

Bioeconomy in Germany's Rhenish Mining Area at a glance

Policy Brief | Germany CoP

This policy brief outlines the key outcomes and recommendations from the Germany CoP's (Community of Practice) Regional Policy Workshop, held under the BioGov.net project, focusing on strategies to enhance bioeconomy skills development.

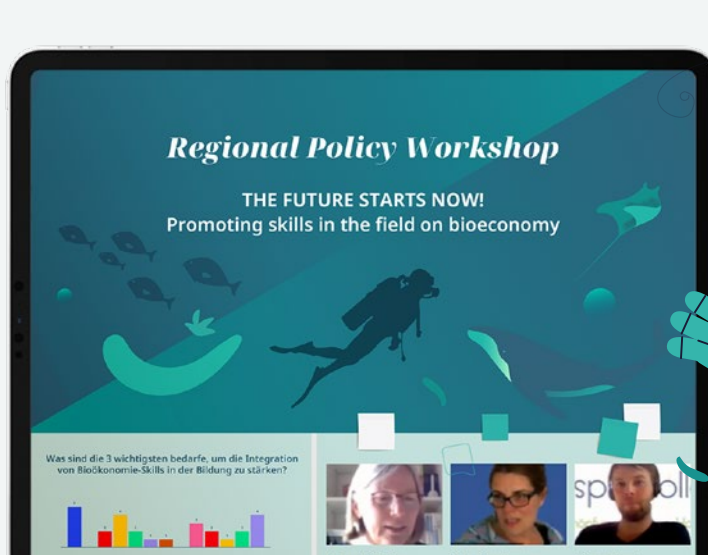
The main takeaways are based on comments by workshop participants and are not representative for Germany

Introduction

The German policy workshop for BioGov.net took place on May 23rd, 2024 with participants from research and higher educational organizations, a vocational education organization, a small business, a regional employment office, an art creator and an organization working with marginalized/disadvantaged / minority groups as well as a representative of wider society.

The meeting was held online in order to reach a wider range of participants. During the meeting collated input from preceding co-creative workshops and events was provided, assessed and complemented. As such the policy workshop focused on the:

- Assessment of requirements for stronger bioeconomy skill integration in education
- Review of the current governance system with regard to development of bioeconomic competencies
- Review of required governance changes to support the development of bioeconomic competencies within the region
- Discussion of barriers that may hinder the development of competencies in the field of bioeconomy
- Collation of concrete measures to strengthen the development of these competencies



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Focus Areas

The focus of BioGov.net in Germany was on the Rhenish Mining Area roughly described as located in North-Rhine Westphalia between Aachen, Cologne, Dusseldorf and the Dutch border. This region is undergoing a massive structural change in which the bioeconomy can play a serious role. On the background of Germany's national bioeconomy strategy (2020) and a North Rhine-Westphalian bioeconomy council and a regional State Strategy from 2023 the need for an integration of bioeconomy topics in educational strategies and policies was identified.

Barriers and Obstacles to Bioeconomy Strategy Uptake

01. Institutional challenges.
02. Insufficient interaction between education, research, innovation and producers.
03. A lack of cooperation between the individual sectors of the bioeconomy and Insufficient target group-specific communication.
04. Missing adequate educational programmes.

Opportunities and Motivations after the Bioeconomy Strategy Uptake

01. Strengthening of start-up businesses in the field of bioeconomy.
02. Using Online tools for further information and raising public awareness.
03. Making use of best-practice examples.
04. Definition of clear goals, creating a spirit of optimism and cooperation Defining a road map.

Main takeaways

Policy

01. It needs a stronger focus on local/regional approaches, e.g. through the creation of regional, theme-driven platforms, direct and regular contact with key stakeholders and the integration of bioeconomy aspects into pilot projects with cross-regional / international support.
02. A uniform certification framework for sustainable organic products and regional marketing clusters to raise public awareness are highly recommended.
03. A better exchange between the chamber of commerce, entrepreneur and business associations and educational institutions should be enabled.
04. Communication should include up-to-date information and support networking events as part of the regional business development, e.g. through 'opportunity fairs', competitions, or prizes.
05. Besides long-term oriented rethinking of bioeconomy and related educational strategies, it needs open-source tools about existing regulations, framework agreements and strategies which define clear goals.
06. To address lacking public awareness, the educational sovereignty of the states and the resulting difficulty in integrating educational programmes into existing educational structures and programmes need to be overcome.
07. To strengthen the integration of bioeconomy skills into the education system it needs access to European funding opportunities, the set-up of a European educational network and the provision of best practice examples at national/international level.

Education

01. A general/basic introductory bioeconomy program/training is needed for all educational levels.
02. Education for a better understanding of the circular economy and carbon footprint is needed.
03. The empowerment and education of teachers to realize the interdisciplinarity nature of bioeconomy should be considered.
04. On-the-job training should be increased.
05. It is urgent to include bioeconomic content in school curricula at all levels and to create teaching resources for schools.
06. Better communication and campaigning and better connections between business development and education programmes are requested.
07. Communication measures, using social media and collaborative projects should become part of job orientation initiatives.

Lessons Learned

- Making bioeconomy topics more tangible for different audiences at different levels of education is promising, but when focusing on specific bioeconomy topics the development of tailored formats for teaching and communication is needed.
- It was stated that the regional bioeconomy activities are highly competitive and as such bear the risk of hindering effective networking and strategic thinking and development.



For more detailed information, visit the [Germany regions page](#) and [Biogov.net website](#).

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Funded by the European Union

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