

## *Memorandum of Understanding European Bioeconomy Clusters Alliance*



This MoU describes the intent of

- **Bioeconomy Cluster**, Slovakia
- **Bioeconomy For Change (B4C)**, France
- **CluBE**, Western Macedonia
- **Cluster industrielle Biotechnologie e.V. (CLIB)**, Germany
- **Corporación Tecnológica de Andalucía (CTA)**, Spain
- **Food & Bio Cluster**, Denmark
- **Food+i**, Spain
- **Flanders' FOOD**, Belgium
- **Greek Bioeconomy Council**, Greece
- **Irish Bioeconomy Foundation (IBF)**, Ireland
- **P-BIO**, Portugal
- **SPRING**, the Italian Circular Bioeconomy Cluster, Italy
- **Wagralim**, the agri-food innovation cluster of Wallonia, Belgium
- **World Bioeconomy Association**, Finland

to join forces in order to support the growth of the circular and sustainable bioeconomy in Europe.

The bioeconomy uses the biological resources of the land and sea, as well as waste streams, as inputs for industrial, agricultural, energy, food, and feed production. The bioeconomy, declined in a circular logic, is based on the following principles:

- Valorization of biogenic resources for higher added value products.
- Manufacturing of bio-based and circular-by-design products.
- Territorial regeneration.
- Soil health.
- Creation of interconnections between different sectors.

The Circular Bioeconomy is an essential tool of European strategies and policies to fight climate change and increase the competitiveness of Europe.

To achieve the transition to a circular and regenerative bioeconomy, bioproducts must be used as key tools to "do more with less", overcoming the overexploitation of resources, pollution problems, and closing the carbon cycle.

To this end, the parties may jointly explore and coordinate activities of mutual benefit and interest.

## **Article 1. Introduction**

Recognizing the key elements of the national government's bioeconomy strategies, the clusters have decided to explore the possibilities of collaboration as partners in order to accelerate the industrialisation and commercialisation of "biobased" innovative ideas and boost the innovation, competitiveness, and resilience of Europe thanks to the circular bioeconomy.

**Bioeconomy Cluster (BEC)** creates an innovation ecosystem for the knowledge and technology transfer between research and agri-food industry (SMEs) including relevant policies through mutual cooperation. BEC was established in 2015 as a result of bottom-up networking pressure of agri-food and other bio-based stakeholders in Slovakia. It is actively engaged in European and national policies in agricultural innovation, in supporting and networking of SMEs, as well as in connecting the entities of knowledge triangle. It is a network of more than 40 members.

**Bioeconomy For Change (B4C)** is the leading French Bioeconomy Cluster, recognised across Europe and internationally. It gathers over 500 members from

across the entire bio-based value chain, from upstream agricultural and marine feedstocks to the marketing of end-products for several industrial sectors (food, feed, bioenergy, bio-based products). Members include agricultural cooperatives, research institutions and universities, companies of all sizes, public stakeholders, etc. B4C network promotes the bioeconomy, supports the projects of its members, and fosters networking and dynamic collaboration.

**Cluster of Bioeconomy and Environment of Western Macedonia (CluBE)** is a non-profit company established in 2014 among local actors and stakeholders of the Region of Western Macedonia in Greece. Its mission is to enhance collaboration and increase regional knowledge by promoting innovation and synergies between regional stakeholders in the fields of bioeconomy and environment. With its highly qualified personnel, it supports its more than 60 members from the quintuple helix of the Region of Western Macedonia, including public entities, R&D institutions, SME's and industries, social enterprises and environmental organisations. It is member of 20 other Networks, a founding member of the Greek Bioeconomy Forum, a point of cooperation with the wider Balkan area and an experienced partner in more than 50 European and national projects, most of them in the family of Horizon (2020 and Europe).

**Cluster Industrielle Biotechnologie e.V. (CLIB)** is an international open innovation cluster for bioeconomy with a focus on industrial biotechnology. The over 110 cluster members are large (multinational) companies, SMEs, universities, and academic institutes, as well as other stakeholders active in the bioeconomy. Founded in 2007, CLIB has >15 years of experience in connecting stakeholders along and across value chains; in helping to set up project consortia, in developing tech transfer strategies, in providing policy advice and in promoting industrial biotechnology as a key driver for a sustainable bio- and circular economy.

**Corporación Tecnológica de Andalucía (CTA)** is private foundation established in 2005 and backed by a board of trustees of more than 182 member companies of all sizes and sectors, dedicated to promoting business innovation in Andalusia in close collaboration with the administrations. CTA has established itself as a pioneering and unique model for the transfer of technology and the promotion of R&D and innovation, integrating strengths of all the actors in the innovation system, in which governments and institutions from other regions and countries have shown interest. CTA has played an active role in promoting bioeconomy at regional level during more than 10 years in close collaboration with the regional

quintuple helix, deploying an active strategy towards the establishment of solid relationships and national, European and international stakeholders, backed up with its participation in more than 60 European projects and strong networks, as full member of the BIC.

**Food & Bio Cluster Denmark (FBCD)** is a non-profit cluster management organisation, science park, incubator and project organisation with nationwide coverage and headquarters located in the Central Denmark Region. The organisation was founded in 2020, by a merger between four Danish clusters to form a new “supercluster”, one of the largest of its kind in Europe with 470+ members ranging from small start-ups to some of the largest companies in the world. FBCE has 42 FTE equivalent personnel, and has been an ECEI Gold Label cluster since 2022. The organisation runs incubation facilities for startups and scaleups at sites across Denmark, has a dedicated business acceleration unit with a portfolio of 370+ investors and is a founder member of the Enterprise Europe Network since 2008. FBCD is a full member of the Biobased Industries Consortium (BIC), and is on the national Bioeconomy Expert Panel.

**Cluster Food+i (F+i)** is the agri-food cluster of the Ebro Valley, Spain, dedicated to fostering corporate innovation in the agri-food sector. Its mission is to drive transformation and competitiveness by promoting collaboration between companies, research institutions, and public entities, addressing industry challenges and creating new growth opportunities. As a dynamic ecosystem, it brings together key stakeholders from across the value chain, enabling synergies that accelerate the adoption of cutting-edge solutions and facilitate the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient sector. With a strong commitment to technological advancement and sustainable development, Cluster Food+i provides strategic insights, training, and access to funding, ensuring its members remain at the forefront of sectoral innovation. The organisation stands out for its strong fundraising capacity, currently managing an open portfolio of R&D projects worth over 10 million euros. The organisation is a Full Member of the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC), reinforcing its role as a key player in European bioeconomy initiatives.

**Flanders' FOOD (FF)** is a cluster organisation and spearhead cluster agri-food in Flanders and responsible to translate the Flemish RIS3 into practice. FF focusses on the economic growth of the Flemish agri-food industry and has about 300 company members (for the larger part SMEs and about 70% from the agri-food industry) and in that respect acts as an enabler for innovation and integrator to

create a trust zone of open innovation with all stakeholders in the agri-food business complex. FF is a well-networked organisation, collaborating with the various 4H actors linked to the broad bio-based and agri-food sectors, both on a regional and European level. FF is also co-founder and co-lead of the S3P I4CE and has in this way active collaborations with other leading clusters and organisations of the bioeconomy in Europe.

**The Greek Bioeconomy Council (GBC)** is Greece's national association for the bioeconomy. Its mission is to advance the country's circular bioeconomy by uniting producers who utilize renewable biological resources and biotechnologies. The GBC focuses on key biotech applications and industrial sectors that cover the complete value chain, from primary production to market, actively advocating and supporting the interests of its members. The members of the GBC comprise profit and non-profit organizations, academia, research centres and professionals who manufacture biobased products, develop bioprocesses and provide services that promote the bioeconomy in Greece. The legal entity of the GBC is expected to be established in the 1st quarter of 2025.

**Irish Bioeconomy Foundation (IBF)** is the bioeconomy association and the innovation cluster covering the Island of Ireland. Its mission is to promote the conversion of Ireland's natural land & sea resources to high-value products for the development of a sustainable bioeconomy that is globally competitive and creates local development. IBF supports its members and the overall Irish innovation ecosystem by providing: Bioprocess design and scale up; Access to finance and Outreach.

**P-BIO** is a private, non-profit association that brings together companies and other stakeholders linked to the Biotechnology and Life Sciences sector in Portugal. Since its foundation in 1999, it has contributed as a key element to the development and support of Biotechnology in Portugal, seeking to develop a favorable environment for the creation and growth of biotechnology start-ups and promoting their national and international business development.

**SPRING** is the Italian Circular Bioeconomy cluster. It gathers approximately 160 members across the value chain: Italian and multinational companies of all sizes, universities, private and public research centres, investors, regional clusters, industrial associations, farmers associations, etc. SPRING, officially recognized by the Italian Ministry of Research, works on all themes related to the production and valorisation of bio-based resources (agriculture, forestry, marine resources or co-products and residues) for food, feed, industrial and energy purposes. It is

a member of the National Coordination Group on Bioeconomy set up within the Italian Presidency of Council.

**Wagralim** is the agri-food innovation Cluster of Wallonia Belgium, fostering innovation, sustainability, and competitiveness of the agri-food sector. We support companies through collaborative R&D projects, networking, and strategic guidance, with a strong focus on biotechnology, bioeconomy, and the valorisation of side streams. Wagralim actively promotes the transition towards sustainable food systems, integrating alternative proteins, digitalisation, and advanced food processing technologies to strengthen the resilience and autonomy of the regional agri-food industry.

As a key player in European innovation, Wagralim is a member of BIC JU, EIT Food and leads the European S3 Ingredients for a Circular Economy Partnership. Wagralim is the operational “extended arm” of the Public Service of Wallonia which integrated the FutureFoodS public-public partnership. Additionally, we coordinate the Biotech4Food and B-Resilient projects, which aim to enhance the use of biotechnology in the agri-food sector and support industrial innovations for the valorisation of side streams.

The **World Bioeconomy Association (WBA)** is a global NGO dedicated to advancing a sustainable and innovation-driven bioeconomy. We provide strategic insights, facilitate collaboration among industry, policymakers, and researchers, and promote bio-based solutions through high-level events and advocacy. By connecting key stakeholders and fostering dialogue, we support the development of a resilient and circular bioeconomy. WBA’s approach is built on three core visions: Bioresource Vision, ensuring efficient and sustainable biomass use; Biotechnology Vision, advancing bio-based innovations; and Bioecology Vision, enhancing biodiversity and regenerative practices. Together, these elements form a balanced and future-ready bioeconomy that reduces environmental impact while unlocking new opportunities for sustainable growth.

## **Article 2. Subject of collaboration**

The Clusters agree to work together to exchange information, to establish networking between their ecosystems, to promote the human capital agenda and to develop research, development, and demonstration projects for technologies that convert sustainable feedstock into food, industrial and energy applications.

To show their commitment, the Clusters agree to set up a European Bioeconomy Clusters Alliance and to act together to support the Circular and Sustainable Bioeconomy.

They all agree about the need to reinforce Circular Bioeconomy in the European Union. Actions suitable to achieve this, and supported by the Alliance include:

- Investment in research, development, innovation and biorefineries.
- Improve incentives to invest in scaling and infrastructure capacity.
- Create a level playing field with fossil-based economy.
- Develop a European model of market access for bioproducts.
- Develop a framework for the fast approval of sustainable bioproducts.
- Establish channels of communication, exchange, collaboration and mutual learning with third countries outside the EU, contributing to the international R&D&I networks, as well as markets, opportunities for growth and homogenization of standards and policies in bioeconomy.

### **Article 3. Approach to collaboration**

To ensure further development of this Alliance, the clusters will work together with their members to identify opportunities to advance the Circular Bioeconomy as stated above.

The Alliance aims to build relationships to industrial, academic or governmental organisations in order to initiate joint projects in research, development, demonstration, or commercial partnering. Clusters will support the initiation of these projects and support the acquisition of private and/or public funds to finance the projects.

The clusters will share best practices and experiences in supporting the Circular Bioeconomy on a European, but also regional level, drawing on their extensive experience.

### **Article 4. Information exchange**

The parties agree to be open and exchange non-confidential information about their organizations, participants and their cooperation networks for the purpose of the joint projects. They also agree to act professionally vis-à-vis received information and to preserve confidentiality of the other parties.

## **Article 5. Responsibility for costs**

The parties will be responsible for their own costs for establishing and conducting the cooperation, including their own expenses for visits, business trips, participation in meetings, etc.

## **Article 6. Working groups**

Parties agree to create ad-hoc working groups, which will lead and coordinate joint activities and interactions between the clusters. The working groups will consist of representatives from all the parties interested in each WG.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is written in English. Each Party shall keep the digital copy.

## **Article 7. Duration and Termination**

(a) The term of this MoU shall commence on the effective date set forth below and shall continue for a period of 3 years.

(b) Either party may withdraw from this MoU by providing written notice to all Parties not less than two (2) months in advance of its desire to do so. Unless otherwise agreed, the withdrawal of a party from this MoU shall not affect the implementation of projects or programmes established under it prior to such termination. This MoU may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties in writing.

## **Article 8. Confidentiality**

The exchange of any confidential data between specific partners requires a separate confidentiality agreement.

## **Article 9. Non-binding nature of the MoU**

The parties acknowledge that the provisions of this MoU represent their common intentions to explore closer linkages between all signatories. Except for article 7, this MoU is not intended to create a legally binding contractual relationship between Parties. It does not constitute the creation of a legal entity or give any party the authority to make binding commitments on behalf of other Parties.



### **Article 10. Non-Exclusive**

The Parties may work on and participate in any projects with other potential partners. However, such participation shall not be detrimental to the spirit of this MoU.

### **Article 11. Effective Date**

The effective date of this MoU shall be 10 February 2025.

Signed:

BEC  
Katarina Blicklingova  
Director

Signed:

B4C  
Boris Dumange  
Managing Director

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Juan M. Viejo Blanlard  
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Inge Arents  
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GBC  
Maria Andriellou  
Co-founder & Director

Irish Bioeconomy Foundation  
Filippo Giancarlo Martinelli  
European Ambassador (former CEO)

P-BIO  
Filipa Sacadura  
Secretary-General

SPRING  
Mario Bonaccorso  
Director

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