CIRCULAR BIOECONOMY AS A MAIN PILLAR OF THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

Dirk Carrez, *Executive Director*
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Bio-based Industries Consortium

The Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC) is a non-profit organisation connecting industry, academia, regions and citizens to transform bio-based feedstocks into novel sustainable products and applications, and create circular bioeconomy ecosystems through investments, innovation and know-how.

240+
industry (full) members
large companies and SMEs

200+
associate members
research organisations, academia and trade associations

1 CBE JU

BIC represents the private sector in a public-private partnership with the European Commission called the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking

2 Business

Facilitating connections and providing market intelligence through activities including networking events and commissioned reports/studies

3 Finance

Mobilising public and private finance and investors through services such as a regional funding platform and a pitching event

4 Society

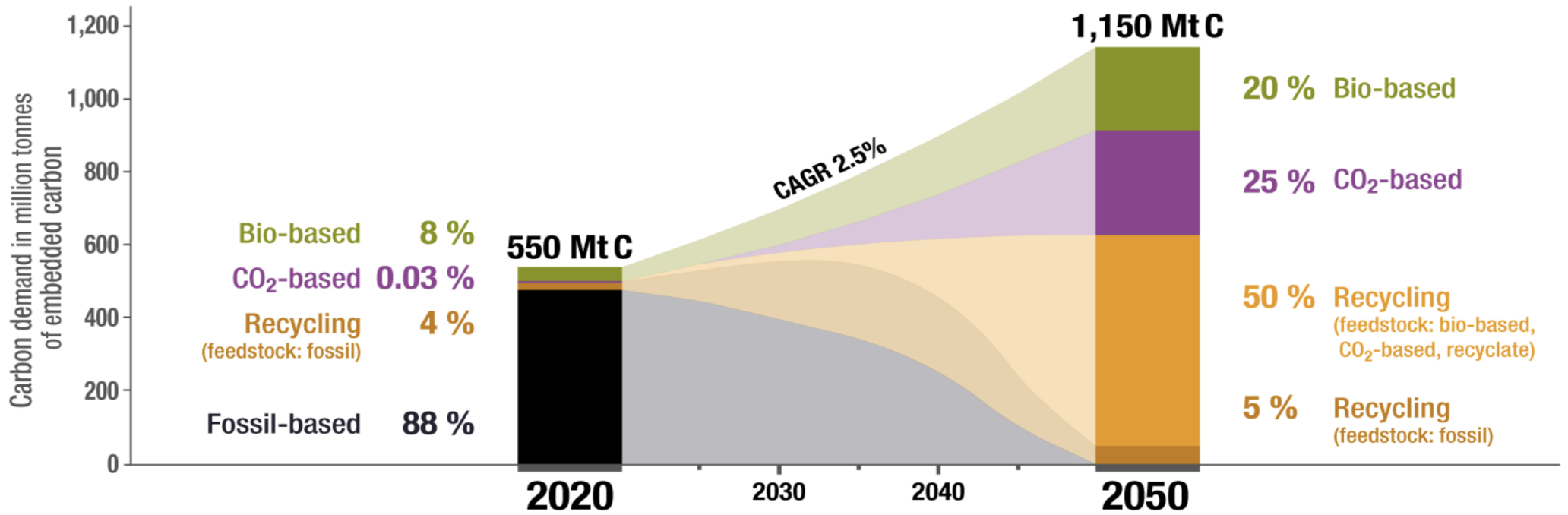
Increasing awareness, knowledge, acceptance and education through activities such as a student competition (BISC-E) and positive impact stories on the BIC Investment Portal

BIC also carries out specific activities to achieve a favourable policy, regulatory and financing framework for the bio-based industries, such as representing our members interest vis-à-vis the EU Institutions.

Defossilize it!

You can only defossilize the chemicals and materials sector, and not decarbonize

Carbon Embedded in Chemicals and Derived Materials



available at www.renewable-carbon.eu/graphics

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There are still opportunities

Biowaste example

Tackling Europe's waste challenges

BIC also teamed up with Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) in 2020 to produce a first-of-its-kind report identifying the untapped potential to valorise bio-waste in Europe.

The report details the current generation and capture rates of bio-waste for each of the EU-27 Member States, plus Norway and the United Kingdom.

The report also includes country-specific factsheets which provide calculations for the EU-27 + and other specific information that is relevant to bio-waste management strategies and perspectives in a specific country.

A circular bioeconomy powering a climate-neutral, sustainable, resilient and competitive Europe

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BIC 2023 Trend Report

Targeted policies for Europe's bioeconomy

EU policymakers must take action to realise the full potential of the circular bioeconomy

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BIC Policy Recommendations

1

To achieve the maximum potential of the bioeconomy for a circular, climate-neutral and green economy, the EU should:

- Develop **a dedicated and long-term policy framework** for the circular bioeconomy to transition into a strategic industry sector, and contribute to the EU's ambitious policy objectives, in consideration of the EU Leads Market Initiative.
- Appoint a **high-level EU policy coordinator** reflecting the cross-sectoral nature of the bioeconomy, e.g., a dedicated European Commissioner, or a cabinet member of the European Commission President.
- Create a **level playing field** for the contribution of carbon from renewable feedstock, by accounting for their key contribution to the substitution of virgin fossil raw materials.
- Establish and use a science-based **definition for renewable carbon** consistently in EU legislation.
- Promote practical **evidence-based criteria** when meeting End-of-Waste status, and for extended producer responsibility (EPR) and labelling, and relevant to the product groups considered. Foster the collection and valorisation of **bio-waste**.
- Support **policies that focus on the safety and sustainability of the end-product**, not on the processes used to produce them. Policies should be **technology neutral** across production methods (such as biotech, fermentation, extraction) and in recycling options (mechanical, chemical, organic and/or a combination).
- Apply a holistic Life-Cycle Analysis approach, including scientifically sound **sustainability criteria**, that fully take into account the benefits of carbon from renewable feedstock e.g. in current methods used for Life Cycle Assessments and Product Environment Footprints.

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BIC Policy Recommendations

2

The EU should unlock the innovation potential of the circular bioeconomy by:

- Undertaking a **systemic assessment** of legislation impacting the availability and use of biomass, including cumulative impacts, inconsistencies, and gaps.
- Ensuring a high-value use of biomass in line with the **cascading use principle**.
- Consistently applying scientifically sound **sustainability criteria** for using biomass.
- Harnessing reliable, comparable, and science-based data on **land use trends** to inform location-appropriate policymaking: the circular bioeconomy includes many diverse ecosystem services across the EU and beyond. One-size-fits-all solutions should be avoided.
- Establishing a regulatory framework for **reducing the dependence from virgin fossil feedstocks** in chemicals and materials including delivering proposals to achieve the 20% reduction target for plastics and chemicals in the EU Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles.

3

For Europe to fully capitalise on the opportunity to transition from fossil to renewable resources, we must:

- Create **incentives for the use of renewable feedstocks**, materials and products including financial instruments and public procurement; and through sustainability labelling and reporting.
- Ensure that the lifecycle effects of fossil-based production are fully accounted for and create a **level playing field** for renewable feedstock.
- Ensure targeted and coherent support for **scaling-up bio-based innovation**, including creating synergies between funding schemes (private, public, national, regional, EU) and faster permitting for first-of-a-kind biorefineries.
- Better enable deployment of bio-based innovation through specific forms of experimentation e.g. **regulatory sandboxes, living labs, test beds**, etc.
- Ensure **faster market-entry** of bio-based innovation through efficient product approval and evaluation mechanisms.
- Set-up **public-private partnerships** for the bio-based industry, for example under the 10th EU R&I Framework programme and/or via Important Projects of Common European Interest.

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Conclusion

The bioeconomy is part of the solution to master the green transition, but this will not happen by itself

U. von der Leyen (September 2022)

*We did not get rid of our **dependency on oil**. And worse, fossil fuels were even **massively subsidised**.*

***This was wrong**, not just for the climate, but also for our public finances, and our independence. And we are still paying for this today.*

***Only a few visionaries understood that the real problem** was fossil fuels themselves, not just their price.*

Not just a quick fix, but a change of paradigm, a leap into the future."

EC President (2024) !?

1. Create and expand market opportunities for bio-based products
2. Develop a policy framework for the circular bioeconomy to transition into a strategic industry sector
3. Support innovation and improve "access to finance" for biobased investments
4. Appoint a "bio-coordinator" e.g. high-level EU policy coordinator, in next EU Commission

GET IN TOUCH!

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Join BIC: https://biconsortium.eu/membership/join-us

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