“Bottom-up and top-down approaches to building learning communities to enhance national and regional competitiveness”

A National Association Perspective

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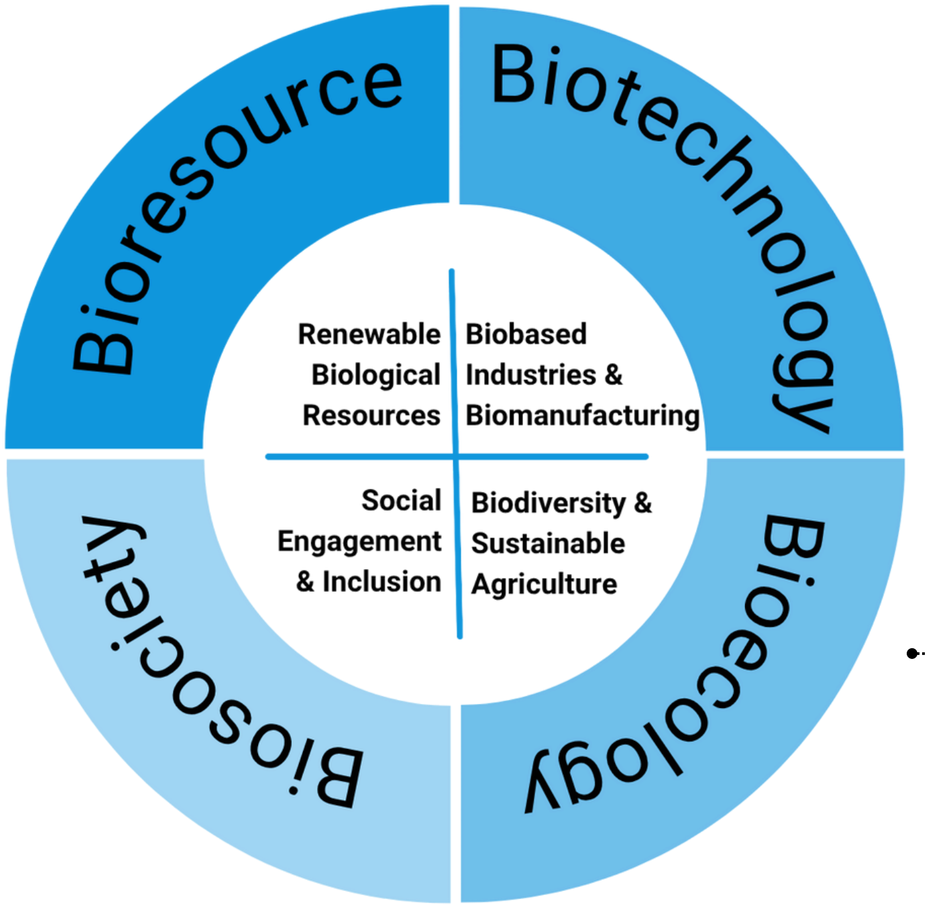
A few words about...



Who we are

The national association for the biobased industry in Greece.

Our mission

To accelerate the country's transition to a regenerative economy by bringing together producers, innovators, and organizations that harness renewable biological resources, biotechnologies, and circular principles to create real impact.

Our role

To be a strong voice and a committed partner to our members, and a key contributor and collaborator to the national and European policy organizations and regulatory bodies.

Our strategic pillars

Strategy & Policy, Growth, Dialogue, Society

Our strategic sectors

Renewable biological resources, biobased industries and biomanufacturing, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, social engagement and inclusion.

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Our members benefit from...

- Contribution to a favourable political, regulatory and financial framework
- Access to public authorities for decision-making, measures and best practices
- Opportunities for cross-sectoral and cross-border cooperation
- Participation in the exchange of knowledge and know-how
- Promote research and innovation
- Information on current or upcoming national and European funding programmes
- Participation in consortia to secure funding
- Contribution to the creation of bioeconomy skills and jobs.

Our members as SMEs, research institutes, universities, non-profit organizations, public bodies, and independent professionals who design, manufacture, and promote bio-based products, processes, and services.

LEDRA FERTILISERS
EVYP Crop Biostimulation Technologies
OLBIO HUMIC SOLUTIONS
AGROREA Reform Earth
ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI
SUST CHEM CONSULTING
Alexpant REGENERATE NATURE
SOLMEYEA
MicroPhykos
staramaki social cooperative enterprise
BIOSOLIDS INNOVATION DRIVEN BY NATURE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA
INTERNATIONAL HELLENIC UNIVERSITY
Clean Stories COMMUNICATING THE BIOECONOMY
AgroTech INNOVATIONS
Perrotis College A division of the American Farm School
4FOODS QUALITY & STRATEGY CONSULTANTS
ΚΑΠΕ CRES ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΑΝΑΝΕΩΣΙΜΩΝ ΠΗΓΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΞΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΗΣΗΣ ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑΣ CENTRE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND SAVING
ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΣ Κ. ΔΑΜΑΤΗΣ Δετλ. Μηχανικός Παραγωγής & Διοίκησης

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The GBC acts as a...

01.

National platform

enabling structured dialogue, collaboration & knowledge exchange among all bioeconomy stakeholders.

02.

A learning community

connecting actors who previously worked in isolation, fostering co-learning, trust and joint problem-solving.

03.

A structured framework for exchange

providing long-term governance, continuity, and alignment with national & EU strategies.

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The bioeconomy in Greece

The current bioeconomy sector in Greece demonstrates a substantial turnover, estimated at approximately 27 billion euros (1,35% of the EU total €2Tril).

€27 Bn.

The current bioeconomy sector employs around 0.5 million individuals (2,9% of the EU total 17Mn).

0.5 Mn. Individuals

Remarkably, nearly 80% of these activities are directly or indirectly linked to the agricultural sector, signifying its pivotal role (19% in the EU).

80%

The dominant sectors within the bioeconomy landscape encompass:

- Agriculture and Forestry
- Marine and Aquatic Resources
- Waste Management and Circular Economy
- Bio-based Industries (Food and Biotechnology)
- Renewable Energy
- Pharmaceutical, and
- Tourism and Biodiversity.

Sources: BioGov.Net EU-funded project: https://www.biogov.net/region/greece/
JRC. The Bioeconomy in the European Union in numbers Facts and figures on biomass, turnover and employment. Link.

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The Main Hurdles

The four key obstacles facing the Greek bioeconomy.

Fragmented Governance and Limited Cross-Sectoral Coordination

This fragmentation slows down decision-making, complicates the communication with the stakeholders and the implementation of EU bioeconomy priorities, and prevents the formation of a unified national vision.

Insufficient Infrastructure for Biomass Valorisation and Industrial Scale-Up

Many Greek companies are forced to test or scale up their innovations abroad, leading to loss of economic value, talent, and competitiveness.

Low Investment and Limited Access to Finance

This investment gap slows down the development of the entire value chain and discourages entrepreneurs from entering or expanding within the sector.

Skills Gaps and Limited Public Awareness

This knowledge gap slows adoption, reduces market demand, limits societal support for bioeconomy transitions, and it weakens Greece’s readiness to integrate into European innovation ecosystems.

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Forming Learning Communities

is necessary to overcome some of these hurdles, reinforce collaboration and build successful dialogue and exchanges between universities, research institutes, industry, policy makers, and the civil society.

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Top-Down Approaches to Forming Learning Communities

Top-down approaches

- Setting national or regional priorities
- Funding collaborative initiatives
- Establishing formal networks, councils, or advisory groups
- Mandating cross-sectoral cooperation
- Providing policy direction and long-term strategies

Advantages

- Clear structure, legitimacy, and continuity
- Access to funding and institutional support
- Ability to align actors through policy frameworks
- Can scale learning communities quickly across regions

Limitations

- May lack flexibility or responsiveness
- Risk of low commitment if stakeholders join out of obligation, not motivation
- Can overlook local needs or grassroots innovation

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Bottom-Up Approaches to Forming Learning Communities

Bottom-up approaches

- Shared challenges
- Fewer resources
- Common goals or opportunities
- Companies often start small, but can grow into strong ecosystems.

Advantages

- Highly relevant to real needs
- Strong motivation and ownership among participants
- Very adaptive and innovative
- Builds trust and long-term collaboration

Limitations

- Limited funding or institutional support
- Difficult to scale without formal recognition
- May remain fragmented without coordination

Application in Greece

Top-down approaches

Greece's bioeconomy governance is fragmented, so top-down action is especially important to:

- coordinate responsibilities across ministries
- support regional efforts, clusters, and learning hubs
- integrate regional bioeconomy need into the national strategy
- provide resources for pilot infrastructures

The GBC advocates for this coordination and acts as a facilitator between ministries and local actors.

Bottom-up approaches

Greece has strong bottom-up activity, especially in:

- agri-food residue management and reuse of agricultural waste
- sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (microalgae)
- regional innovation clusters (e.g., Crete, Central Macedonia)
- regional bioeconomy hubs (Peloponnese)

The GBC supports these communities by giving them visibility, connecting them to policymakers, and helping them join EU networks.

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Why do we need both approaches?

Because learning communities are not merely academic concepts.
They are practical mechanisms for transformation that bring
together local expertise, institutional support, and shared purpose.

How the GBC applies the Learning Community model in practice.

Knowledge-Industry Bridge

We are planning to create Living Labs to connect the industry with Universities and research institutes to couple industrial needs with scientific results, and co-develop applied solutions.

We are also currently developing a Master of Science in Bioeconomy at the A.U.T.H. aiming to enable graduates to apply for internships and jobs at our industry members.

Regional Bioeconomy Hubs

These hubs link SMEs, local authorities, and universities, operate with local resources to create local impact. We support these regional innovation ecosystems by feeding their voices and goals into the national strategy and connecting them to our members.

The first hub was created in 2025 from Mr. Vorgias in Peloponnese.

Skills & Jobs Development

We are planning to create a national skills map to identify gaps in bio-based education and vocational training. This directly contributes to aligning academic curricula with emerging industry needs.

Citizen engagement through municipalities

We are connecting with local municipalities to create side events at social activities that educate people about the bioeconomy, i.e. biobased drinking containers and their biodegradable properties.

Thank you for listening!
Any questions?

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