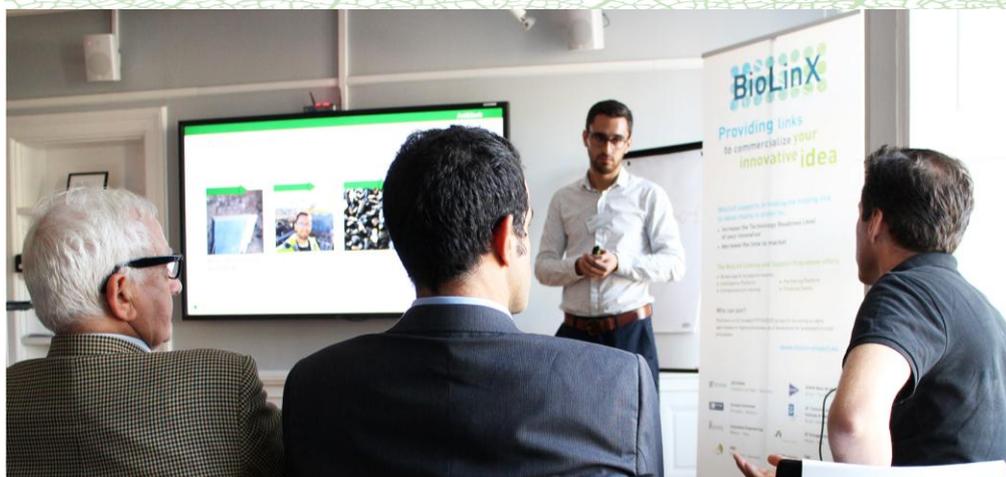


Policy Recommendations BioLinX

Making post project impact



BioLinX, key figures

- 500+ unique projects contacted
- 400+ participants to regional events
- 160+ projects impacted
- 60+ projects directly supported
- 30+ SMEs directly supported
- 10+ regions analysed

Scout & Select

BioLinX Support:
Broadening network
Added Intelligence
Incubation
Entrepreneurial skills
Finance

TRL / Time to market

Does innovation end when the travel budget runs out?

Introduction:

The EC has successfully supported bio-economy related projects during FP7 and will continue to do so under Horizon 2020. In H2020 the EC has launched a number of projects (as CSA, like BioLinX) to support bio-economy projects in reaching the next TRL level and/or getting closer to market. The CSAs should also reveal why, despite the EC investments, only few biobased products are already available on the (European) market.

Policy recommendations:

In order to support the further development of the bio-economy as well as an input to Horizon Europe the BioLinX project shares, via this leaflet, the most relevant policy recommendations.

1. Loss of momentum

BioLinX contacted a large number of projects in order to offer support. We found however that the momentum for continuing with the innovation is gone after the project has ended. In order to overcome this issue, the EC should:

- Assess during proposal evaluation that the topic studied is within the core strategy of (some of) the consortium partners;
- Assess during the Mid Term and Final Review if there is a 'coalition

of the willing' that is seeking opportunities to continue the development of the innovation or determine if a 'technology transfer' would be appropriate post project;

2. SME support

Via various offerings BioLinX provided support to SMEs in the bio-economy. We found that raising funding for a great idea is a struggle when the risk/reward ratio is off balance. In order to create a better balance the EC should:

- Keep the H2020 SME Instrument available under Horizon Europe;
- Create CSAs that support SMEs active in 'very technical' disciplines in presenting their case to non-technical audiences;
- Generate success stories of SMEs that used the SME Instrument.

3. Financial funnel & TRL

While analysing projects, BioLinX found a large number of projects stuck between TRLs. The Lab-Fab-App steps are far from easy. In order to support Lab-Fab-App the EC should:

- Deploy the 'three step' approach in the SME Instrument also in Horizon Europe innovation projects (and thus foresee follow-up on innovation projects, e.g. like BIConsortium foresees research,

demo and flagships);

- Better support lower TRL levels for developing industries;

4. Market demand

Over its lifetime, BioLinX encountered parties and projects innovating without a clear vision on the market. In order to stimulate a more market based approach, the EC should:

- Invite projects with a strong technology push to show the market demand;
- During proposal evaluation check on the link between the technology related innovation and potential regional value chain partners;
- Not overrate the importance of market demand as the most disruptive innovations have not been predicted by the market;

5. Time to Market

During its life time BioLinX discussed with various stakeholders the time to market and how to avoid the 'impatience' of policy makers. The EC should:

- Recognize that for a new product it takes, on average, 14 years to arrive on a new market and (on average) 11 years to arrive on an existing market
- Keep CSAs that support the development of entrepreneurial skills to SMEs.



BioLinX (selection of) success stories

From isolated researcher to consortium coordinator:

A young Italian researcher doing work on the utilization of trees and crops for soil phytoremediation in several highly polluted communities.

BioLinX partner PNO Consultants got in touch with the researcher and connected her to numerous key bioeconomy players. As a result a consortium was formed that has now prepared multiple bids for new projects. The researcher is now the official contact person of her organization within the BBI-network and is fully integrated within the EU bioeconomy field.

Change of income model

An entrepreneur in the Netherlands is a supplier of machines and equipment to enable the production of high quality biobased particleboard panels in commercial quantities. The main challenge for this company was to find investors. The entrepreneur was present during the BioLinX Finance Academy where he attended a masterclass, with a lecturer from BioLinX partner TNO, about managing IP. In the entrepreneur's own words: 'The IP was really an eye-opener. I had never realized that my trademark is such an important asset. It showed me the direction to a new way of doing business: based on royalties. The entrepreneur has decided to change the course of his company.'

Enlarging business scope

A Swedish entrepreneur presented his company during the Swedish Finance Academy. The main technology was to press more water out of the wood biomass to make efficient energy pellets. During the Finance Academy a link was made to Netherlands based multinationals to evaluate if the technology could also be used on agro biomass. The multinationals are still in contact with the Swedish SME as they find the technology very attractive.



6. Biobased & rural areas

It is expected that the development of the biobased economy will allow rural areas to profit from this economy. This will only be true if the allocation of costs & revenues of the value chain is also redesigned.

The EC should:

- Implement CSAs to either provide new business case examples or to break existing and (often) paralyzing imperatives in the current value chains;
- Further support cluster organizations as these are critical to provide regional support on entrepreneurial level;
- Implement CSAs that not only support product development but also the redesign of the value chain;

7. Level Playing Field

The creation of a level playing field is on the wish list of all biobased product manufacturers. In order to create this level playing field the EC should:

- Use the fact that it can shape the market and boost demand by establishing regulations / market creation policies;
- Understand the 'downstream conversion costs' of shifting to green;
- Embark on a 'Bio-Inside certification' programme, ranking biobased products against oil based.

8. Centralized information?

BioLinX used the centrally available information of CORDIS but also built its own database of bioeconomy professionals and companies. BioLinX encountered multiple other

projects with similar objectives. In order to align the efforts the EC should:

- In addition to keeping data and records on projects (e.g. CORDIS), keep data and records on key innovations developed with EU funding;
- Decide if 'people databases' (esp. with GDPR in place) should be fully privately or publicly owned; in the latter case, discuss an opportunity for a continuous database supported as an independent infrastructure instead of having each project creating a new one;
- Encourage projects to co-host events (like BBI Info Day) and support cooperation between the projects.

9. Support structure

In order to support the bio-economy, investments in demo & pilot facilities are needed. Various projects are already taking stock of these facilities. Main goal is also to avoid unnecessary 'double investments'. However:

- Further support the creation of vouchers for SMEs to make use of pilot and support facilities;
- Europe should be careful that these facilities do not become 'monopolists' and/or become too costly to use.

Concluding note:

The BioLinX team was surprised to see that it was hard to activate stakeholders beyond their given project / region / network. Even 'free services' are difficult to 'sell'. It makes clear that (the development of) the biobased economy is largely still a 'people's business'.



BioLinX
Creating links to speed up innovation in the bio-economy.

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