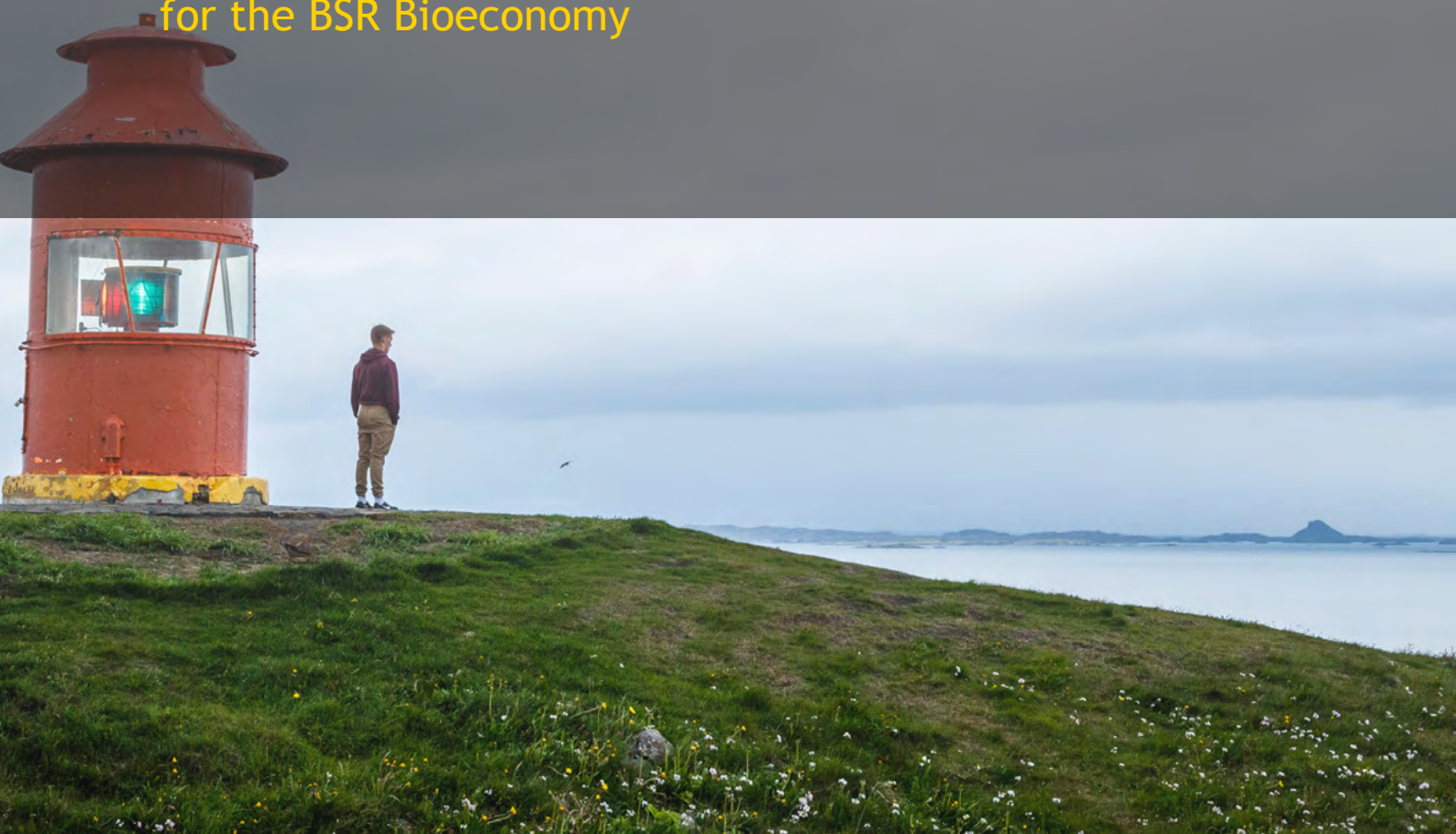


Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

NEWSLETTER 3

The 2015-2018 Strategy and Action Plan
for the BSR Bioeconomy



Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

In Warsaw on 4-5 March 2015, a three-year strategy and action plan to support the Baltic Sea Region in realising the bioeconomy was adopted.



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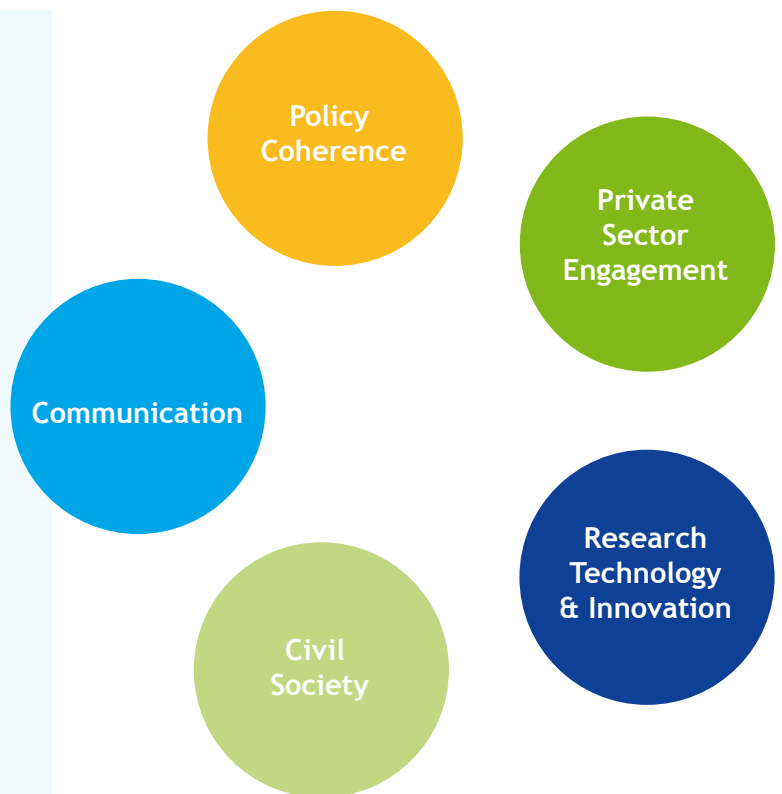
I am very pleased that stakeholders from national and local governments, knowledge and research institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations have now agreed on a framework for how we can provide practical support to the work of the Baltic Sea Region in realising the bioeconomy. The strategy and action plan is a result of more than a year of knowledge building and dialogue that has identified a number of opportunities - as well as a number of persistent bottlenecks - for realising the bioeconomy. The Baltic Sea Region is well endowed - with many capable institutions, knowledge and experiences, dedicated individuals, and a number of supporting frameworks at local, regional, national and macro-regional level - to move from pockets of smartness to become genuinely smart in the bioeconomy. I feel confident that the new strategy and action plan will play an important role in this transformation.

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy strategy

The 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy strategy and action plan aims to unlock key persistent bottlenecks in realising the bioeconomy. These bottlenecks are: Policy Coherence; Private Sector Engagement; Research, Technology and Innovation; Civil Society; and Communication. The identification of these target areas of the bioeconomy is a result of detailed analysis and mapping activities, as well as dialogue activities in the form of seminars involving more than 300 stakeholders from around the Baltic Sea Region.

The full strategy document can be downloaded here.



The bioeconomy is complex and cuts across sectors, so it does not fit neatly into one specific policy area. Instead it must be addressed through efforts in different policy areas. Some regions and countries in the Baltic Sea Region have already holistic bioeconomy policies in place. Others are on the way to developing such policies. In other countries and regions the bioeconomy is being pursued through sector policies, such as in agriculture, fishery, forestry, regional development, environment and innovation. Realising the bioeconomy calls for regions and countries to move beyond silos and sector policies and towards holistic policies and incentives across sectors. The 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan will facilitate sharing of best practice and development of new bioeconomy policy practices. A new 'BSR Bioeconomy Policy Dialogue Forum' will play an important role in this work.



Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

Private Sector Engagement

The bioeconomy essentially calls for new ways of producing and consuming biological resources. Consequently, the bioeconomy goes hand-in-hand with the private sector embracing new business opportunities afforded by the bioeconomy. The 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action plan includes a number of initiatives to engage the private sector more in the bioeconomy through various measures including: a Bioeconomy and Circular Economy Business Forum, aimed at being the leading and highly visible platform in the Baltic Sea Region for exhibiting bioeconomy and circular economy business solutions; efforts within the area of biorefineries to generate new value chains; public procurement incentives; and smart specialisation and business matchmaking activities that promote cross-overs and cross-fertilisation between, for example, biotechnology, life science, cleantech and circular economy business clusters.

Research, technology and innovation are key enablers to unlocking the potential of the bioeconomy. The 2015-18 BSR-Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan therefore aims to: improve the overview of leading knowledge and research institutions, their areas of excellence within the bioeconomy and their activities and experiences that can enable the transition towards the bioeconomy; investigate opportunities for smart specialisation through shared use of hard and soft test and demonstration infrastructures; fertilise the emergence of entirely new value chains resulting from new sector cross-overs; and encourage macro-regional innovation consortia whereby companies and universities in the Baltic Sea Region collaborate to find bioeconomy solutions to business challenges by utilising and commercially activating university competences.

Research Technology & Innovation

In essence civil societies - citizens - are the final consumers of all products and services, so any transition towards more sustainable consumption (and production) patterns goes hand-in-hand with the citizens of the Baltic Sea Region (literally) buying into the bioeconomy. The 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan will therefore assess lessons learned from organic and eco-labelling and their potential implications for increasing the demand for bioeconomy-based product alternatives by encouraging more sustainable consumption. Also, efforts will be made to engage with civil society as consumers through dialogue activities in connection with 'People's Meetings' such as Almedalsveckan in Sweden, Folkemødet in Denmark, Arendal Week in Norway, Suomi Areena in Finland, and Arvamusfestival in Estonia.



A key bottleneck to accelerating the transition towards the bioeconomy relates to its complexity and the relative novelty of the policy, research and business area. To increase awareness of the many opportunities afforded by the bioeconomy, the 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan will undertake a number of activities relating to communication: story-telling, such as through short films; study tours to show bioeconomy players how the bioeconomy is actually and practically being pursued in the Baltic Sea Region; and a BSR Bioeconomy Award to radical new innovations, new innovative partnerships or novel ways to engage with society and consumers. With a view to communicating Baltic Sea Region bioeconomy solutions beyond the macro-region, efforts will also be made to benefit from and contribute to the work of the European Bioeconomy Observatory.



Implementing the 2015-18 BSR-Bioeconomy strategy and action plan

“Implementing the strategy and action plan will not be pursued under one single joint budget. Instead, the strategy and action plan should be viewed as a framework and reference point for realising the shared vision, objectives and activities of a large number of bioeconomy stakeholders. With the joint strategy and action plan we are now able to speed up the transition towards the bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region.”

Geir Oddsson

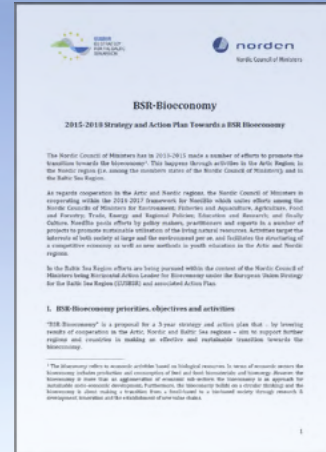
In its capacity as Priority Area Coordinator for Bioeconomy under the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the Nordic Council of Ministers will provide an anchoring point for stakeholder networking and cooperation aimed at realising the bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region.

In other areas - for example, work to promote smart specialisation through shared use of hard and soft test and demonstration facilities, innovation consortia, and cross-cluster cooperation - the Nordic Council of Ministers will engage by supporting and contributing to activities led by other partners. For example the Nordic Council of Ministers is currently cooperating with a number of partners to develop a competitive project application ‘BSR Stars S3’ under the European Union Baltic Sea Region Programme.

If the BSR Stars S3 application is approved, this project will directly support 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan activities relating to e.g. shared testing and demonstration, innovation and cross-cluster actions.

Bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region

In some areas of the 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy strategy and action plan, the Nordic Council of Ministers will lead the cooperation. Examples are the BSR Bioeconomy Policy Dialogue Forum, the Bioeconomy and Circular Economy Business Forum, and a number of the communication activities described above.



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In other areas, the Nordic Council of Ministers will play more of an intermediary and supporting role for stakeholders whose objectives are in line with those of the 2015-18 BSR Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan and who wish to work to realise these objectives through, for example, Horizon 2020 or other European- or Nordic-financed cooperation projects.

In this regard it is worth noting that the eight cooperation activities that have emerged from pre-seed funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers (read more here). A number of these partnerships will generate larger European or Nordic co-financed cooperation projects