

# **ENRD Thematic Group on Bioeconomy and Climate Action in rural areas**

## **Year 6 Workplan**

July 2019- July 2020

September 2019

## 1. Introduction

The ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on 'Bioeconomy and Climate Action in rural areas' will identify and disseminate tools and approaches linked to the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) which support the development of sustainable bio-based initiatives, are profitable for the rural economy and which effectively contribute to climate change mitigation.

The ENRD Thematic Group 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy' operated from July 2018 to July 2019, seizing the policy momentum created by the 2018 update of the EU Circular Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan<sup>1</sup>. It brought together a broad group of different stakeholders across and beyond the EU. The TG established a set of recommendations on how to use RDP measures to support rural bio-based value chains that bring jobs and income to rural areas while respecting ecosystems.

Adaptation to and mitigating climate change are becoming central objectives in all sectors of economic activity. Agriculture and rural economies are among the most vulnerable sectors in the face of global warming, while they are also important contributors to GHG emissions. IPCC's report on Climate Change and Land<sup>2</sup> underlines the importance of *land* and *value chain management* in cutting emissions from food systems, deforestation and the energy sector and enhancing their mitigation potential. Given that Climate Change Action is one of the nine specific objectives of the Common Agriculture Policy in the 2021-27 period (as per the Commission's proposal), EU Member States' future agriculture and rural development strategic plans will need to actively deliver for climate.

For the TG this presents a timely opportunity to identify the potential of upscaling climate outcomes within the rural bioeconomy, such as reduced GHG emissions, carbon sequestration and conservation, and provision of non-fossil materials and services for the overall society. The work will continue building on the conceptual approach of the TG 'Mainstreaming the Bioeconomy' and its outputs, focusing on sustainable bio-based value chains that can bring economic, social and environmental benefits to rural areas while contributing to climate change mitigation. It will continue raising the awareness of the role of RDPs in promoting sustainable rural bioeconomy and climate action. The TG outputs will be particularly relevant for orienting the CAP post-2020 programming in the Member States.

The group is open to all interested stakeholders, while paying specific attention to reaching the Managing Authorities of the RDPs, the National Rural Networks (NRNs) and rural Local Action Groups.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec\\_bioeconomy\\_strategy\\_2018.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none](https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/pdf/ec_bioeconomy_strategy_2018.pdf#view=fit&pagemode=none)

<sup>2</sup> IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, August 2019 - <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srcl/>

## 2. Objectives of the Thematic Group

The TG 'Bioeconomy and Climate Action in rural areas' will identify the types of activity and business models within bioeconomy value chains in rural areas which provide the most significant climate benefits, explore effective tools and approaches to promote them, and how they can be supported by the Rural Development Programmes now and through relevant interventions under the post-2020 CAP strategic plans. The TG will build on the synergies between new bioeconomy strategies and the post-2020 CAP priorities on bioeconomy and climate.

The TG will aim at providing useful tools to rural development stakeholders and Managing Authorities (MA) in order to upscale the climate outcomes of the bioeconomy value chains. The work will focus on identifying economic and social incentives for rural actors to provide greater climate outcomes within their bioeconomy activities, and possibilities of rewarding and supporting rural actors for their climate services. Attention will be paid to opportunities to provide climate outcomes at all steps within bioeconomy value chains with relevance to rural areas, covering aspects of production of biomass, processing, distribution and consumption, as well as related ecosystem and other services.

The outputs of the TG work will support the work of the Member States currently drafting their CAP Strategic Plans. The new delivery model of the 2021-2027 CAP will allow greater flexibility for Member States to define interventions to achieve environmental and climate objectives, in line with local needs. The TG will provide Managing Authorities with practical and useful indications for the design of schemes supporting rural bio-based interventions that contribute to climate action.

## 3. Main activities, outputs and their feed in-out to other CP activities

### 3.1. Thematic Group meetings

Up to four TG meetings will be organised between September 2019 and May 2020. The objective of the meetings is to contribute to knowledge development and sharing on climate action within bio-based value chains in rural areas, and on the support tools and approaches, underlining links to current RDP measures and possible future CAP interventions. The TG meetings will be occasions to share experiences from relevant projects, initiatives and bio-based business models contributing to climate change mitigation in rural areas in EU Member States – including EAFRD funded initiatives, but also those initiated under the EU LIFE programme, Horizon2020, and the EIP-Agri Focus Groups or Operational Groups. Examples from both local and national levels will be explored, as well as both private and public sector initiatives.

The meeting topics are defined based on the analytic background work defining the most relevant areas of support to climate action within rural bioeconomy value chains, and on the discussion in the first TG meeting concerning necessary tools. The subsequent meetings will then contribute to the definition of the most relevant approaches to incentivise and upscale greater climate action at

different steps of rural bio-based value chains. Each meeting will contribute to a fact sheet covering a specific set of tools or approaches.

The CP will explore the possibility of organising one or more of the TG meetings outside Brussels/in another MS, in order to enable field visits to concrete cases of rural climate action. Possibilities of organising a TG meeting back to back with another event will be identified with TG members, National Rural Networks and the EIP-Agri network. Climate focused work of the NRNs will be disseminated within the TG as relevant.

### **3.2. Capacity building tools**

Based on the analytical work to be carried out and the inputs of its members, the TG will develop tools (such as 'factsheets') that can support Managing Authorities of RDPs and other stakeholders in rural bioeconomy value chains in upscaling climate outcomes at different stages of the value chains. The tools will also give orientation the Member States' strategic plan delivery for the next CAP programming period.

The development of the tools will benefit of previous and on-going RDP screening work carried out by the ENRD Contact Point, in as far as it allows for identifying different approaches to bioeconomy and climate action in different MS' RDPs.

### **3.3. Support to exchanges and peer learning**

In addition to the TG meetings, up to two more targeted learning events can be organised using web-based communication tools (video conference, webinar), following the experience of the videoconference on environmental sustainability indicators and monitoring tools organised by the TG in February 2019.

The topics, participation and number of these events will be defined based on interest expressed by TG members (through a survey), and they will be specifically targeted to TG members having less opportunities to participate in the physical meetings – including NRNs, farmers, LAGs and other local-level actors. The learning events will allow for more specific discussions on climate aspects of specific bioeconomy value chains, sectors, or geographic regions. The emphasis will be on peer-to-peer learning.

### **3.4 Communication**

A series of communication activities will spread the knowledge acquired through the points above to a wider audience. This includes continued updating the Rural Bioeconomy Portal with climate relevant content and linkages. Coordination with NRN's communication activities on the climate and

bioeconomy themes will be explored and ensured where relevant, for example by disseminating NRN communication materials through the Portal and in TG newsletters.

Social media, in particular Twitter and Facebook will be used to keep the wider audience informed about the TG's work and to activate the members between the meetings. This may include the organisation of Twitter chats, as in the previous year.

A short video clip, demonstrating the benefits of an EAFRD-funded bioeconomy initiative with climate outcomes, may be produced. Its primary dissemination channels will be the Rural Bioeconomy Portal, events and social media.

### 3.4. Links to other ENRD activities

The tools and orientations produced by the TG will contribute, as relevant, to ENRD's **capacity building work** in view of supporting the MS authorities in the preparations for the post-2020 period, in particular for the CAP Strategic plans and the new delivery model.

**An RDP screening** focusing on climate issues in RDPs will be carried out by the ENRD CP. The screening will complement and support the TG work, and provide material for case studies and orientations to MAs in view of integrating climate interventions in the CAP Strategic Plans. Relevant outcomes of the previous ENRD TGs, especially that on Resource Efficiency, will also be used as resource materials in as far as they have a relevant climate dimension. Likewise, a previous RDP screening carried out on the use of the Agri-Environment-Climate measures will be further built on, in terms of relevant case studies from MS regarding bio-based rural activities with climate effects.




**A Rural Inspiration Awards** competition for the National Rural Networks is considered for 2020. The competition would focus on bioeconomy and climate action and contributions of EAFRD-funded projects to the topic. Relevant **good practices** on bio-based climate action collected among the competition entries will be used in the TG work and disseminated through its communication channels. NRN's direct participation in the TG work will also be encouraged through targeted communication and by finding synergies with national climate work. Possibilities of organizing one or more TG meetings in another MS, back to back with a NRN hosted event, will be explored.







Close coordination will be ensured with ENRD's climate-relevant thematic work on **LEADER**, in particular in terms of ensuring synergy with LEADER thematic labs, communication products, and fact sheets where relevant. LAG participation and awareness of the TG work will be promoted, aiming at involving LAG representatives in TG meetings, and engaging them in possible video conferences and social media activity.

During Y6 the aim is to consolidate the links between the TG on Bioeconomy and Climate Action in rural areas and **the other two ENRD thematic priorities**. For example, in some places Smart Village Strategies may support local approaches to building renewable and bio-based energy production in a local circular economy. Similarly, economic opportunities offered by new bio-based value chains can make a contribution to creating vibrant rural areas and rural employment. The orientations for the design of schemes supporting bio-based interventions that contribute to rural climate action will also feed in to any other ENRD activity supporting the CAP Strategic Plans preparation.

























The following charts present the core activities and outputs of the Thematic Group on Bioeconomy and Climate Action in rural areas (Table 1) and the indicative work plan (Table 2).

Table 1: *Main activities and outputs of the ENRD Thematic Group on Bioeconomy and Climate Action*

ACTIVITIES	
 <b>Background research</b>	The background research carried out by the ENRD CP will clarify the key areas of possible climate outcomes within rural bioeconomy and set the context for the choice of sub-topics in the TG's knowledge development activities.
 <b>Up to four TG meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1st TG meeting (September 2019)</li> <li>• 2nd TG meeting (December 2019 - tbc)</li> <li>• 3rd TG meeting (February 2020 - tbc)</li> <li>• 4th TG meeting (April 2020 - tbc)</li> </ul>
<b>Analysis on ways to promote climate action along rural bioeconomy value chains</b>	Following the most relevant areas of action identified in the background research and input from TG members, the TG will carry out analytical work on tools and approaches to incentivise and upscale climate outcomes within the rural bioeconomy, focusing on approaches that can be linked to the RDPs and CAP Strategic Plans.
 <b>Targeted peer-to-peer learning events</b>	Depending on demand and interest by the TG members and NRNs, opportunities to exchange on more specific approaches to rural climate action – for example within a specific sector, value chain or geographic region – will be facilitated using digital technologies, such as webinars or videoconferences <b>(to be confirmed)</b> .

<p><b>Communication and outreach activities</b></p> 	<p>The ENRD CP will follow up, link to and contribute to relevant organisations and events on bioeconomy and rural climate action across the EU. Specific attention will be given to National Rural Networks' climate work. The Rural Bioeconomy Portal, social media and ENRD publications are actively used to disseminate TG work and outputs.</p>
<b>OUTPUTS</b>	
<p><b>Bioeconomy and Climate Action meeting highlights</b></p> 	<p>Highlights with the main outcomes from each of the TG meetings in a visual, reader-friendly format for broad dissemination.</p>
<p><b>Tools for promoting climate outcomes in bioeconomy value chains</b></p> 	<p>A series of tools will be developed based on analytic work, inputs from key experts and TG members, and parallel RDP screening. The outputs will take the form of visually attractive, short fact sheets that map and explain key tools and approaches that can incentivise and upscale climate action in rural bioeconomy value chains (e.g. decision support tools, monitoring approaches, supply chain assurance or community based approaches). The factsheets will be complemented by orientations with practical and useful indications for the design of schemes, above all in the CAP Strategic Plans, supporting bio-based interventions that contribute to rural climate action.</p>
<p><b>Rural Bioeconomy web portal</b></p> 	<p>The Rural Bioeconomy Portal will be further updated with relevant content on bio-based initiatives delivering on climate. The work includes regular updates of the content in term of policy initiatives, projects, relevant stakeholders, events and news, multimedia, interactive and visual tools, etc.</p>
<p><b>Case Studies</b></p>	<p>Up to three Case Studies on specific climate initiatives with a link to RDPs, possibly focusing on selected value chains. They will be presented in a visual, reader-friendly way for broad dissemination through the Rural Bioeconomy Portal and social media.</p>
<p><b>A video</b></p> 	<p>A short video will be produced, to showcase concrete and successful experiences of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable rural bioeconomy activities that also contribute to climate change mitigation, and the role of EAFRD support and Rural Development Policy in promoting them (to be confirmed).</p>
<p><b>TG summary report</b></p> 	<p>Synthesis of the key outcomes developed and activities throughout the year in a brief document.</p>

**Table 2: Indicative work plan**

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	
<b>Background Research</b>													
<b>1<sup>st</sup> TG Meeting</b>		 (Sept 25, 19)											
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting: Ongoing TG work &amp; TG meeting</b>					 (Dec 19)								
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting: Ongoing TG work &amp; TG meeting</b>							 (end of Feb, 2020- tbc)						
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Meeting: Ongoing TG work &amp; TG meeting</b>										 (end of April, 2020-tbc)			
Identification and collection of cases and initiatives for dissemination and analysis													
Video production – TBC – and other communications work													
Videoconferences - TBC													
<b>TG Outputs</b>													
Background (scoping) document													
Meeting highlights													
Fact sheets and orientations for the CAP SP													
Case Studies													
Rural Bioeconomy Portal: Ongoing updates													
A video (TBC)													
Seminar										(June, 2020-tbc)			
TG Summary report												