

Press release

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF BIOENERGY ON THE ECONOMY AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

EERA's Joint Programme on Bioenergy launches an update of its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020, putting a stronger focus on sustainability, socioeconomics, and public acceptance

Brussels/Bologna – Challenges in the energy sector cannot be solved with technology alone and need to be tackled in a holistic approach. Today, the European Energy Research Alliance (EERA)'s Joint Programme on Bioenergy is launching an update of its Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020, which is putting a stronger focus on the sustainability, socioeconomics and public acceptance of bioenergy. The revision of the agenda was accompanied by the creation of a new sub-programme, aimed at facilitating the integration of biomass into the energy mix of a climate-neutral Europe.

The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda 2020 of EERA's Joint Programme on Bioenergy was first published in March 2019 and has attracted considerable attention in the bioenergy community. It is conceived as a guide for policymakers and public administrators at all levels with a particular focus on people designing research and innovation framework programmes and advises on scientific and technological priorities for the European bioenergy sector. The updated version puts a stronger focus on topics that go beyond pure technological solutions and can be downloaded here:

<http://www.eera-bioenergy.eu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/EERABioenergySRIA2020.pdf>

The agenda was developed by researchers from 42 organisations in 18 countries organised in the EERA Joint Programme, who have expertise in the broadest areas of biomass, from primary resources to conversion processes and end products. It has been addressing the sustainable production of biomass, both land and marine-based, the thermochemical and

biochemical processing of biomass into advanced biofuels and bio-based products as well as heating, cooling, power and a combination of those (CHPC) from biomass. The updated version goes one step further and discusses the impact of bioenergy on society and the European economy, leveraging on the creation of a new sub-programme that gathers expertise in these topics.

More emphasis on a holistic approach

Soon after the launch of the agenda last spring, members of EERA Bioenergy with an expertise in sustainability, socioeconomics and public acceptance have decided to join forces and create a dedicated sub-programme aimed at extending the document and supporting the implementation of the mentioned topics in the daily work of the Joint Programme. More specifically, the new sub-programme has been focusing on the following research areas:

- **Environmental analysis**, evaluating the environmental implications of bioenergy and aiming at understanding its potential for achieving European low-emission goals;
- **Techno-economic analysis (TEA)** of bioenergy systems, providing insights into the design of future biorefineries and biomass conversion processes;
- **Social analysis**, helping understand the factors, strategies and policies that play a role in the public perception and acceptance of bioenergy.
- Furthermore, it has been focusing on **innovation processes and commercialisation of bioenergy technologies**.
- It has also been establishing ties between the other research areas covered by the Joint Programme through a **cross-cutting sustainability analysis**, identifying potential synergies or trade-offs between these dimensions.
- Finally, it has been looking at the **political and regulatory frameworks for bioenergy** in Europe. For example, the implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive (RED-II, entering into force on 1 January 2021) will create several challenges in the next decade that need to be addressed early on.

The role of bioenergy for a circular economy

The bioeconomy represents a great opportunity for Europe. Biomass is an important driver for achieving an innovative and low-emissions circular economy, reconciling demands for sustainable agriculture and fisheries, food security, and the sustainable use of renewable biological resources for industrial purposes, while ensuring biodiversity and environmental protection. Besides a new boost for jobs, growth and investment.

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About EERA

The European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) is an association of European public research centres and universities active in low-carbon energy research. Bringing together more than 250 organisations from 30 countries, EERA is Europe's largest energy research community. EERA coordinates its research activities through 17 Joint Programmes and is a key player in the European Union's Strategic Energy Technology (SET) Plan. For further information, see www.eera-set.eu.

About the EERA Joint Programme on Bioenergy

The EERA Joint Programme on Bioenergy gathers Europe's main research organisations in the fields of bioenergy and bioeconomy. It promotes international co-operation to accelerate the implementation of SET-Plan priorities and actions, contributing to the decarbonisation of the energy sector by assessing research, development and innovation. Bioenergy in all its forms (power, heat and biofuels) is an essential component of the existing and future low-carbon technologies mix in all climate-change mitigation scenarios. For further information, see www.eera-bioenergy.eu.

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