Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Meeting Minutes

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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Minutes of the 18th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: **Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine & Online via Webex**

Date: **19th Sept 2023 10.30am – 12.30pm**

Attendees:

Chairs: Karl Walsh (DAFM), Marc Kierans (DECC)

Secretariat: Patrick Barrett (DAFM), Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Laura Broomfield (DECC) & Evan Carey (DECC).

Departments: Leona De Khors (DED), Valerie Hughes, Andrea Lennon (D/Transport), Andrew Moran (D/Taoiseach), Thomas Connolly (DFIN), Josh Lernihan (DPENDR), James Cadden, Alex Dowdall (DFHERIS), Alan Dempsey (DETE), Gareth Makim (DRCD).

Agencies: Niall McEvoy, Orla Finucane (SFI), Maeve Henchion (Teagasc), Grainne Devine (BIM), Owenroe Lemass (SEAI), Warren Phelan (EPA), Niamh Garvey (NESC), Kathleen O'Regan (EI).

Guests: Billy Goodburn, John Brosnan (ICOS), Fiona Scott-Hayward, Helena McMahon, Eve Savage (MTU), Tom Curran (UCD).

Apologies:

Rob Barnes (DFIN), Laura Devaney (D/Taoiseach), Fiona Grant (MI), Brian Carroll (DECC), Joseph Moore (DFHERIS), Mark Christal (EI), Margie McCarthy (SEAI), Orlaith Ni Choncubhair (Teagasc).

Item 1: Introduction

K Walsh welcomed the group and began round of introductions, new members of the group introduced.

Item 2: Publication of Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025

K Walsh thanked everyone for the finalised actions of the BEAP Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 and agreeing actions. BEAP Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 is yet to be brought to cabinet, and it will be on eCabinet shortly, with 2-week interdepartmental consult, with possible approval by bioeconomy week which is 16-22 October 2023.

Item 3: BIDG Terms of Reference/Operational Structure

K Walsh outlined the Terms of Reference/Operational Structure for the BIDG, which set out tasks and operations, membership of the group, monitoring of BEAP.

M Kierans noted that contact details in Terms of Reference should be checked to ensure all are correct and up to date.

Taken as accepted.

Item 4: Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 progress reporting

K Walsh informed the group of the HIVE site set up to view the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 online Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 Home (cloud.gov.ie)). Proposed that departments and agencies provided twice yearly updates to action plan. Next updates in April 2024, October 2024, following the publication of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 in October 2023 and to inform report to government December 2024. Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 completed; Irish version near completion.

P Barrett – The HIVE site is to be an aid to work together, take responsibility of actions, bring updates to excel spreadsheet, highlighting of items for the next update meeting. Access to be granted to departments and agencies. Slides and other relevant information to be contained here. Some anomalies noted re ownership of actions, tool to be updated and corrected if error in action plan.

K Walsh noted high priority areas where progress sought in first year (by Oct 24). Highlighted a key push to get actions delivered by all in the timespan of the plan.

Valerie Hughes - ongoing biofuel obligations implementation policy aligns with BEAP.

K Walsh noted that the ministers (DAFM & DECC) have strong interest in the area, co-sponsor memo on action plan.

Warren Phelan asked about access to the HIVE site, number of team members to have access, head of division downwards.

Access will be provided to BIDG government department representatives.

P Barrett highlighted that a SFI and EPA funding opportunity for fellowship natural capital approach to food waste hierarchy, with a placement within the EPA. Asked group members to flag opportunities to the group, need for interconnected discussions.

M Kierans noted applications are still open for the fellowship.

Item 5: Deep dive into Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 Pillar 7 – Knowledge and Skills

P Barrett provided an overview of pillar 7 actions to the group. Setting out importance of knowledge and skills within the action plan. Plan sets of actions to promote continuous learning and professional development.

Tom Curran (UCD) provided a presentation on BioBeo project (Actions 7.1 & 7.2) to the group.

- T Curran provided an overview of the progress on the BioBeo project to date, and the plans for the remainder of the project - list of events where promotion of BioBeo has occurred.
- BioBeo Horizon Europe project update. – Education on the bioeconomy for young people in primary and secondary education. Scheduled end date April 2025.
- Roll out of programme in Oct/Nov 2023 in Ireland in 5 primary schools, different profiles urban, rural, island, spec ed. Secondary in Netherlands & Belgium. Educational aids: board games, geospatial app, AR/VR, animated videos.
- T Curran asked for board game feedback – “Resource Don’t Go!”, feedback link on slides.

- BioBeo Festival Event at Odisee, Brussels 15th March 2024, EU Bioeconomy Changemakers Festival Week 11-17 March 2024. EC events on 13-14 March 2024.
- K Walsh noted was great to see all the EU collaboration on the project.
- P Barrett asked how to bring in initiatives into the policy sphere, valuable work being done across Europe.
- T Curran answered that schemes such as the promotion of school gardens, extra benefits (more fruit and veg, healthier lifestyle, reduce foodwaste). Fund to give assistance/advice to schools, with Australia as an example.

Fiona Scott Hayward (MTU) provided a presentation on the BIObec project (Actions 7.3 & 7.4) to the group.

- Ireland's bioeconomy a huge growth area. MTU and UCD leaders in the bioeconomy sector. Human capital initiative, demand coming from SME's and businesses. Digital sustainability skills being developed.
- Using resources of all stakeholders within Ireland to draw knowledge from. Overview of the timeline (4 year) and setup of the programme with tasks and roles required. Capital expenditure: website 15k, staff expenses 128k, Ancillary >30k over 3-year period.
- K Walsh noted the usefulness of such a programme in cross cutting areas. Asked question re factoring in awareness and driving traffic to website is included in expenditure.
- F Scott Hayward answered community marketing manager role to manage website and drive traffic. Social media and website team, including all bioeconomy stakeholders, which will drive traffic further. Funding – keep as low as possible, 6 pilot centres have diff approaches, project finishes in January 2024, how to set up new centres (replication).
- M Kierans asked question re Industry partners dairy/agri food centric?
- F Scott Hayward answered business shown are only a snapshot of businesses involved.
- P Barrett – Q Identified gaps and developed activities to fill in gaps. Conversations together (2 projects), joined up thinking/ scope to coordinate?
- B Goodburn open to collab with MTU and other partners, unified approach would be good to take. Linking in all levels of education together.
- F Scott Hayward – presenting project, collab the way forward/ working together and moving forward.

Billy Goodburn (ICOS Head of Development) provided a presentation on the ICOS Skillnet (Action 7.5) to the group.

- B Goodburn noted that education programmes available for 3rd level across Europe, but there is a lack of practical grassroots skills programmes.
- A Bioeconomy awareness programme – underpinned by EU Erasmus funded Fields+ project and funded by Skillnet Ireland. Develop national cooperative centre.
- J Brosnan described the self-directed online modules.

- J Brosnan noted the involvement the circular bioeconomy clusters, Munster involve in collaboration discussions.

AOB:

Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2023

- P Barrett – Event runs from 16-22 October 2023 with the tagline "Empowering Ireland's Bioeconomy for a greener tomorrow". Co-host launch event with Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford on 16th October, to be opened by Minister Heydon. The event includes a panel discussion involving DAFM and 3 regional assemblies, presentations, will be an online hybrid event. 9/10 more events planned. Invite to be sent in coming days.
- K Walsh noted that the event is a good way to bring the action plan to life, and the attendance of Minister Heydon is welcomed. The momentum behind events, and publicity for the week was also noted.
- P Barrett – Biobus (Bioeconomy Bus) 20 different locations around Ireland, organized by BioOrbic Research Centre, how to describe the bioeconomy to the general public, popup event, science outlook SFI.
- K Walsh – Thanked BiOrbic for the BioBus initiative
- P Barrett – www.irishbioeconomy.ie to be updated with list of events, regional assemblies to issue invites to events.

National, EU & International Bioeconomy Developments

K Walsh – National: EU Just Transition fund call launched and shared island fund call in preparation.

P Barrett – Funding received for bioeconomy developments. EU Just Transition open. 2 calls (€5 mil per project) – processing biowaste, value chains for agri/forestry. Co-lead by LA's, SMEs, further education. Collaboration of different actors to develop the bioeconomy, high quality submissions wanted. Shared Island fund (€7 mil) with DAERA engaged to bring up fund to €9 mil. Information webinar held on 14th September 23. Specific opportunities for agri-bioeconomy demo initiative, and the blue bioeconomy. Aim for 6 initiatives. Local Authorities advising how to engage with local enterprise, planning advice, environmental requirements, climate action implementation.

EU Co-funding opportunity – regional innovation valleys. Develop concept, expression of interest for regional assemblies, Commission launching bioeconomy and food systems concept on 13 October 23. European calls to join up thinking with Ireland, coordinated approach required.

K Walsh thanked DECC and D/Taoiseach in securing injection into the biorefining and bioeconomy in Ireland, highlighted the desire for high quality submissions, and to ensure the spending of allocated funds within the timeframe. Noted the aims for capital infrastructure within the Just Transition fund, finalising call spec for Shared Island fund with DAERA (NI).

N Garvey said the regional innovation valleys are to align with 3 regional assemblies and link in with regions in Europe.

P Barrett contact has been made to join up with regions in Italy, Flanders, Spain, Slovenia.

W Phelan – demonstration project of scale – end of waste, byproducts, planning, other funding schemes, technical workshop to help consortium. Engaging with DECC to address unforeseen barriers.

K Walsh noted the delays on planning consents, technical regulations could delay project, help is appreciated.

W Phelan said early engagement piece, clear understanding of project needed. Waste regs in draft format at present.

FAO Science and Innovation Forum Rome 2023

P Barrett outlined that the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations are hosting the World Food Forum in Rome 16-20th October 2023. Elements of the event to focus on the bioeconomy. High level panel of speakers, with President Higgins invited to be on panel. Noted it was a strong statement by FAO to invite President Higgins, highlights Ireland's seriousness about the bioeconomy, confirmation of attendance. Link to watch panel to be sent round when made public.

Next meeting – 21 November 2023, 10:30 - 12:30

K Walsh – last quarterly meeting of 2023. Location TBD.

Land Use and Sectoral Policy

26/09/23

Minutes of the 19th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: **Online (Webex) – Hosted by DAFM**

Date: **21st November 2023 10.30am – 12.30pm**

Attendees:
Chair: Karl Walsh (DAFM).

Secretariat: Patrick Barrett (DAFM), Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Laura Broomfield (DECC) & Evan Carey (DECC).

Departments: James Cadden (DFHERIS), Alan Dempsey (DETE), Ronan Corley, Gareth Makim (DRCD), Andrea Lennon, Valerie Hughes (D/Transport), Andrew Moran, Laura Devaney (D/Taoiseach), Aoife McGrane, Liam Byrne (D/Education), Donal Cronin (DHLGH), Josh Lernihan (DPENDR), Thomas Connolly (DFIN).

Agencies: Niamh McCormack (EPA), Owenroe Lemass, Irene Ward (SEAI), Grainne Devine, Ronan Cooney (BIM), Maeve Henchion, Órlaith Ní Choncubhair (Teagasc), Ankush Shirsath (EI), Niamh Garvey (NESC), Nicola Cosgrove (SFI).

Guests: Kevin O'Connor, Derek O'Brien (BiOrbic), John Morrissey (UCC), Damien McConville (InterTrade Ireland Synergy Programme).

Apologies: Marc Kierans (DECC), Lorraine Caulfield (DFHERIS), Leona DeKhors (D/Education), Orla Finucane (SFI), Niall McEvoy (SFI), Vivienne Ahern (DECC), Warren Phelan (EPA).

Item 1: Introduction

Karl Walsh (KW) opened the meeting and asked any new members of the BIDG to introduce themselves.

Item 2: Publication of Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025

KW noted that BeAP and the associated Press Release were published on 19th October 2023, during Bioeconomy Ireland week 2023, by Minister McConalogue, DAFM and Minister Ryan, DECC.

KW highlighted the important step that the work reached the cabinet level, ensuring that the bioeconomy is on the radar of government.

Item 3: Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 progress reporting:

KW reminded Departments of their responsibilities for twice-yearly reporting on their respective actions. Reports provided back from Departments (including from their respective agencies) should be detailed and balanced. The first report from all Departments would be due on 19th April 2024.

A tailored spreadsheet has been sent to all lead departments, with their own actions listed. Lead departments are to work with supporting departments and respective agencies to complete their report updates. Reporting updates will be compiled into a main spreadsheet located on the HIVE. The reporting and feedback will be included in the annual BIDG report to government.

KW noted that reporting should be considered in the upcoming months and a formal request would be sent to lead Departments in March 2024 for the first reporting updates, with a deadline of the 19th April 2024.

Matthew Halpin (MH) went through an example of the tailored spreadsheet. Any feedback or comments would be welcomed before formal requests for reporting is issued in March 2024.

Patrick Barrett (PB) provided an update on progress under Pillar 7 'education and skills', which was the focus of the 18th BIDG meeting. Since the 18th BIDG meeting, it was outlined that a follow up meeting was held with DFHERIS Green Skills (Further Education) and Higher Education policy teams. The DFHERIS teams indicated that an overview report on the 'status quo' of bioeconomy education, training & skills would be a very useful starting point for engagement with relevant agencies e.g., SOLAS and representative organisations such as ETBI.

A follow up meeting was also held with a range of stakeholders on 17/11/23 including: ICOS who have a bioeconomy introductory continuous learning opportunity available on ICOS Skillnet; Teagasc and MTU who are developing level 5, 6 education streams that consider bioeconomy. UCD (BioBeo) and MTU (IKC3) who are developing bioeconomy related primary level education inputs; MTU who has developed bioeconomy post graduate programmes and SETU who are developing post-graduate programmes on sustainable agriculture and food systems that include specific certificate level programmes on bioeconomy.

Item 4: Deep dive into Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025, Pillar 2 – 'Research, Development and Innovation'.

KW outlined the focus for the 19th (BIDG) meeting would be on the Action Plan Pillar 2 – Research, Development and Innovation.

KW noted importance of following up on the deep dive discussions, as per above.

MH provided an overview of Pillar 2 which centres on research development and innovations. Including outlining the actions for Pillar 2.

Damien McConville - InterTrade Ireland Synergy Programme

Damien McConville provided an update on the work of the InterTrade Ireland Synergy Programme. This programme offered the opportunity for funding bioeconomy opportunities for cross border collaboration. Further details and information available on slides.

John Morrissey - UCC (SUSFERM/IBISBA/DIALS/FEDRI)

John Morrissey provided an overview of SUSFERM, a new research centre for Sustainable Fermentation and Bioprocessing Systems for Food and the Bioeconomy. The interdisciplinary centre will facilitate the development of Irelands bioeconomy and will be formally launched on 22nd January 2024. He also presented on IBISBA. IBISBA is a pan-European research infrastructure consortium, dedicated to industrial biotechnology and bioeconomy. UCC is currently a member of IBISBA and DAFM represents Ireland on the IBISBA steering committee. Ireland will have the opportunity to become a member of the IBISBA-ERIC. An Irish node for IBISBA is being developed. Further details and information available on slides.

James Cadden - DFHERIS

James Cadden provided an outline of the overall context of Impact 2030 which is Ireland's research and Innovation Strategy vision and acts as a whole of government strategy for Ireland to become an innovation leader. Further details and information available on slides.

Nicola Cosgrove - SFI

Nicola Cosgrove provided an overview of how the bioeconomy will be integrated into SFI funding – through e.g. research centres and spokes programmes, strategic partnerships, challenge funding. Further details and information available on slides.

Maeve Henchion & Órlaith Ní Choncubhair – Teagasc

Maeve Henchion provided an overview of the infrastructure in place within Teagasc to aid the development of the bioeconomy, with a focus on actions 2.3 & 2.4. Of particular note were plans to develop a National Food Bio-Circularity Centre at Teagasc Ashtown. Further details and information available on slides.

Alan Dempsey - DETE (DTIF), Ankush Shirsath, Enterprise Ireland, & NSAI

Alan Dempsey provided an update on Action 2.2 national funding programmes. Further details and information available on slides.

Ankush Shirsath outlined the Enterprise Ireland supports for the bioeconomy including a feasibility fund, innovation partnerships for research, green transition funds to integrate bioeconomy, circular, and climate action and develop roadmaps.

KW noted funds are important as Ireland behind European countries in investment in the past.

Owenroe Lemass – SEAI

Owenroe Lemass provided an overview of the SEAI and Action 2.2 funding opportunities including an online database of funded projects National Energy Research Database | Data & Insights | SEAI . This database lists relevant bioeconomy including bioenergy projects. Further details and information available on slides.

Ronan Corley - DRCD (RRDF)

Ronan Corley presented on the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and how the RRD fund can assist in supporting bioeconomy. Further details and information available on slides.

KW noted that the RRDF is a fund that people sometimes aren't familiar with, with both Category 1 and 2 funding applicable for the bioeconomy sector.

Niamh McCormack – EPA

Niamh McCormack presented on EPA Research 2030 - Thematic Hubs. 10-year vision and funding programme. An overview of recently published EPA funded bioeconomy projects was provided. The launch of the 2024 Research Call was highlighted. Further details and information available on slides.

Grainne Devine & Ronan Cooney - Bord Iascaigh Mhara

Grainne Devine provided an overview of the New EMFAF (European Maritime Fisheries & Aquaculture Fund) now in place and implemented until 2027, and a National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture 2030.

Ronan Cooney gave an overview of ongoing examining a Norwegian methodology in use for the last 10 years. The methodology begins with an inventory of potential feedstocks for valorisation. Further details and information available on slides.

Patrick Barrett – DAFM

PB provided an update to the work of DAFM across the actions of Pillar 2. Further details and information available on slides.

Patrick Barrett, on behalf of MI - Marine Institute

PB provided an update of the work on behalf of the Marine Institute. MI are developing research and innovation strategy with blue bioeconomy as part of the Blue Food pillar of the strategy. Further details and information available on slides.

Kevin O'Connor & Derek O'Brien – BiOrbic

Derek O'Brien provided an overview of the work undertaken by BiOrbic, including the collaborating to develop bioeconomy day initially and now bioeconomy Ireland week (2019-2023 to date), and bioeconomy maps that explains the bioeconomy in terms and visuals suitable to aid public understanding, and the BioBus activity in 2023 that brought an explanation of the bioeconomy to the public in almost all counties of Ireland in a 5 week period in Late 2023.. Further details and information available on slides.

Kevin O'Connor noted the challenge in increasing awareness of the bioeconomy, highlighting there was very limited knowledge of the bioeconomy in 2017.

KW noted the very significant number of funding opportunities applicable to the bioeconomy presently. The snapshots provided aid in creating familiarity amongst BIDG members of what is out there. Engagement with industry through research activities is an aspect that is working well. The task is to further engage industry, and activities on this matter in pillar 2 should eb linked to pillar 6.

Item 5: AOB

<u>Bioeconomy week 2023 recap:</u>

KW huge number of activities took place during the BIW 2023, including the BioBus.

Action: Asked the group for any ideas/improvements/new events for BIW 2024 to feed back early next year.

National, EU, & International Bioeconomy Developments:

PB provided an update. EU Just Transition Fund – Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative new call in 2024. Tentative launch date for Shared Island Fund Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative Scheme call is end of 2023 . The EU COM DG Grow will host a biobased products related event in early Dec 2023 which will be attended by DAFM & DECC. The Bioeconomy Changemakers Festival will take place between the 11-17 March 2024 in Brussels, organised by European Commission. Links into Bioeconomy Summit in Tullamore March 12th, 2024. Minister Hackett attended the high-level event on bioeconomy at the FAO Science and Innovation Forum in Rome and the 8th meeting of ISBWG and was able highlight Ireland's efforts in the bioeconomy and share details of Ireland's newly launched Bioeconomy Action Plan.

Órlaith Ní Choncubhair – New Zealand developing bioeconomy strategy, IACGB Hannover Symposium Statement published.

Gareth Makim – Development of the next social enterprise policy underway. Reference to bioeconomy contained, would be grateful for contact point for bioeconomy.

BIDG dates for 2024 (Placeholder outlook calendar invites to be sent out after meeting):

- 27th February 2024 (in-person, location TBC)
- 14th May 2024
- 24th September 2024
- 26th November 2024

Deadlines for Bioeconomy Action Plan progress reporting.

- 1st reporting returns due 19th April 2024
- 2nd reporting returns due 18th October 2024.

DECC - Land Use and Sectoral Policy
30/11/2023

Minutes of the 20th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Orion Suite, The Spencer Hotel, Excise Walk, IFSC, Dublin, D01X4C9 (in-person only).

Date & time: Tuesday 27 February 2024, 10.30 to 12.30.

Attendees:

Co-chairs: Marc Kierans (DECC) & Karl Walsh (DAFM).

Secretariat: Laura Broomfield (DECC), Patrick Barrett (DAFM), Evan Carey (DECC) & Matthew Halpin (DAFM).

Departments: Alan Dempsey (D/ETE), Sirlone Lopes (D/FIN), Gareth Makim (D/RCD), Andrea Lennon (D/Transport), Matt Hornsby (D/ECC), Laura Devaney (D/Taoiseach), Rinku Phulphagar (D/PENDR) & Laura Courtney (D/HLGH).

Agencies: Ronan Cooney, Gráinne Devine (BIM), Niamh McCormack, Sandra Gleeson (EPA), Aine Macken-Walsh, Maeve Henchion, Órlaith Ní Choncubhair (Teagasc), Luis Gay-Tarazona, OwenRoe Lemass (SEAI), Ankush Shirsath (Enterprise Ireland), Fiona Grant (Marine Institute), Orla Finucane (SFI).

Apologies: Brian Carroll (DECC), Margaret Power, Donal Cronin (DHLGH), Niamh Garvey (NESC).

Item 1: Opening Remarks

MK gave a brief introduction of the BIDG and gave a particular welcome to first-time attendees. He also acknowledged that this was the first 'in-person only' meeting since before COVID-19 and strongly encouraged a high level of input from all attendees.

MK gave a brief overview of the Bioeconomy Action Plan's Pillar 1 'Governance & Awareness'. This Pillar would be the focus of the meeting.

Item 2: Irish Bioeconomy Forum (Action 1.3)

PB gave an update on the re-establishment of the Irish Bioeconomy Forum, highlighting that this is a specific Action (1.3) under Pillar 1 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan. John Malone will Chair the Forum again. An updated Terms of Reference and Work Programme will be agreed upon by members.

PB noted that invites had been extended to all past members of the Forum and Expert Advisory Group (EAG). An Expression of Interest was also launched to provide opportunity for new members. To date, the re-established Forum comprises 45 members (22 renewals & 23 new), and the EAG comprises 18 members (11 renewals & 7 new).

Item 3: Other updates on Pillar 1

PB provided an update on other activities related to Actions under Pillar one of the Action Plan.

The finals of the BISC-E student competition will take place in Maynooth University on 08 March 2024. Participants will receive prize money (vouchers), while the winners will go forward to

represent Ireland at EU finals in September. The BISC-E challenges post-graduate students to develop bio-based solutions that address technological/environmental/societal challenges.

The NSAI is seeking to establish a national bioeconomy committee to oversee the development of bio-based and related standards. A draft prEN18027 on bio-based products, Life Cycle Assessment and Additional Requirements is currently open for comment.

Two research projects of potentially high significance for bioeconomy have been funded recently. BioValue, funded by DAFM, will seek to measure and report on the Irish Bioeconomy using economic indicators. EnableBIO, funded by EPA, will aim to provide a roadmap to remove regulatory barriers and enhance enablers for Irish bioeconomy development. It was noted that many of these projects are developed based on expert feedback.

Item 4: Bioeconomy Communications (Action 1.1)

EC presented an update on Action 1.1 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan which centres around growing bioeconomy awareness through the implementation of a bioeconomy communications campaign.

DAFM and DECC bioeconomy teams are currently developing a communications campaign strategy in consultation with their respective Communications Divisions.

DAFM and DECC also plan to engage with the Department of the Taoiseach's Climate Communications Coordination Committee.

KW suggested that it would be important to involve the Irish Bioeconomy Forum in the communications campaign.

PB asked for feedback from the BIDG on current and past bioeconomy communications activities to help shape the development of the communications campaign.

LD indicated that there are good resources in Department of the Taoiseach, and she would be happy to link in relevant colleagues.

Item 5: Workshop – Integrating Bioeconomy into Policy (Action 1.2)

A workshop was organised to allow DAFM and DECC to gain an understanding of the issues facing Departments/agencies with regard to bioeconomy policy.

Three questions were posed to participants:

1. What does bioeconomy policy mean to your Department/agency?
2. What are the issues you are facing to achieve this action?
3. What tools do you have, or need, to fulfil this?

The output from this workshop will feed into the development of a bioeconomy policymaking guidance document (Action 1.2.2 of the Bioeconomy Action Plan).

AOB:

Funding opportunities:

- DAFM is currently running an EU Just Transition Fund Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative. It is anticipated that two successful proposals on foot of the 2023 Call will be announced in

the first half of 2024. DAFM expects to launch a 2024 Call, with a further €10m in funding, later in 2024.

- The launch of the €9m Shared Island Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiative, being developed by DAFM in partnership with DAERA, has been delayed due to political developments in Northern Ireland. KW noted that this Shared Island initiative is being looked on positively by the new Agriculture Minister in NI.

An All-Island Bioeconomy Summit will take place on 12 March 2024 in Tullamore Court Hotel.

Bioeconomy Ireland Week will take place between 14-20 October 2024. Departments and Agencies are encouraged to consider potential events or activities that could be held around this time to promote bioeconomy.

Important dates:

- Next meeting – 14 May 2024, 10.30 to 12.30 (Hybrid: In-person and online)
- Reporting Period 1 returns are due 19 April 2024
- Reporting Period 2 returns are due 18 October 2024

BIDG Secretariat
25/04/2024

Minutes of the 21st meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Online via Microsoft Teams

Date & time: Tuesday 14 May 2024, 10.30 to 12.30.

Attendees:

Co-chair: Karl Walsh (DAFM).

Secretariat: Laura Broomfield (DECC) [Chair for 14 May 2024], Evan Carey (DECC), Patrick Barrett (DAFM), & Matthew Halpin (DAFM).

Departments: Andrew Moran, Laura Devaney (D/Taoiseach), David Walsh, Joseph Cummins (DETE), Donal Cronin (DHLGH), Emma Hanrahan (DFHERIS), John Knox (D/Transport), Matt Hornsby (DECC), Rinku Phulphagar (DPENDR), Thomas Connolly (D/FIN).

Agencies: Ciara McDonagh, Maeve Henchion, Órlaith Ní Choncubhair, Paul Maher, Raymond Kelly (Teagasc), Fiona Grant (Marine Institute), OwenRoe Lemass (SEAI), Sandra Gleeson (EPA), Ankush Shirsath (Enterprise Ireland).

Invited guests: Alvan Hunt (Hexafly), Hanna Freienstein (DG GROW), Michael Lysaght (DETE), Gráinne Devine (BIM), Peter Corcoran (Monaghan Biosciences).

Apologies: Marc Kierans (DECC & co-chair).

Item 1: Opening remarks, introductions and workshop feedback

Welcome to Emma Hanrahan (DFHERIS), and Raymond Kelly and Paul Maher (Teagasc) attending their first BIDG meeting. Welcome also to invited guests.

Laura Broomfield (LB) presented on the outcomes of a workshop that was held during the February 2024 BIDG meeting (Meeting 20) and thanked all that participated and provided feedback. The main feedback points are included in the meeting slide deck. Regarding next steps, DECC will use this feedback to inform the development of a policymaking guidance document (as per Action 1.2 of Bioeconomy Action Plan).

A question was raised about the development of a sectoral toolkit for the bioeconomy. Patrick Barrett said that DAFM & DECC would be open to hearing of/discussing examples of toolkits from other sectors.

Item 2: Deep dive - Pillar 6 Industry & Enterprise

(LB) set the scene for this deep dive item, presenting an overview of Pillar 6 which focuses on 'Industry and Enterprise'.

Hannah Freienstein (HF), an invited guest representing DG GROW, presented insights around industrial aspects of EU bioeconomy policy, notably the March 2024 Communication on 'Building the Future with Nature'. Overall, the EU Commission recognises the strategic importance of the bioeconomy and biotechnology sectors. The Communication has identified a number of challenges and barriers towards European bioeconomy development but proposes a number of actions to address these. Other EU developments include the updating of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, the

creation of an EU biotech hub and a possible EU biotech Act. See accompanying slidedeck for more information.

Michael Lysaght (ML), an invited guest representing the Enterprise Strategy Unit in DETE, gave a presentation on the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA) and its pertinence to bioeconomy. The NZIA is expected to come into force in July 2024. Notably, biogas/biomethane technologies and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies are listed as proposed net-zero technologies. See accompanying slidedeck for more information.

BIDG member Ankush Shirsath (AS) from Enterprise Ireland (EI) gave a presentation on various enterprise funding mechanisms and grant supports for the bioeconomy that are offered by EI. Overall, this amounts to over 35 funding streams. See accompanying slidedeck for more information.

Alvan Hunt (AH), an invited guest representing Hexafly, gave a presentation outlining the experiences of an SME growing and developing within the bioeconomy. Alvan is CEO of Hexafly, a business that uses insect farming as a means to bioconvert food waste into high quality protein, oil and fertiliser. Alvan first outlined his business concept, before going on to share his experiences in relation to raising equity funding, scaling production and working with local authorities. See accompanying slidedeck for more information.

Peter Corcoran (PC), an invited guest from Monaghan Biosciences, gave a presentation on how Monaghan Mushrooms is using the concept of the bioeconomy to overcome significant challenges in relation to mushroom production. Policy and regulatory changes have resulted in a need to research and develop a sustainable replacement for peat. Peter outlined how this challenge is being approached from a bioeconomy perspective, using biotechnology as an enabler and the concept of circularity to ensure maximum resource efficiency, zero waste and overall product sustainability. He highlighted a need for a strategic approach from Government to support SME's in their approach to bioeconomy scaling. See accompanying slidedeck for more information.

Responding to questions:

- What are the regulatory barriers to scale-up?
    - (AH) Funding and access to capital are vital, particularly at the smaller scale (early stage of scaling).
    - (PC) It is critical to encourage businesses to carry out depth of horizon scanning in order to get ahead of regulatory hurdles.
    - (HF) EU Commission will be undertaking a study to better understand legislation gaps.
- Funding opportunities at present?
    - (AS) 75% of applicants to EI funds in this area are from SME's 6% are high-performance start-ups and 19% from larger companies. Many are within food and drink sectors.
    - (AH) Hexafly has availed of EI funding wherever possible. It would be extremely beneficial to have a specific bioeconomy fund available.
- Members states' contributions to EU Biotech Hub?
    - (HF) The concept is still under development. Member States should provide feedback on specific needs of SME's and stakeholders.

- Natural capital considered in funding applications?
    - (AS) EI is reviewing its funding mechanisms.

Item 3: Bioeconomy Action Plan reporting update

Evan Carey (EC) provided an overview of progress under the Bioeconomy Action Plan between the period October 2023 to April 2024. This update on progress was presented on a per Pillar basis and is detailed in the meeting slidedeck. The next reporting returns for the Action Plan are due on 18 October 2024 and will cover the period April 2024 to October 2024.

AOB:

Patrick Barrett gave an update on EU & International developments relating to the Bioeconomy. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy is currently being updated and is expected to be published in 2025. The Global Bioeconomy Summit (GBS) will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on 23-24 October. Ireland is currently considering a bid to host the 2026 GBS, as part of Ireland's EU Presidency. The CBE JU, a €213 million Call for advancing circular biobased industries, is open until 18 September 2024.

Matthew Halpin gave an update on national developments relating to the bioeconomy. Planning is underway for Bioeconomy Ireland Week which will take place 14-20 October 2024. The Irish Bioeconomy Forum has been renewed with 50 members and 19 expert advisory group members. A work plan for the Forum is being finalised, however, this will include a bioeconomy study tour to Denmark in June 2024 – BIDG members are welcome to attend. Also, as part of the Forum, a workshop to gather feedback on the development of a bio industrial network in Ireland will take place on Friday 17 May – BIDG members are welcome to attend.

(EC) gave a brief update on the DECC & DAFM bioeconomy communications strategy.

More details on A.O.B are available in the meeting slidedeck.

Important dates:

- Next meeting – 24 September 2024, 10.30 to 12.30 (Hybrid: In-person and online)
- Reporting Period 2 returns are due 18 October 2024

BIDG Secretariat

12/07/2024

Minutes of the 22nd meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: In-Person Meeting room 8-1W, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 & Online via Webex.

Date & time: Tuesday 24 September, 10.30 to 12.30.

Attendees:
Co-chair: Marc Kierans (DECC).
Secretariat: Patrick Barrett (DAFM) [Chair for 24 September 2024], Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Laura Broomfield (DECC), Evan Carey (DECC).

Departments: Andrew Moran, Laura Devaney (D/Taoiseach), Alan Dempsey (DETE), Emma Hanrahan, Alex Dowdall, Padraig Kelly (DFHERIS), John Knox (D/Transport), Rinku Phulphagar (DPENDR), Sean Judge, Thomas Connolly, David Owens (D/FIN).

Agencies: Maeve Henchion, Pat Dillon, Paul Maher, Raymond Kelly (Teagasc), Owenroe Lemass (SEAI), Caitriona Collins, Niamh McCormack, Nigel Hayes (EPA), Ankush Shirsath (Enterprise Ireland), Grainne Devine (Bord Iascaigh Mhara), Sean Mulvaney, JP Corkery (NTMA), Maria Nash, Nick Vafeas (Research Ireland), Majbritt Bolton-Warberg (Marine Institute).

Invited guests: John Malone (Irish Bioeconomy Forum), Catriona Power, Helena McMahon (Circular Bioeconomy Cluster), Stephen Napier (Irish Bioeconomy Foundation).

Apologies: Karl Walsh (DAFM & co-chair), Fiona Grant (Marine Institute), Melissa Maloney (DRCD), Órlaith Ní Choncubhair (Teagasc), Margie McCarthy (SEAI), Donal Cronin (DHLGH), Orla Finucane (Research Ireland).

Item 1: Opening remarks and introductions

Welcome to invited guests John Malone, Catriona Power, Helena McMahon, and Stephen Napier. Recap of the last BIDG meeting held on 14th May, previous minutes accepted, and an overview of the agenda.

Marc Kierans (MK) provided an overview of the DECC bioeconomy work programme and noted the progress with the Bioeconomy Action Plan. Climate Action Plan 25 is underway, a lighter plan than previous years.

Item 2: Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2024 Preview

Patrick Barrett (PB) provided a preview of Bioeconomy Ireland Week (BIW) and background to the event.

Matthew Halpin (MHa) gave an update on BIW 2024, taking place 14-20 October. The theme of BIW 2024 is "Demonstrating Biobased Solutions for a Greener Ireland". Highlighted main events, a full list of events at www.irishbioeconomy.ie

Item 3: Irish Bioeconomy Forum Updates

PB provided an overview of the Forum's first and second iterations, and the report to Government.

MHa gave an overview of the 2024 work programme for the Forum – expression of interest, 2024 Forum meetings, working group topics, bilateral meetings with BIM and Teagasc, and the study tour to Denmark.

2025 work programme will be developed in due course, feedback for BIDG members is welcomed.

John Malone (JM), chairperson of the Irish Bioeconomy Forum, provided a further update to the work of the Forum and an overview of the direction of the bioeconomy in Ireland. Current challenges in the area – more happening now than a few years ago, there is a need now to narrow the lens. Look at scaling up research to reality and be prepared for some failures. An opportunity for shared experiences – numerous projects ongoing but there is a need to avoid duplications and share knowledge. From the bilateral meetings with state agencies, challenges within the transitions across projects. Funding is available. Learnings from the Denmark Study Tour – at least 5 years ahead of Ireland, better integration e.g., co-location of bioeconomy with bioenergy (green industrial parks concept). Playing to their strengths - Local enterprise and local initiatives. ICOS and role of the coops in the bioeconomy is worth examining.

MHe noted the need to, focus on industry projects. Difficult to get companies involved in bioeconomy. How does bioeconomy contribute to rural development and growth, an action for Forum? Regional assemblies' involvement is welcomed.

PB – Danish perspective. Integrating bioeconomy into other systems (agri) for considerable time - 10 years. Industry involved in deploying bioeconomy innovation to address climate and water quality challenges. Biomass to protein, biochar, all on one site – a good example of co-locating.

Helena McMahon (HM) – Priority area for bioeconomy must be skills and talent, upskilling. New innovations and supply chains. Team internally with skills deploying new innovations. Topic for BIDG in the future? Companies more sustainable focused and have increasing reporting requirements. EI and other agencies need to provide supports to assist with reporting, and how bioeconomy can help reach targets for business sustainability.

Item 4: Deep dive – Pillar 4 Agriculture, Food, Forestry & the Marine

PB provided an overview of Pillar 4 – Agriculture, Food, Forestry & the Marine and an update on the progress of the actions within Pillar 4. Outlined the context on the bioeconomy and agri-food systems, the identification of potential gaps and opportunities in the bioeconomy policy landscape, and areas of future policy development.

Item 4A: Guest Presentations

Catriona Power (CP), an invited guest from Circular Bioeconomy Cluster (Circular Bioeconomy Cluster), gave a presentation on the BioDirect Innovation Challenge. BioDirect (BioDirect) is an All-Island initiative, funded by InterTrade Ireland's Synergy Programme. The project aims to accelerate the adoption of circular bio-based products across key sectors of the Irish economy and fostering cross-border collaboration (agriculture, packaging, textiles, construction). See accompanying slide deck for more information.

Stephen Napier (SN), an invited guest from the Irish Bioeconomy Foundation (IBF) (Home - Irish Bioeconomy Foundation), gave a presentation on the Biomethane for Carbon and Community project (Biomethane for Carbon and Community) which is co-funded by the GOI and EU JTF funding. The project will see a new Biomethane Development Office (BDO) centred on the National Bioeconomy Campus. The project is a partnership between Tipperary Co Co, Technological University of the Shannon, Tipperary Energy Agency and the IBF. BDO will act as independent resource to support and enable communities, enterprises and the agriculture sector to develop an economically feasible biomethane concept. See accompanying slide deck for more information.

Item 4B: Round table discussion on how bioeconomy advisory services are being integrated within current operations:

How are bioeconomy advisory services being integrated within current operations?

Organisation were asked to consider the following questions:

1. What bioeconomy advisory services does your organisation offer currently?
2. Who are the people/organisations that engage with your advisory services?
3. What are your thoughts/feedback on your current advisory offering?
4. How does your organisation plan to develop/improve its bioeconomy advisory services going forward?
5. Where do you think are the gaps in bioeconomy advisory services, and how could these be addressed to accelerate bioeconomy development?

Grainne Devine (GD), representing Bord Iascaigh Mhara, shared insights on BIM's advisory services for aquatech and primary producers. Ad-hoc bioeconomy advice to date, BIM's BIW videos first steps to advisory in bioeconomy area. Number of projects ongoing; seafood utilization projects, workshop with Teagasc in November. Challenges include staff and bioeconomy not formalised in BIM's current work programme.

Ankush Shirsath (AS), representing Enterprise Ireland, highlighted the ongoing efforts towards helping with sustainability reporting requirements, and making bioeconomy more attractive to SMEs through funding. Consultancy and training offerings are included within the advisory services offered by EI. Challenges and barriers to development exist with planning process.

Majbritt Bolton-Warberg (MBW), representing the Marine Institute. MI's role is to provide scientific knowledge advice to Government and industry. No bioeconomy specific group currently but features across whole organisation. Providing support to researchers in international funding streams, broad advisory service but not under bioeconomy theme, increasing focus on offshore and blue bioeconomy in work programme.

Caitriona Collins (CC), representing the EPA. The area of the bioeconomy is within the Circular Economy programme. Focusing on engagement with state agencies, regulatory aspect to bioeconomy activities, support the opportunities within resource management. The different language/definitions in use across sector is a challenge. Opportunities exist in by-product regulations, waste prevention. A need to look from strategic and sectoral perspective. EPA is willing to work with agencies and sectors to identify and navigate regulatory challenges and opportunities.

Owenroe Lemass (OL), representing the SEAI. No formal advisory service for bioeconomy within SEAI. Anaerobic Digestion plant developers, technology developers are interested in funding, however, there needs to be a strong energy component for SEAI involvement. Opportunities such as

Biochar and AD, biorefinery nutrient distribution hub, ReNure. Research database for companies supported. A need to reinforce capacity.

Sean Mulvaney (SM), representing the Irish Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) Multiple strands of funding exist. Importance of research funding, move towards companies engaging with research and co-funding. Debt and equity financing for companies, start-ups and spinouts around disruptive innovations. Advisory side – invested in funds €30m Sean O'Sullivan's SOSV Fund 5: Decarbonisation, Ireland biomanufacturing fund €250k-5m cheques. Feedback on infrastructure – scale up facilities, need for biorefining, and equipment access for smaller scale projects. De-risking opportunists. Advisory needs – more or different kinds of biomass, demand increasing. Diversification opportunity for some farmers, potential for instrument to meet biomass production's needs.

JP Corkery (JPC), representing the New Era side of the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA). Provide financial advice to Government depts and semi states. Stakeholder engagement for funding perspective, building markets and proving end markets. Tech side is semi-proven. Not much advisory so far, as semi states use internal staff. Biochar, AD, wastewater sludge are areas of opportunity. Tech advisors for pilot projects, then financial advisor for business case development. Accelerator programmes. Green gateway on the bioeconomy side, but covers mostly AD.

Maeve Henchion (MHe), representing Teagasc. Provide agricultural and food advisory services. No specific bioeconomy services, but bioeconomy related with climate, water quality, good collaboration with dairy co-ops and other stakeholders on measuring carbon footprints. Scope for better collaboration. New research from farm systems side, project on spatial and economic aspect. Food side, valorisation of waste streams and other streams.

Paul Maher (PM) of Teagasc added that there is an opportunity for bioeconomy advisory to align with ongoing Agriculture Knowledge & Innovation Systems (AKIS) developments. The role of other organisations such as co-ops, EPA, SEAI, BiOrbic projects assist in strengthening AKIS to develop the bioeconomy. Recent survey with farmers in Cork and Kerry conducted on grass biorefining. Network is there with AKIS, focus on content and choice at farm level. A challenge is to balance differing land uses.

AOB:

Evan Carey (EC) gave a brief update on the reporting under the Bioeconomy Action Plan. BIDG report to Government in Q4 2024 focusing on Action Plan implementation

National, EU & International Bioeconomy Developments were deferred until next meeting.

More details on A.O.B are available in the meeting slide deck.

Important dates:

- Next BIDG meeting – 26 November 2024, 10.30 to 12.30 (Hybrid meeting hosted by DECC)
    - Update on Action Plan reporting
    - Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan post 2025
- Reporting Period 2 returns are due 18 October 2024

BIDG Secretariat
05/11/2024

Minutes of the 23rd meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Hybrid (Online and DECC Offices, Tom Johnson House) – Hosted by DECC

Date& time: 26th November 2024 10.30am – 12.30pm

Attendees:

Chair: Marc Kierans (DECC)

Secretariat: Laura Broomfield (DECC), Evan Carey (DECC), Patrick Barrett (DAFM)

Departments: Brian Quirke, Aaron Bayle, Conor McGovern (DECC), Gareth Makim (DRCD), Alan Dempsey (DETE), Laura Devaney, Andrew Moran (D/Taoiseach), Rinku Phulphagar (DPER), Sirlone Lopes (DFIN), John Knox (D/Transport), Aobh Hyland, Alma Walsh (DHLGH),

Agencies: Fiona Grant (MI), Grainne Devine (BIM), Ankush Shirsath, Catriona Power (Enterprise Ireland), Orlaith Ni Choncubhair, Aine Macken-Walsh (Teagasc), Nigel Hayes (EPA), Owenroe Lemass (SEAI)

Guests: Colm Walsh (SRA), Wim Haentjens (DG RTD), John Daly (NWRA), Owen Douglas (EMRA).

Apologies: Karl Walsh, Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Melissa Moloney (DRCD)

Item 1 - Introduction

Marc Kierans (MK) opened the meeting and welcomed new members of the BIDG (Catriona Power (Enterprise Ireland), Alma Walsh (DHLGH)), and invited guests, previous minutes were accepted, and an overview of the agenda was provided.

MK provided a recap of Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2024 highlighting the launch event "Utilising Organic Waste Streams within the Circular Bioeconomy" held in DECC's Tom Johnson House, and the Marine Institute's library campaign.

MK provided an update on the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026, which Ireland is to host following a successful application process. Ireland was announced as 2026 host at the GBS 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya. Date to be decided, will likely be in October or November. The event will take place over two days, with plenaries, side events, and workshops. There is the possibility of day trips on third day to bioeconomy sites. GBS 2026 is included in the DFA's EU Presidency shortlist of events, a tiered system of supports will be offered by DFA. GBS tier to be known in 2025.

Item 2 – Bioeconomy Implementation

Evan Carey (EC) provided an update on the progress of the Bioeconomy Action Plan 2025, based on the reporting returns supplied by the departments and agencies responsible for delivery of the actions. At the end of the first year of the action plan – 4 actions have been completed, 24 have significant progress, 40 have commenced, and 4 have yet to start. A breakdown of the progress of each pillar was shown.

The Bioeconomy Action Plan progress report to be sent out to BIDG members for comments and feedback following the meeting. This report incorporates the reporting on actions by departments

and agencies for the October 2023 to September 2024 period. There will be a focus on implementation in 2025 and progressing remaining actions to completion before the end of the action plan in December 2025.

Item 3 – Bioeconomy Strategy Development

National Bioeconomy Strategy Development and Action Plan for 2026 – 2030, Laura Broomfield DECC

Laura Broomfield (LB) presented an update on the National Bioeconomy Strategy 2026-2030. Development of a bioeconomy strategy is Action 1.7 of the BeAP. Updated European Bioeconomy Strategy expected by end of 2025. Key steps and timeline for the bioeconomy strategy were outlined.

Regional Bioeconomy Strategy, Colm Walsh Southern Regional Assembly

Bioeconomy included in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies in the Regional Authorities. Alignment with the BeAP and Pillar 5. ROBIN Project – developing a ROBIN regional action plan. To include alignment of bioeconomy, research and innovation, regional enterprise, circular economy. Involvement of EU programmes Horizon and Intereg. Support provided for the CAROs.

European Bioeconomy Strategy, Wim Haentjens DG RTD

Wim Haentjens (WH) outlined the ongoing work on the development of the updated European Bioeconomy Strategy due for publication at the end of 2025. The update will include a more global context for the bioeconomy but respecting boundaries. 12 Directorate Generals are involved, drafting joint paper on benefits and added value of policy.

Bioeconomy mentioned in two mission letters. Consultation on the updated Bioeconomy Strategy to take place in early 2025. Bioeconomy moving from DG RTD to DG ENV with the main task of updating the Bioeconomy Strategy. Links to other initiatives – Biotech Act, Life Sciences, Clean Industrial deal, and the CE Act.

Discussion

LB introduced the Open Floor Discussion on thematic topics for inclusion and potential actions and provided an overview of the following questions:

- What strategies have you included bioeconomy in, and what gaps can you identify?
- Are there sectors that should be focused on?
- What policies and regulations need to be revised or introduced to support the sustainable development of the bioeconomy?
- What actions could your department consider for Ireland's bioeconomy from 2026 to 2030?
- What should a multi-stakeholder steering committee look like?

Fiona Grant (FG): Ocean Knowledge 2030. A research & innovation strategy proposed aligning actions.

Gareth Makim (GM): DRCD to develop rural development policy to be launched in early 2026, OECD working on a policy framework. Enterprise support focus in rural areas.

Alma Walsh (AW): Revision of the National Planning Framework – statutory requirement to be consistent with local levels and national. 2018 NPF contains bioeconomy, strengthened in update.

FG: Biodiversity benefits e.g. in marine sector – should bioeconomy look at whole supply/value chain?

Conor McGovern (CmG): Inclusion of research and innovation in strategy.

Grainne Devine (GD): Noted biodiversity requirements could be a challenge with developments. Nature Restoration Law and marine planning.

Brian Quirke (BQ): EU food waste reduction targets. Sector targets, National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap ongoing.

Item 4 – A.O.B.

National, European and International Bioeconomy Updates

Patrick Barrett (PB) provided an update.

National developments included the launch of the Circularity Gap Report on the 25th September 2024, and DAFM to fund Circular Bioeconomy Education Centre (CBEC) research project to support implementation of Bioeconomy Action Plan Pillar on Education & Skills.

EU developments include bioeconomy present in EU COM and EU Council priorities for next period with preparations for an EU Bioeconomy Strategy update now ongoing, and The Netherlands looking to take their Joint Statement on Sustainable Carbon global via COP.

International developments include the publishing of the G20 High-Level Principals on Bioeconomy following the Brazil G20 presidency.

Dates for 2025

BIDG Meeting Dates. Placeholder calendar invites to be sent out for agreed dates.

- 25 February
- 13 May (since changed to 10 June)
- 9 September
- 25 November

Deadlines for Bioeconomy Action Plan progress reporting 2025.

Third reporting (October 2024 to March 2025) due 17 April 2025.

Fourth reporting (April 2025 to September 2025) due 17 October 2025.

BIDG Secretariat

January 2025

Minutes of the 24th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Online – Hosted by DAFM

Date: 25th February 2025 10.30am – 12.30pm

Attendees:

Chair: Karl Walsh (DAFM), Marc Kierans (DECC)

Secretariat: Patrick Barrett, Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Laura Broomfield, Evan Carey (DECC)

Departments: Melissa Moloney (DRCD), Alan Dempsey (DETE), Andrew Moran (D/Taoiseach), John Knox (D/Transport), Laura Courtney (DHLGH), Alex Dowdall, Padraig Kelly (DFHERIS), Thomas Connolly (DFIN)

Agencies: Ronan Cooney (BIM), Ankush Shirsath, Catriona Power (Enterprise Ireland), Maeve Henchion, Orlaith Ni Choncubhair, (Teagasc), Niamh McCormack (EPA), Owenroe Lemass (SEAI), Niamh Garvey (NESC)

Item 1 - Introduction

Karl Walsh (KW) opened the meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. Minutes of the previous BIDG meeting approved.

Item 2 – Bioeconomy Action Plan Implementation Report

Matthew Halpin (MH) provided an update on the Bioeconomy Action Plan implementation report. Progress of the year 1 of the action plan was presented by Evan Carey (EC) at the November 2024 meeting. A timeline for delivery presented.

KW: To be decided how to bring to attention of the departments and ministers.

Item 3 – Irish Bioeconomy Forum Updates

Patrick Barrett (PB) provided an overview of the workplan for 2025. This involves finalising of the first two Irish Bioeconomy Forum papers (Bio-industrial Network and Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiatives), beginning of Climate Action paper, June 10th joint meeting of the Forum and the BIDG, Forum input to National Bioeconomy Strategy, end of year report to government.

PB presented an overview of the final version of the Bio-Industrial Network Forum paper. Analysis focused on coordination, co-design, services development, and business development. Advice to align with EU developments, leverage EU activities to support Irish developments. Expanded details of paper available on slide deck. Large body of work to consider and how to implement.

KW noted needs to be driven by industry, reflect on comments and questions. Bring in key players in a separate call to discuss in more detail. Dedicated session for key departments and agencies.

Item 4 – Deep dive into Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025, Pillar 5 – Communities, Regions & Cities

PB presented an overview of Pillar 5 – Communities, Regions & Cities. Noted a new area for the Bioeconomy Action Plan, with local authority and regional assembly interest. Development around social enterprise policy and activities, with opportunities around regional enterprise and skills.

Melissa Moloney (MM) from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) presented on Our Rural Future and the Rural Ideas Fora bioeconomy activity (Action 5.1.2). Held in Athlone during Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2024, the event featured a panel discussion and workshop with approximately 50 attendees from policy, local authorities, local development companies, and academics. The workshop discussed: 1) Why the bioeconomy is important for rural Ireland, 2) Key enablers and obstacles for the bioeconomy for rural communities, 3) Government investment priorities for biobased solutions. A video of the event was produced and is available on DRCD website. Our Rural Future to end in 2025, work has begun on the development of Our Rural Future 2.

Laura Courtney (LC) from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage presented on the First Revision of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and connection to Bioeconomy Action Plan Action 5.1.1. LC provided an overview of the new planning act, which will have 2-year phased introduction, and the planning hierarchy. NPF will shift planning be more regionally balanced, with city-focused and compact growth, and is tied to the €165B National Development Plan. Legislative requirement to revise the Framework every 6 years. Steps to date – Cross-departmental groups, public consultations, significant stakeholder consultation throughout. Details on NPF.ie. References to Bioeconomy embedded throughout the Draft NPF Revision particularly in Chapter 9 – Climate transition and Our Environment, NPO 67 and 30.

PB provided further updates on Actions 5.2.1 and 5.3.1.

Item 5 - National Bioeconomy Strategy & Action Plan 2026-2030

PB presented overview of the proposed National Bioeconomy Strategy & Action Plan 2026-2030. Strategy to follow on from current Bioeconomy Action Plan and the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy 2025. DAFM and DECC to lead on development, timeline of key steps outlined. Preparation work includes update of Network Analysis Diagram (building on Forum 1.0 activity), compilation & analysis of existing bioeconomy research, and a preliminary stakeholder survey. The survey will guide the initial draft document of National Bioeconomy Strategy & Action Plan, follows from BIDG feedback in November 2024.

Item 6 – AOB

MH provided an update on the national bioeconomy. CBE JU Call 2025 stakeholder event to be held 28 February 2025. All-Island Bioeconomy Summit 2025 to take place in Enfield, Co. Meath 13 May 2025. NSAI has established the national Standards Committee for the Bioeconomy, NSAI/TC 169 to mirror the work of CEN/TC 411 – bio-based products.

Laura Broomfield (LB) updated the group on EU developments in the bioeconomy. Development of the new EU Bioeconomy Strategy is in progress with an expected publishing date of Q4 2025, public consultation expected March 2025 will be open for 8-10 weeks. Bioeconomy moved from DG RTD to

DG ENV in new Commission. European Circular Economy Act expected 2026, with bioeconomy included.

LB provided an update on the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026. Regular meetings being held with IACGB. Regular meetings with DFA & other Government Departments and agencies, as relevant. Currently working on logistical details i.e. dates, venue, etc.

EC updated the group on the planned communications activities for 2025, and the key BIDG dates for 2025. Next meeting of the BIDG will take place on 10 June 2025.

End of Meeting.

BIDG Secretariat

May 2025

Minutes of the 25th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre, Dublin 15

Date: Tuesday 10th June 2025, 10.00 to 15.00

Attendees:

Chair: Marc Kierans (DCEE).

Secretariat: Laura Broomfield, Evan Carey (DCEE), Matthew Halpin (DAFM).

Departments: Matthew Hornsby, Conor McGovern, Marie-Lousie Farrell (DCEE), Emma Hanrahan, Yvonne Cannon, Karolina Murphy, (DFHERIS), Niamh Guihen (Dept. Transport), Thomas Connolly (Dept. Finance), Melissa Moloney (DRCDG).

Agencies: Owenroe Lemass, Luiz Gay Tarazona (SEAI), Catriona Power (Enterprise Ireland), Majbritt Bolton-Warberg (Marine Institute), Grainne Devine (Bord Iascaigh Mhara), Maeve Henchion (Teagasc).

Invited: Pádraic Ó hUiginn (NSAI).

Apologies: Karl Walsh, Patrick Barrett (DAFM).

Minutes:

Interactive session with Teagasc

Meeting attendees participated in a tour of the Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre which focused on bioeconomy up-scaling and pilot facilities. The facility tour was guided by Brijesh Tiwari and Shay Hannon of Teagasc.

Item 1 - Introduction

BIDG co-chair Marc Kierans, DCEE, provided opening remarks and welcomed BIDG members. He noted this was a joint meeting of the BIDG and the Irish Bioeconomy Forum and welcomed Forum members, including Forum Chairperson and meeting co-chair John Malone. He thanked Teagasc Ashtown for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the previous BIDG meeting taken as read.

Irish Bioeconomy Forum Chairperson John Malone provided opening remarks on behalf of the Forum and welcomed the opportunity for a joint meeting of the BIDG and Irish Bioeconomy Forum. He also thanked Teagasc for hosting the meeting and the tour of their facilities. He briefly summarised the Forum's work programme for 2025.

Item 2 – Teagasc Presentation

Prof Maeve Henchion, BIDG member and Head of the Teagasc Department of Agrifood Business and Spatial Analysis, presented an outline of Teagasc's work in the bioeconomy to date, the

establishment of the Teagasc Bioeconomy Working Group, and future plans for Teagasc activities in the area of bioeconomy, including the development of a National Food Bio Circularity Centre.

The full Teagasc presentation was shared with BIDG and Forum members after the meeting.

Item 3 – Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiatives

Matthew Halpin, DAFM, presented the final Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiatives paper to the BIDG for consideration, on behalf of the Irish Bioeconomy Forum. This paper was developed on foot of a Forum activity which assessed members' ideations for future bioeconomy piloting and demonstration activities in Ireland.

The paper identifies bioeconomy piloting and demonstration activities offering the potential to significantly advance scale-up and commercialisation of the bioeconomy across a range of opportunity areas including agri-food, marine, construction & built environment, plastics & bioplastics, pharmaceuticals, waste valorisation, and bioenergy. The paper identifies multiple factors (both direct and cross-cutting) that contribute to the viability of bioeconomy demonstration initiatives.

Seven recommendations are proposed by the Irish Bioeconomy Forum in the paper:

- Implement long-term, tiered funding models
- Develop a bio-industrial network and plot funding opportunities
- Outline scenarios for cross-sectoral value chains
- Develop a current facilities map
- Undertake gaps and opportunities analysis
- Outline commercial application and demonstration initiatives
- Develop solutions for co-ownership / multi-actor approach

The final paper was sent to BIDG and Forum members after the meeting.

Item 4 – Bioeconomy & Climate Action

Evan Carey, DCEE, updated BIDG and Forum members on an Irish Bioeconomy Forum activity on Bioeconomy & Climate Action. The activity is examining the role the Bioeconomy can play in reducing fossil carbon emissions and in climate adaptation and mitigation policy.

A first draft paper is being prepared on foot of feedback from Forum members via a set of initial scoping questions and a dedicated online workshop.

A final paper will be agreed by the Irish Bioeconomy Forum and then presented to the BIDG for consideration.

Item 5 – European Bioeconomy Strategy

Maria Rincon Lievana from the Circular Economy, Sustainable Production and Consumption Unit of DG ENV joined the meeting virtually to present on the new EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

The new strategy will consider interplay with other key EU policy initiatives. The objectives of the new strategy include:

- enhancing long-term competitiveness and resilience of the EU economy,
- ensuring industrial leadership in addressing climate challenges,
- leading in the emerging bio-based economy and driving biotechnology innovation,
- securing sustainably production and supply of biomass for food, materials, energy and services, and
- creating green jobs.

A public consultation on the Strategy is open until 23 June 2025. A range of workshops and targeted events are scheduled during the summer of 2025 to facilitate stakeholder consultation.

Item 6 – National Bioeconomy Strategy

Laura Broomfield (LB), DCEE, provided an update on the development of the National Bioeconomy Strategy 2026-2030.

DCEE and DAFM have summarised the results of the online preliminary stakeholder survey for the strategy. This has provided a draft vision, mission and guiding principles for the Strategy, as well as ranking policy areas, enabling tools and commercial applications.

Next steps for the development of the Strategy include the preparation of a first draft, a call for evidence, a public consultation, and conducting a SEA and AA. It is the intention to publish the Strategy in Q3 2026.

Separately, LB invited BIDG and Forum members to participate in the technical consultation on the derogation to the cascading use of biomass allowable under Article 3(3) of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III).

Item 7 – Interactive Workshop on National Bioeconomy Strategy 2026-2030

DCEE facilitated an interactive workshop to identify concrete, time-bound actions for the National Bioeconomy Strategy 2026–2030.

For the workshop, meeting attendees were divided into small groups, with each group being asked to consider one assigned bioeconomy policy area. The workshop centred around two questions, with 30 mins allocated per question:

1. You are in 2030, and Ireland has succeeded in progressing so there are visible signs of a sustainable, thriving, inclusive and circular bioeconomy?
2. Based on what needs to be in place by 2030, what specific actions must be initiated and completed between 2026–2030?

A workshop report was circulated to BIDG and Forum members after the meeting.

Item 8 – A.O.B

The remaining BIDG meetings in 2025 will take place on 09 September and 25 November.

Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2025 will take place 13-19 October.

The full meeting slide deck was circulated to BIDG and Forum members after the meeting.

BIDG Secretariat

August 2025

Minutes of the 26th meeting of the Bioeconomy Implementation & Development Group

Location: Online

Date: Tuesday 9th September 2025, 10.30 to 12.30

Attendees:

Chair: Karl Walsh (DAFM).

Secretariat: Patrick Barrett, Matthew Halpin (DAFM), Laura Broomfield, Evan Carey (DCEE).

Departments: Matthew Hornsby, Sean Kinsella, Conor McGovern, Marie-Lousie Farrell (DCEE), Emma Hanrahan (DFHERIS), Niamh Guihen (Dept. Transport), Hugh Power, Lara Mullen (Dept. Finance), Conor Foy (DRCDG), Alan Dempsey, Elisha Friel (DETE), Andrew Moran (Dept. Taoiseach)

Agencies: Luiz Gay Tarazona (SEAI), Catriona Power, Ankush Shirsath (Enterprise Ireland), Majbritt Bolton-Warberg (Marine Institute), Cliodhna Griffin (Bord Iascaigh Mhara), Maeve Henchion, Orlaith Ni Choncubhair, Áine Macken-Walsh (Teagasc), Niall McEvoy (Research Ireland), Michelle Reddy, Niamh McCormack, Caitriona Collins (EPA), Pádraic Ó hUiginn (NSAI).

Apologies: Marc Kierans (DCEE).

Minutes:

Item 1 - Introduction

BIDG co-chair Karl Walsh, DAFM, provided opening remarks and welcomed BIDG members including new attendees Michelle Reddy (EPA) and Pádraic Ó hUiginn (NSAI), and guest speakers Matt Hornsby (DCEE), Sean Kinsella (DCEE), and Niamh Guihen (Dept. Transport).

Minutes of the previous BIDG meeting taken as read.

An overview of activities since previous BIDG meeting included: IPCEI consultations, EU Bioeconomy Strategy consultation report with BIDG feedback, Biotech Act development ongoing, Danish Presidency updates.

Item 2 – Bioeconomy Action Plan 2023-2025 Implementation

Matthew Halpin provided an update on the Bioeconomy Action Plan's action for the third reporting period from October 2024 to March 2025. This included an overview of progress within the seven pillars, and highlighted key actions progressed to date (see slides for links to highlighted actions). For the remaining timeframe of the Action plan, action owners should focus on implementation and delivery of significant progress on actions.

Karl Walsh highlighted the focus is now on moving to significant progress of actions, and to make DAFM and DCEE aware if there are any setbacks to implementation of actions.

Item 3 – National Bioeconomy Strategy & Action Plan 2026-2030

Patrick Barrett outlined progress on the development of the National Bioeconomy Strategy, and the draft structure of the strategy. Feedback from BIDG members is important to strategy development. Awaiting publication of EU Bioeconomy Strategy, due in November and to be launched in early December 2025. Overview of the next steps: preparation of initial draft strategy, NESC event in January 2026, public consultation, SEA/AA screening. It is the intention to publish the Strategy in Q3 2026.

Karl Walsh outlined need for high-impact actions for strategy, with input on actions from the BIDG. Moving into the next phase of bioeconomy development, asked for ideas how to develop at enterprise level (start-ups and spin-outs). Look at existing enterprise supports and aligning funding sources with bioeconomy development funding. 10-15 key actions that move bioeconomy forwards.

Item 4 – Upcoming Bioeconomy Activities

National Ploughing Championships 16-18 September 2025: Bioeconomy stand in the "We're Taking Climate Action" tent at this year's National Ploughing Championships. BiOrbic will share the stand space with DCEE and DAFM for all three days, with an interactive showcase of biobased products, as well as bioeconomy research.

Bioeconomy Forum Meeting 29-30 September 2025 to be held in Tralee, with site visit to MTU Tralee facilities.

Bioeconomy Ireland Week, 13-19 October 2025: This year's theme is 'Inspiring local communities for a sustainable, competitive Ireland'. Full list of events will be added to the new www.irishbioeconomy.ie website.

Global Bioeconomy Summit 2026: Tender process for venue nearing completion – dates & venue will be confirmed soon. Government Press Release, in conjunction with IACGB, for announcement. Government website/landing page being set-up. Tender for Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) being developed. Communications campaign strategy drafted and being finalised. Regular meetings being held with IACGB.

Item 5 – Deep Dive into Pillar 3: Nature, Climate, Energy & Circular Economy

Applying the natural capital approach to bioeconomy – Matt Hornsby

The presentation focused on defining natural capital as the stocks of renewable and non-renewable resources that generate flows of benefits to society. Reference was made to the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA-EA) framework. The INCASE Project was highlighted, which examined four catchments in Ireland to explore applications of natural capital accounting. Links to National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) actions were discussed, as well as updates from the DCEE natural capital workshop. Several ongoing projects were noted (as referenced in the presentation slides). A UK case study was presented to illustrate how natural capital has been integrated into policy decision-making.

Integrating bioeconomy with renewable energy obligations - The updated Renewable Transport Fuel Policy 2025-2027 – presentation by Niamh Guihen, Dept. Transport

The updated RTFP 2025–2027 was published in June 2025 and gives effect to the Renewable Energy Directive (RED III). The policy outlines biofuel targets to 2030, with 19 actions identified for delivery by 2027 to support CAP objectives. A pathway to 2030 was presented (as detailed in the slides). Updates were provided on Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) rate trajectories. The presentation highlighted the link between the RTFP and bioeconomy principles, emphasizing opportunities for indigenous biofuel production. The role of research and innovation within the RTFP was discussed, alongside a review of additional certification schemes. Sustainability concerns were raised regarding palm-derived biofuels, aligning with wider EU and national sustainability objectives.

Balancing bioenergy and bioeconomy - Implementation of the National Biomethane Strategy – presentation by Seán Kinsella, DCEE

The presentation outlined progress on the National Biomethane Strategy, including development of the Renewable Heat Obligation (RHO) scheme and district heating projects. Ireland was identified by the EU as having the highest per capita biomethane potential. A Sustainability Charter is being finalized to underpin the strategy's environmental integrity. The economic potential of biomethane was discussed, highlighting contributions to emissions reductions, agricultural diversification, and bio-based fertiliser production. The strategy also supports energy security through increased domestic gas production. Implementation involves 25 key actions (as outlined in the slides). The RHO will serve as a demand-side incentive for anaerobic digestion (AD), with annual increases planned through 2030. Several grant rounds are scheduled to support deployment. Bioeconomy-related actions include a pilot programme for small-scale AD projects (led by DAFM) and an assessment of supports and policies for bio-based fertilisers. Research opportunities were identified across these themes. A communications strategy and online information hub are being developed, with updates to be published on gov.ie shortly.

Slides from each of the invited presentations were shared following the meeting.

Item 6 – A.O.B

The next BIDG meeting will take place on 25 November 2025.

Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2025 will take place 13-19 October.

The full meeting slide deck was circulated to BIDG members after the meeting.

BIDG Secretariat

November 2025