

**In the context of the event "How can the EU lead in the circular bioeconomy,"**

## **a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between 14 European national clusters to drive and grow in the bioeconomy.**

- The Bioeconomy is worth 1751 billion € and employs 2 million people in the EU4 (Germany, France, Italy and Spain)<sup>1</sup>
  - €437.5 billion and about 2 million jobs: the national figures.

**Brussels, February 10, 2025** – 14 national bioeconomy clusters today signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding in Brussels aimed at supporting and strengthening Circular and Sustainable Bioeconomy in Europe.

The partnership will focus on accelerating the industrialization and commercialization of biobased innovations, fostering innovation, competitiveness, and resilience within the European bioeconomy.

The agreement outlines plans to work collaboratively over the next three years, sharing expertise, building commercial relationships, promoting human capital, and developing R&D projects across various applications including food, industry, and energy.

The clusters will also work together to advocate for concrete policy actions that can support the circular and sustainable bioeconomy in the context of the EU Green Deal. These actions include increasing investments in research and innovation, providing incentives for industrial scale-up, and establishing a European model for market access.

The bioeconomy, which relies on renewable biological resources for industrial, energy, food, and feed production, plays a vital role in driving sustainable development and competitiveness in Europe. Across France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, the bioeconomy generated €1.751 trillion, employing over 7.4 million people. This represents 8.4% and 6% of the total workforce in the four countries.

The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding marks a significant step towards further advancing the circular bioeconomy in Europe. Through collaboration, innovation, and a focus on sustainability, the bioeconomy will continue to be a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and environmental responsibility across Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Report on Bioeconomy in Europe 2024, Intesa Sanpaolo-Cluster Spring-Federchimica Assobiotec.

## DEEPER INFORMATION

The 14 clusters involved:

**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



#### Italian Circular Bioeconomy Cluster

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 organization, 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 organizations 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 centers 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.



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**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 centers, 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 and full member SME of the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC).

**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.