricultural commodities, also voiced concerns. The group warned that "the most damaging of the approved amendments is the introduction of an additional 'no risk' category," which has not undergone the necessary scientific scrutiny but could have significant implications for how the regulation applies to imports from various countries.

European Commission proposed One-Year Delay for EUDR Implementation amid Stakeholder Concerns

As a reminder, on 2 October, the European Commission announced a [proposal to delay](#) the entry into force of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) from 30 December 2024 to the end of 2025.

The postponement follows protests from key stakeholders, including countries in Latin America and North America—major suppliers of raw materials and products—as well as from affected European industrial sectors and international organisations such as the FAO and WTO.

Their primary concern was the infeasibility of accessing the European Union's **Information System**, which companies must use to generate and register Due Diligence Statements. The planned launch of the system in mid-December 2024 would have required due diligence statements for hundreds of thousands of products to be developed and uploaded within a few weeks. Since products cannot be placed on the market without these declarations starting from 30 December 2024, this process would have been practically impossible to complete in time.

In addition, the Commission has issued further **guidance documents** to provide clarity for companies and enforcement authorities in applying the rules. These documents include updates on penalties, explanations of key definitions such as 'forest degradation', 'operator' within the scope of the law, and 'placing on the market'. The guidance also addresses the functionalities of the Information System and provides additional clarity on traceability obligations. It is divided into 11 chapters covering diverse topics, including legality requirements, application timeframes, agricultural use, and clarifications on product scope, all supported by tangible scenarios.

The latest **FAQ**, featuring over 40 new responses, addresses questions raised by a wide range of stakeholders.

Additionally, the Commission has published the *principles of the methodology* it will use in the EUDR benchmarking exercise, which will classify countries as low, standard, or high risk. This classification aims to facilitate operators' due diligence processes and enable competent authorities to monitor and enforce compliance more effectively. Under this methodology, most countries will be classified as 'low risk', allowing collective efforts to focus on regions where deforestation challenges are more acute.

CEPI supports EUDR postponement

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) welcomed the European Commission's proposal to delay the implementation of the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR). CEPI Director General, Jori Ringman, stated that "The EUDR is too important to risk getting wrong. We fully recognise the environmental crisis and climate emergency it seeks to address, and our industry is not a source of deforestation. Deforestation poses a significant reputational risk for any sector, and our industry depends on healthy forests for its future." Ringman stressed the need for additional time to properly develop a deforestation-free system.

CEPI has also strongly advocated for a suitable transition period for the EUDR. It was pointed out that while it is common for EU legislation to allow medium-to-long transition periods, such as the three-year period granted under the simpler EU Timber Regulation (EUTR), the EUDR initially proposed only a one-year adaptation phase.

Concerns were raised due to the EUDR's requirement to track information across complex supply chains, particularly challenging in industries like paper, where materials from different sources are mixed. The postponement is expected to allow for better implementation and ultimately strengthen the regulation's impact on reducing deforestation.

International Criticism of EUDR Postponement

The European Commission's proposal to delay the implementation of the EUDR has faced criticism. Twenty-five civil society organisations have already signed a letter titled "Every Second Counts to Protect Global Forests and Ecosystems," expressing their opposition to the postponement.

The organisations called for a strengthened implementation of the regulation, highlighting the potential for leveraging existing monitoring and reporting frameworks used in other countries to support EUDR compliance.

The letter particularly emphasises Brazil's leadership in monitoring ecosystems and land use, a system overseen by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE) since 1988. Brazil is also recognised for its traceability initiatives in agricultural supply chains, notably in the soy and livestock sectors, which have been operational in the Amazon since 2006 and 2009, respectively.

Rainforest Alliance concerned about EUDR Delay

The Rainforest Alliance has expressed deep disappointment with the European Commission's proposal to delay the EUDR by 12 months, viewing it as a stark contradiction to the EU's commitments to halt biodiversity loss and climate change. It is believed this decision could set a dangerous precedent by potentially reopening other key regulations under the EU Green Deal.

The Rainforest Alliance also noted that this delay unfairly penalises companies and producers that have already made significant investments to comply with the EUDR. Having supported the regulation from its inception, they have consistently opposed any postponement. The EUDR represents a long-overdue response to deforestation after decades of inaction.

In response, the Rainforest Alliance has fast-tracked updates to its certification program and is developing a Deforestation Risk Assessment Tool to assist non-certified supply chain actors and farmers in meeting EUDR requirements.

They also call on the European Commission, member states and companies to ensure smallholder farmers receive adequate support so that compliance costs are not passed onto them, potentially excluding them from the EU market.

Nonetheless, the Rainforest Alliance welcomes the recent publication of guidance and FAQs and urges companies to increase their efforts to comply, even if the transition period is extended.

Official Requests for EUDR Implementation Delay

As noted in previous editions of this newsletter, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Agriculture Minister Lollobrigida have formally requested a one-year delay in the EUDR implementation, citing concerns about potential disruptions to the soy supply chain that could impact the agri-food sector. Additionally, German MEP Peter Liese, representing the European People's Party (EPP), has openly supported this call.

The appeal for a delay has also garnered support from WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who urged the EU to reconsider the regulation in light of compliance uncertainties and trade concerns raised by the United States, as well as various Latin American and Southeast Asian nations. Agricultural organisations such as COPA/COGECA and FEFAC, along with approximately 20 other stakeholders in the EUDR value chain, have echoed these concerns, advocating for a postponement to address issues related to the availability of soybean meal.

More about the regulation and potential issues (under discussion)

The EUDR, which mandates strict due diligence requirements to curb deforestation, will start being applied from December 30, 2024, for large and medium enterprises, and from June 30, 2025, for micro and small enterprises. It specifically targets a list of commodities outlined in Articles 38(2) EUDR, including cattle, cocoa, coffee, oil palm, rubber, soya, and wood, and demands comprehensive traceability from the point of origin to processing and distribution. Operators are required, under Article 3, to ensure that commodities exported are:

- deforestation-free;
- produced in accordance with the relevant legislation of the country of production;
- covered by a due diligence statement.

Pursuant to Articles 3, 4, and 8 of the Regulation, due diligence statements must be submitted to the designated authorities via the information system delineated in Article 33 before placing products on the market. This electronically transmitted due diligence statement must include the details specified in Annex II and affirm that the operator has conducted due diligence, identifying no or negligible risk.

GREEN DEAL, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE EU'S CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (CBAM) IS POISED TO BEGIN.

The European commission open initiative for implementing regulation on CBAM declarants' procedures.

The European Commission has released a CBAM implementation [initiative](#), proposing key requirements for CBAM declarants. This draft regulation specifies the procedures and conditions for authorising CBAM declarants, including:

- Communication protocols between applicants, competent authorities, and the Commission.
- Application format and submission procedures via the CBAM registry.
- Timelines and procedures for competent authorities to process applications.
- Rules for identifying authorised declarants specifically for electricity imports.

The initiative aims to clarify administrative processes as part of the EU's broader climate action strategy. Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on the draft regulation until 27 November. The document was officially published by the European Commission on 30 October. The draft is a step towards establishing a robust framework for the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), ensuring compliance and smooth implementation.

BASIC bloc labels CBAM as discriminatory at COP29

China, Brazil, South Africa, and India (the BASIC group) have pushed for the inclusion of transboundary carbon adjustment mechanisms like the EU's CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) on the COP29 agenda.

The BASIC countries are strongly advocating a discussion on "unilateral trade-restrictive measures related to climate change," such as CBAM, during the UN Climate Conference in Baku.

The first plenary session was interrupted as these countries requested the inclusion of the topic, but the presiding nation decided to address it informally instead. This situation underscores ongoing tensions between countries with differing climate priorities and the challenge of reaching consensus on critical issues within limited timeframes.

Developing nations, many of which are significantly impacted by CBAM, have consistently voiced concerns at prior climate summits. However, the issue has not been formally added to the UN agenda, with the EU maintaining that CBAM is a trade-related topic better suited for WTO discussions.

Earlier this year, the BASIC group criticised border carbon taxes and subsidies by wealthier nations, labelling them as discriminatory. Analysts note that CBAM disproportionately affects developing economies reliant on exports to the EU. For example, South Africa has called the mechanism biased, India has considered retaliatory actions, and China has raised objections within the WTO.

CBAM's Second Transitional Phase officially started in July 2024

The second transitional phase of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) commenced on July 1, 2024, and will conclude at the end of 2025. During this period, EU importers are required to collect and disclose actual embedded emissions data for their imports from non-EU manufacturers, moving away from reliance on default values.

The transition to a CBAM-based system began on October 1, 2023, with importers of specific products—including steel, aluminium, cement, fertiliser, hydrogen, and electricity—mandated to report their embedded carbon emissions. The initial quarterly reports were due by January 31, 2024; however, compliance was low, with only a minority of companies meeting the deadline.

To ensure adherence, EU importers must conduct thorough screenings of the emissions data received from non-EU manufacturers. This process involves verifying that the data accurately reflects actual emissions according to CBAM's greenhouse gas accounting principles and requesting necessary documentation, such as calculation templates and supporting evidence.

To enhance the accuracy of carbon accounting, importers are advised to:

- Cross-verify data against multiple sources for consistency.
- Conduct audits to evaluate data quality and identify discrepancies.
- Validate the accuracy of calculations and measurements used.

Until the end of 2024, the Implementing Regulation on reporting requirements allows some flexibility regarding the values used to calculate embedded emissions during the transitional phase. Companies may choose from three reporting options: (a) full reporting according to the new EU methodology, (b) reporting based on an equivalent method, or (c) reporting using default reference values (valid only until July 2024).

Starting January 1, 2025, only the EU methodology will be accepted, and estimates (including default values) may only be applied to complex goods if they represent less than 20% of the total embedded emissions. The Commission published default values on December 22, 2023, based on a report from the EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Default values' deadline: 31 October

From 31 October 2024, the use of default values will no longer be permitted, except for 20% of emissions, where default values may still be applied. Instead, actual data—specific measurements of greenhouse gas emissions generated during the production of a given product—must be used.

This data will be sourced directly from production processes and includes both direct emissions from the manufacturing of the product and indirect emissions associated with the energy required for its production. Importers and producers will have to provide this data through systems that monitor actual emissions throughout the supply chain.

This deadline marks the next phase of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) transitional period for products imported into the EU from 1 July 2024. Businesses must collect and submit actual embedded emissions data for all imports entering the EU during the quarter from 1 July to 30 September 2024.

The EU has outlined the methodology for calculating embedded emissions, which broadly falls into two categories that must be included in each CBAM declaration:

1. **Calculation Approach:** This determines the emissions of EU CBAM products based on source streams and activity data through measurement systems at the production site, combined with laboratory analysis or standard values. It encompasses both combustion and process emissions.
2. **Measurement-Based Approach:** This assesses emissions based on the emission source through continuous measurement of greenhouse gases at the installation, utilising specified disaggregation formulas aligned with international ISO standards on source emissions.

However, certain derogations from the EU's prescribed methodology are still permitted for the declarations due on 31 October 2024 and 31 January 2025, including the use of embedded emissions data captured as part of an existing carbon pricing or emissions monitoring scheme in the product's country of origin. Nonetheless, from 1 January 2025 onwards, only the EU's methodology may be employed.

The obligation to report using actual data will remain in effect until the end of the transitional period.

*PACKAGING & PACKAGING WASTE REGULATION (PPWR)
DEVELOPMENTS*

European Parliament approved a revised version of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR)

On April 24, 2024, the plenary session of the European Parliament cast votes to advance the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) toward its final stages of legislative enactment. This [regulation](#), designed to be directly applicable across all EU member states, aims to preemptively reduce waste generation through stringent reuse requirements, restrictions on market practices, obligations for deposit-return schemes, and additional regulatory measures.

Following disagreements on recycled content origins and plastic materials' focus, the decisive vote on April 24 sets the stage for the new Parliament and Council, elected in June 2024, to give their final endorsement in late 2024. Thus, the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR) is expected to be implemented by 2026.

Under this new regulatory framework, companies involved in manufacturing and distribution will be compelled to:

- Undertake significant modifications to their packaging solutions, product designs, and logistical operations to accommodate mandated reuse systems and enhance sustainability.
- Specifically, entities providing takeaway food and beverages must enable consumers to use their own containers and establish dedicated collection systems for single-use plastic (SUP) bottles and metal beverage containers.
- Augment the recycled material content within their plastic packaging configurations.
- Implement reduction strategies by eliminating superfluous packaging elements, minimizing void space within packaging, reducing material thickness, and incorporating refill options.

To facilitate this transition, the adoption of prevention and eco-design strategies—already mandatory in several jurisdictions—will serve as an effective methodology to fulfil and exceed these regulatory demands, thereby fostering a more sustainable industrial ecosystem.

What will be banned starting January 2030? - Background of the proposed PPWR Regulation

The PPWR, pivotal for the forestry value chain, especially for entities manufacturing paper-based packaging, prescribes substantial reductions in packaging materials by the years 2030, 2035, and 2044. The regulation prohibits the use of detrimental chemicals such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and bisphenol A (BPA) in food packaging and advocates for the utilization of sustainable materials sourced from responsibly managed forests, with a strong emphasis on the recyclability and reusability of packaging.

Commencing in January 2030, prohibitions will include:

- Single-use plastic packaging for unprocessed fresh fruits and vegetables, and for consumables in bars and restaurants.
- Single-use items such as condiments, sauces, sugar, and cream.
- Small-scale hotel products like shampoo and shower gel.
- Plastic wrap for suitcases at airports.

However, exemptions apply to milk cartons, disposable compostable plastic packaging, and packaging for fruits and vegetables weighing less than one and a half kilograms, necessary to prevent food deterioration.

The regulation sets packaging reduction goals of 5% by 2030, 10% by 2035, and 15% by 2040, with MEPs advocating for a 20% reduction in plastic packaging by 2040. It also mandates a maximum empty space ratio of 50% in various packaging types to minimize waste, and stipulates that manufacturers and importers ensure minimized packaging weight and volume, except where protected packaging designs are already established.

Additionally, the MEPs call on EU member states to ensure that 90% of materials used in packaging are collected separately by 2029, reinforcing the regulation's role in promoting environmental sustainability and a circular economy within the EU packaging sector.

UPDATES ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2024-2029

Jessika Roswall confirmed by the European Parliament as new Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and Competitive Circular Economy.

On November 5th, Jessika Roswall, new Commissioner responsible for Environment, Water Resilience and Competitive Circular Economy, presented several key initiatives that aim to enhance the EU's sustainability and circular economy efforts.

Roswall highlighted how the Circular Economy Act will leverage the EU Single Market to advance circularity across all sectors. The Act will aim to streamline processes, harmonize waste regulations and create a market for secondary raw materials. By doing so, it seeks to support the EU's green transition while building both business and public confidence in sustainable practices, though the timeline for implementation remains unclear.

She also outlined further efforts for the Water Resilience Strategy, which aims to safeguard water quality and availability both within the EU and globally. The strategy is designed to tackle critical issues such as water pollution, scarcity, and the impacts of climate change, while also encouraging innovation in the water sector. It will align with existing EU initiatives, including the European Climate Adaptation Plan, Civil Defence Mechanism, and Ocean Pact, ensuring a coordinated response to global water challenges.

Turning to the Bioeconomy Strategy, Roswall emphasized the importance of sustainable resource use, particularly in agriculture and forestry. This strategy encourages innovation in bio-based materials, while focusing on responsible resource management and nature restoration. It aims to promote sustainable practices in these sectors to create a more resilient and balanced economy.

On the issue of simplification, Roswall highlighted her commitment to prioritising implementation and simplifying legislative processes. She stressed that simplification does not equate to deregulation but should make rules easier to apply and more efficient. This approach is intended to ensure that new rules are practical and effective.

Through these initiatives, Roswall aims to create a more sustainable, resilient, and circular economy within the EU, balancing environmental goals with economic growth.

The Commission that Roswall is part of is expected to begin its work in the first week of December, following the new European Parliament vote on November 27.

Jessika Roswall has been nominated by Ursula von der Leyen as Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy (DG ENVI).

As a reminder, on Tuesday, 17 September, the newly elected European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, unveiled her team of Commissioners, including Roswall, Finland's candidate. In her mission letter, von der Leyen stressed the importance of enhancing Europe's natural capital and advancing the circular bioeconomy. Key objectives include updating the bioeconomy strategy, introducing incentives for nature-positive actions, and better aligning with international bioeconomy commitments.

Strong coordination is anticipated between DG Environment and other departments, particularly with EC Vice-President Teresa Ribera (DG Competition; portfolio: Clean and Just Transition), Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra (DG Clima; portfolio: Climate, Net Zero, and Clean Growth), and Commissioner Dan Jorgensen (DG Energy; portfolio: Energy and Housing).

Roswall's next step is to pass a hearing before MEPs in the coming weeks, where she will need to secure their approval.

HIGH LEVEL FORUM: COP29 AND G20

COP 29 Side Event: Sustainable Forest-Based Bioeconomy for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

On 20 November, a panel discussion on financing and investment in forest product value chains for climate action was held at the COP 29 side event, *Sustainable Forest-Based Bioeconomy for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation*.

The session focused on how new investments can foster the development of a sustainable forest-based bioeconomy and accelerate the transition towards carbon-neutral economies.

Participants explored potential opportunities for public-private partnerships and other collaborations to drive innovations in forest product value chains, scaling up their role in climate action.

Led by the FAO and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and co-hosted by the Government of Japan and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), the event aimed to highlight the potential of a sustainable forest-based bioeconomy in halting deforestation and mitigating climate change.

It also discussed how such efforts contribute to achieving the SDGs and the Global Forest Goals, particularly in support of the Paris Agreement's commitment to reversing deforestation by 2030.

G20 Reaches Consensus on High-Level Principles for Bioeconomy

After nine months of intense discussions, the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy (GIB) has established 10 High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy, culminating in a meeting of technical experts from member

countries in Rio de Janeiro this week. This marks the first multilaterally agreed document dedicated to bioeconomy.

Proposed by Brazil's G20 Presidency, the Bioeconomy Initiative aims to promote the development of a sustainable, innovative paradigm that integrates modern science with traditional knowledge, particularly from Indigenous peoples and local communities. The principles are designed to guide future global discussions on bioeconomy and support the ecological transition to a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

The principles are voluntary and non-binding but emphasise key commitments, including the promotion of equity, gender equality, and climate change mitigation in line with multilateral climate agreements. They also highlight the importance of biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource use, and the equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources.

Additional principles call for **sustainable consumption and production**, efficient use of biological resources, and the creation of fair market conditions and decent jobs.

The initiative is coordinated by Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in close collaboration with other governmental bodies, and engages a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors.

European Council publishes conclusions on G20 Summit, including Bioeconomy

Following the G20 International Summit held in Brazil on 18-19 November 2024, the European Council and Council of the EU released their concluding statements on the conference's outcomes.

Under the motto "Building a Just World and a Sustainable Planet," G20 leaders participated in three key sessions, focusing on Brazil's presidency priorities:

- Social inclusion and the fight against hunger and poverty
- Reform of global governance institutions
- Sustainable development and energy transition

Among the issues addressed, G20 leaders reiterated their commitment to urgent action on climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, and the degradation of oceans and land, as well as the challenges posed by drought and pollution.

Notably, the launch of the first multilateral document on bioeconomy garnered significant attention and received the official endorsement of the G20 leaders.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR

Horizon Europe Research Call: Mission 6

New calls for proposals for the 2024-2025 Horizon Research Programme are anticipated to be announced by the end of the year. As part of Mission 6, "A Soil Deal for Europe," new funding opportunities are expected to feature an expanded scope, incorporating countries beyond the EU.

As the initiative enters its third consecutive year, the mission aims to establish 100 living labs and lighthouses to spearhead the transition towards healthier soils by 2030. Key objectives include reducing desertification, conserving soil organic carbon stocks, halting soil sealing while promoting the reuse of urban soils, decreasing soil pollution, and enhancing restoration efforts. Additionally, the mission seeks to prevent soil erosion, improve soil structure to bolster biodiversity, minimise the EU's global footprint on soils, and increase soil literacy within society.

Background of Horizon Europe

Horizon Europe is the EU's main funding program for research and innovation, boasting a budget of €95.5 billion for the period 2021-2027. It aims to address climate change, support the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and enhance EU competitiveness and economic growth. The program fosters collaboration and amplifies the impact of research and innovation in shaping, supporting, and implementing EU policies while addressing global challenges. It plays a crucial role in generating and spreading excellent knowledge and technologies.

Moreover, Horizon Europe is instrumental in creating jobs, engaging the EU's full talent spectrum, promoting economic expansion, bolstering industrial competitiveness, and maximizing the impact of investments under a revitalized European Research Area.

Distinctive features of Horizon Europe that set it apart from its predecessor, Horizon 2020, include:

- European Innovation Council (EIC): The EIC supports high-risk innovations with breakthrough potential and disruptive nature, primarily targeting SMEs with 70% of its budget.
- Missions: Horizon Europe introduces missions aiming to achieve bold, inspiring, and quantifiable objectives within specific timelines, encompassing five primary mission areas.
- Open Science Policy: The program enforces mandatory open access to research publications and applies open science principles across all activities.
- Revamped Partnerships: Horizon Europe fosters more strategic and ambitious partnerships with industry to support EU policy goals, emphasizing objective-driven collaboration.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Bioeconomy Regions Summit to be Held in Brussels on 28 November

The Bioeconomy Regions Summit, a high-level in-person [event](#), will take place in Brussels on 28 November 2024. The summit will spotlight the role of European regions in advancing place-based

forest bioeconomy, facilitating knowledge exchange on best practices and strategies, while promoting networking among key bioeconomy stakeholders at both the regional and EU levels.

The event will bring together political representatives from leading bioeconomy regions, European Commission officials, regional delegations to the EU, innovation agencies, bioeconomy-related clusters, Brussels-based networks, researchers, and other professionals engaged with forest bioeconomy.

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