

Enabling transition towards circular and systemic BIOeconomy model regions by a Regions-to-Regions approach

Report on strategic coordination activities in phase I

Deliverable 6.6

This deliverable has not yet been reviewed by the European Commission. Its content might therefore change as a result of the review process.

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BIO2REG in a nutshell

A circular bioeconomy is essential for achieving the EU's sustainability goals. However, the implementation of a regional bioeconomy is fraught with challenges. Bioeconomy model regions offer a systemic approach to the transition to sustainable development, based on circular economy concepts. The EU-funded BIO2REG project aims to help greenhouse gas-intensive economies unlock their circular bioeconomy potential by becoming bioeconomy model regions.

The project will promote regional networking, interregional exchange and cooperation, and provide regional stakeholders with a conceptual framework for regionalisation in bioeconomy model regions. This includes mapping best practices in a circular and sustainable bioeconomy, assessing bioeconomy potential, providing mentoring and training, forming transition alliances and making policy recommendations. The project adopts a multi-stakeholder approach, developing tools and guidelines in collaboration with regional stakeholders and engaging with regions through guided exchanges on the ground.

Find out more:

Website: <https://bio2reg.eu>

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1 Introduction and purpose of the Deliverable

Deliverable D6.6 provides a structured overview of the strategic coordination activities carried out during Phase I of the BIO2REG project, covering the first 18 project months from January 2024 to June 2026. As BIO2REG is implemented under a lump sum funding model within Horizon Europe, transparent documentation of completed activities is essential to demonstrate the full implementation of Task 6.1 (Strategic coordination – Phase 1) under Work Package 6.

This report focuses on the key outcomes and tangible results achieved—such as governance structures established, partnerships initiated, and Advisory Board engagement—while offering a high-level synthesis of coordination progress. In contrast, the upcoming official periodic reporting part B to report on Reporting Period 1 will place stronger emphasis on the coordination processes and management measures taken to ensure smooth collaboration and project alignment. Together, both reports provide a comprehensive view of how BIO2REG is effectively governed and strategically positioned within the broader European bioeconomy landscape to foster systemic regional bioeconomy transition.

2 Strategic coordination framework: Structures and meetings established

Between January 2024 and June 2025, the BIO2REG project successfully implemented a strong and effective coordination structure. Building on the Project Management Plan presented by FZJ at the Kick-off Meeting in Brussels (February 2024), the consortium established and agreed on a clear framework to guide internal communication, decision-making, and partner collaboration. This framework defined the project's governance structure and laid out key procedures for risk management, quality assurance, and progress monitoring. It also addressed practical aspects such as internal communication tools, meeting schedules, issue reporting, and ethical compliance. Specific provisions were included to manage the financial framework of the lump sum funding model, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the project's lifecycle. Two core structures were launched: **the Executive Committee (ExCom) and the General Assembly**.

The **Executive Committee**, comprising all Work Package (WP) leaders, met monthly to ensure strategic coherence and effective coordination across the project. These regular meetings helped identify interlinkages between WPs, supported proactive risk management, and facilitated continuous progress monitoring. To complement this coordination, internal reporting mechanisms were established. Progress reports—compiled by ExCom members—were produced four times during the first reporting period (January 2024 to June 2025), providing structured, written updates on the status of each task and enabling timely course corrections where needed.

The **General Assembly**, comprising all BIO2REG project partners, played a central role in maintaining transparency and coordination throughout the project. Regular online meetings facilitated timely information sharing and collective activity tracking. Initially held bi-weekly, the meeting frequency was adjusted over time—shifting to monthly from October 2024 and to bi-monthly from April 2025 onward—to reflect the evolving project needs. These regular meetings were particularly critical during time-sensitive phases involving multiple partners. Notable examples include the implementation of the five expert workshops under Task 1.4 (focused on education, social aspects, bio-based value chains and business models, living labs and research infrastructure, and funding), which took place between May and September 2024, as well as the regional network events hosted across five European regions from March to May 2025.

In addition to the virtual meetings, the General Assembly convened for two in-person gatherings: the Kick-off Event in Brussels, Belgium (February 2024), and the 1st Annual Meeting in Jülich, Germany (January 2025). Key outcomes and documentation from these physical meetings are detailed in project Deliverables [D6.1](#) and [D6.4](#).

3 Strategic alignment with external initiatives and projects

BIO2REG actively fostered strategic alignment with relevant European and international initiatives to maximize impact and position the project within the wider bioeconomy transition landscape. The aims of these collaborations were to:

- Leverage existing knowledge and networks,
- Avoid duplication of efforts, and
- Strengthen BIO2REG's role in systemic regionalization processes of bioeconomy transition.

As of March 2025, BIO2REG had successfully established synergies with 13 related initiatives and networks, including its active participation in the Rural Bioeconomy Alliance (RBA)—a cluster of EU-funded projects supporting the development of rural circular bioeconomy initiatives:

- SCALE-UP
- ROBIN
- BBioNets – Standing Liaison Round Table
- Rural Bioeconomy Alliance (RBA)
- Beaming
- BioInSouth
- C4B – Collaboration for Bioeconomy
- European Bioeconomy Network
- HOOP – Urban circular bioeconomy
- Primed
- RuralBioUp
- ShapingBio
- SUSTRACK
- SYMBA

The [partner initiatives are also published on the BIO2REG website](#). Through these collaborations, BIO2REG partners shared insights, aligned transition efforts, and contributed to joint learning and capacity building across regions and projects.

In addition to formal alignment, consortium partners actively engaged in joint activities and networking events to promote BIO2REG and disseminate early results. Highlights include:

- Participation and presentations at regional stakeholder workshops of the ROBIN project in 2024,
- A joint workshop organized during EU Green Week with other members of the Rural Bioeconomy Alliance in June 2025,
- A back-to-back event with the Agro2Circular project during the Spanish regional network event in Murcia in March 2025.

Further joint actions are planned for the second reporting period beginning in July 2025, expanding these synergies and further embedding BIO2REG in the European bioeconomy ecosystem.

4 Advisory Board: Composition, recruitment and first activities

To ensure quality assurance and external validation, as well as to complement the expertise within the BIO2REG consortium, a five-member Advisory Board was established. Its members represent a diverse range of roles, geographical backgrounds, and strategic perspectives that are crucial for supporting regional bioeconomy transitions—particularly in areas not directly covered by consortium partners.

Elisa Gambuzzi – R&D Project Manager at CETENMA (Spain), Elisa brings interdisciplinary expertise in territorial bioeconomy, circular fertilizers, and stakeholder-driven innovation, with a focus on circular economy transitions.

Yannis Eustathopoulos – Economist and Head of the Sustainable Development Observatory at ENA Institute (Greece), Yannis has over 25 years of experience in sustainability policy, including drafting Greece's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2030.

Gorka Altuna Fernandez – Forest Engineer at HAZi Foundation (Spain), Gorka specializes in forest-based bioeconomy and sustainable forest management, with extensive experience in multi-actor EU projects and policy advisory roles.

Andreea-Raluca Leru – Expert at the Brussels Office of the North-East Romania RDA, Andreea excels in managing and evaluating EU-funded projects, with a strong focus on regional development, innovation, and research valorization.

Prof. Vladislav Popov – Deputy-Rector at the Agricultural University of Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Prof. Popov is a leading figure in agroecology and bioeconomy, advising EU and national institutions and coordinating high-level research and strategy initiatives.

The first Advisory Board Meeting took place in October 2024, where members provided strategic input on key deliverables, most notably Deliverable 1.1 (Regionalization Concept). They also supported the review of project outputs prior to submission to the European Commission, offering valuable external perspectives to strengthen the project's impact.

More on the Advisory Board: <https://bio2reg.eu/about/advisory-board/>

5 Risk management and Work Package interactions

FZJ as coordinator and the ExCom jointly monitored project risks through internal reporting phases (see Chapter 2). One key risk identified was maintaining long-term Advisory Board engagement. Mitigation actions include early involvement in Deliverable reviews and regular updates. All Work Packages were involved in strategic coordination, particularly WP1 (bioeconomy potential), WP2 (network building) and WP4 (communication, dissemination and stakeholder engagement), ensuring coherent planning across tasks.

6 Summary and outlook

All objectives defined under Task 6.1 have been fully implemented:

- Management, decision and support structures set up,
- ExCom and General Assembly meetings conducted regularly,
- Two project meetings organized (Kick-off & Annual Meeting),
- Advisory Board established and activated,
- Strategic alignment with 13+ initiatives underway and
- Interaction with all WPs ensured through coordination formats.

Next steps include:

- Strengthening Advisory Board engagement,
- Expand and refining strategic alignment to prioritize impactful partnerships and exploiting synergies,
- Continuing monthly coordination meetings and progress documentation.