



## Increasing collaborations between bioeconomy ERA-NETs for future benefits

A study from the PLATFORM project has mapped out opportunities for collaborations among existing bioeconomy European Research Area Networks (ERA-NETs) and with JPIs. Through inter-network collaborations the efficiency and effectiveness of research can be improved and cross-cutting or overlapping areas can be addressed. The identified opportunities are good starting points for integrated joint programming, and dissemination, and for new ERA-NET Cofund actions in Horizon 2020 and other activities such as fully member state funded multi-disciplinary calls, joint networking, training and dissemination.

The initiatives included in the study span ERA-NETs, ERA-NET Plus actions, and Joint Programme Initiatives (JPIs) in the bioeconomy sectors. Through an exploratory inventory areas were identified where inter-network cooperation on overlapping or neighbouring topics could have a clear added value. General recommendations from the network coordinators include:

- In a changing environment, and with changing projects, research agendas and political framework, a continuous search for collaboration possibilities between existing and new initiatives and networks is a necessity. This concerns all actors.
- Joint calls, which are an established mechanism to implement collaboration between countries, can be employed for inter-network collaboration as well. This widens the opportunities for researchers, businesses and programme and policy makers.
- Bioeconomy topics that require collaboration among countries and that are in the focus of the Horizon

2020 areas should be boosted by the ERA-NET Cofund instrument.





- Further workshops should be organised for funding authorities and other ERA-NET actors to investigate common interests, to formulate bottom-up needs for new collaborations and to develop joint activities.

### Collaborations at different levels

The results clearly show that the collaborations can take place at different levels, e.g., joint workshops and joint calls. The inventory, which included questionnaires, a desk study, and a match-making session at a PLATFORM annual event yielded concrete recommendations for 11 joint workshops to disseminate research findings, 19 interests for exploring joint calls on overlapping or cross-cutting topics between two or more networks, and 17 expressions of interest for other kinds of collaboration.

Read more in the full report ‘Collaboration among public-public research coordination networks in the bioeconomy’. This paper constitutes Deliverable 4.1 of PLATFORM and is part of the work package Common Vision and Strategy. The main objective of this work package is to define the strategic position and dimension of ERA-NETs within the European Research Area and to provide recommendations for high impact cooperation and collaboration of ERA-NETs with other actors in the knowledge based bioeconomy. All reports can be found on the website:

[www.era-platform.eu](http://www.era-platform.eu)

### About the European Bioeconomy and ERA-NETs

The transition towards a bioeconomy, and the potential of research and innovation to produce ‘more and better-quality’, contributes to square the circle of ensuring food security, reducing the carbon footprint, recycling natural resources, and new jobs and competitiveness. The European Commission and more and more Members States capitalise on the bioeconomy aiming to secure a competitive food market and to optimise primary production in a global context and in a sustainable way.

More than 30 European Research Area Networks (ERA-NETs) in the bioeconomy sectors have been funded under FP6 and FP7. Through coordination and collaboration between national research programmes, these networks contribute to meeting the challenges Europe faces on the path towards a sustainable bioeconomy, be it in the area of agriculture, forestry or the marine, and on topics ranging from biotechnologies, application of ICT and robotics, organic food and farming, forest-based materials, statutory plant health, rural development, infectious diseases of livestock, or plant sciences.

**PLATFORM**, the FP7 project ‘Platform of Knowledge Based Bioeconomy Relevant ERA-NETs’ offers mutual learning and networking opportunities to the ERA-NET actors and has developed into a robust forum for funders and programme managers. PLATFORM facilitates increased coordination and cooperation among the networks, for maximising synergies and rationalisation in the area of the bioeconomy.