



Annual Report 2024





” We welcomed 105 new Industry Members, making BIC an association representing around 330 companies and 280 Associate Members by the end of December. **This makes us the leading organisation for representing Europe’s entire bio-based economy.**

Message from the Executive Director **Dirk Carrez**

Thank you for taking the time to read about how BIC spent 2024.

It was a year of growth. We welcomed 105 new Industry Members, making BIC an association representing around 330 companies and 280 Associate Members by the end of December. This makes us the leading organisation for representing Europe’s entire bio-based economy.

We significantly increased our networking activities in 2024, with two in-person networking events and four online pitch webinars, where more than 50 new Industry Members were able to present themselves to the rest of BIC’s members. The introduction of our new open innovation challenge also marks our efforts to stimulate networking and collaboration.

The year saw a strong push to provide additional business intelligence to our members in the form of webinars on specific technologies and markets; in-depth studies, such as the one on biowaste availability; two Country Reports explaining the potential for bio-based business in central and eastern European countries; and more.

We took our public affairs activities to the next level, including working closely with the European Commission on the Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing Initiative; producing several policy documents; and organising a visit for European Commission representatives to some biorefineries.

We increased our focus on facilitating access to the finance for stimulating investment in Europe. The results of this included two events with TechTour which brought SMEs together with investors, and laying the foundation for a bio-based industries’ IPCEI (Important Projects for Common European Interest).

And let’s not forget our BISC-E 2024 competition, through which we try to stimulate entrepreneurship in masters students, preparing them for a future in the bio-based industries.

So, 2024 was certainly a year of “more” for BIC - more members, more activities and more services provided to our members.



” The next five years will be crucial for advancing the sector. **We hope for a focus on concrete, actionable measures that deliver real impact and drive progress in the bioeconomy.**

Message from the Chairman **Rob Beekers**

We welcome the EU Commission’s focus on strengthening the industrial dimension of the bioeconomy. The next five years will be crucial for advancing the sector. We hope for a focus on concrete, actionable measures that deliver real impact and drive progress in the bioeconomy.

The three key priorities should be:

- Scaling up innovative and sustainable bio-based solutions,
- Ensuring a reliable, affordable supply of sustainably sourced biomass, and
- Expanding market opportunities for bio-based products.

We must continue de-risking of innovative bio-based industrial processes and infrastructure for demonstration and first industrial deployment. There are many hurdles when it comes to finance and regulation.

We need EU policymakers to support the transition to a fossil-free, sustainable and circular chemicals and derived materials sector by 2050, ultimately boosting Europe’s competitiveness. Replacing fossil raw materials isn’t possible without incorporating biomass as a core part of the solution, alongside recycling and CO₂ capture. Europe is able to meet at least 20% of the chemicals and derived

materials sector’s carbon demand through bio-based sources by 2050 without compromising food supply.

This means that the bio-based industry can support Europe’s transition to a competitive, sustainable and circular chemicals and derived materials sector, significantly reducing reliance on fossil carbon and enhancing global autonomy and competitiveness. However, achieving this transition requires technology, innovation, partnerships and strong policies. There are policy frameworks for food, feed, and bioenergy, but not for bio-based chemicals and derived materials. This gap puts the bio-based chemicals and derived materials sector at a disadvantage and has also an impact on investments in Europe. Therefore, we need policy changes and incentives to ensure fair competition between bio-based chemicals, biofuels and other sectors.

In 2025, discussions will start on the future role of public-private partnerships, like the CBE JU.

We will adapt BIC’s structure and activities to better align with the challenges ahead of us and the wishes of our members.

So, 2025 will be a busy year.

Connecting & expanding: team and wider reach

- We welcomed **Elena Antonakopoulou** who joined the BIC staff at the start of the year as Administrative & Operations Officer, handling much BIC membership administration.
- Long time member of staff **Nelo Emerencia** scaled down his workload at the end of the year, but we're happy that he will remain in contact with BIC, working on our student innovation competition, BISC-E.



Elena Antonakopoulou
Administrative & Operations Officer



Nelo Emerencia
Coordinator of BISC-E

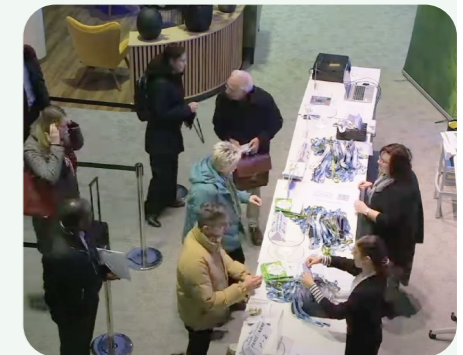


Iryna Biliaieva
ADM



Régis Houzé
ADM

- After many great contributions to the BIC Board, we said goodbye to ADM's Board representative Iryna Biliaieva in the middle of the year, and welcomed her replacement from ADM, Régis Houzé.



In 2024, BIC

4 Hosted
live events

Followers on social media

12.5K

7.5K
Views

7 Wrote and co-authored
publications

10 Organised
webinars

7.9K

400

Helping members discover business opportunities



↗ 2024 saw a large increase in BIC members and it remains vital to us that we connect as many BIC members as possible, helping to facilitate strategic partnerships and collaboration. During the year, we organised two in-person events.

The **BIC Matchmaking Event (MME)** on 8 February saw more than 270 participants come to Brussels for a day of presentations, pitches, posters, workshops and 1-to-1 meetings.

➔ [Watch the BIC Matchmaking Event \(MME\) video](#)

About 100 BIC Industry Members joined us at the exclusive **Networking Event (NWE)** at the Sheraton Brussels Airport hotel on 2 October, which included guest speakers and a walking dinner.



↗ Our efforts to help BIC members network offline included four pitching webinars, where BIC Industry Members who recently joined BIC introduced themselves through short pitches.

Around **50 BIC Industry Members from a wide variety of sectors pitched themselves** – explaining their activities and potential for working with other BIC members.

➔ [See the pitches in the BIC Members area \(BIC Members only\)](#)



AI as a game changer for the bio-based industries



- Another webinar in 2024 allowed BIC members to find out more about **Regional Innovation Valleys** – a new EU initiative worth 170 million euros, which could offer business opportunities for the bioeconomy sector.

➔ [Watch the webinar recording in the BIC Members area](#)

- With artificial intelligence becoming more prevalent and more mainstream, we explored **how AI could be useful to the bio-based industries**. Following a webinar that included concrete examples of relevant AI use, we provided a more in-depth look at this topic by producing a [short report](#).

➔ [Watch the webinar recording in the BIC Members area](#)

- Highlighting **the potential bio-based business in central and Eastern European countries**, we published two Country Reports in 2024. Our [Country Report on Romania](#) draws attention to one of the largest agricultural sectors in Europe, which could be tapped into when growing Romania's bioeconomy and bio-based industries.

Coinciding with Hungary's Presidency of the European Council, our [Hungary Country Report](#) shone a spotlight on the large farming and forestry land, as well as a growing biotech sector.

- Announced at the MME 2024, the winner of our very first **Open Innovation Competition (OIC)** 2023 was Swiss SME Bloom Biorenewables. The company responded to a challenge launched by Procter & Gamble, concerning the development of paper-based packaging solutions for detergents. Bloom Biorenewables received 10,000 euros from P&G and BIC to develop a proof-of-concept of their solution.

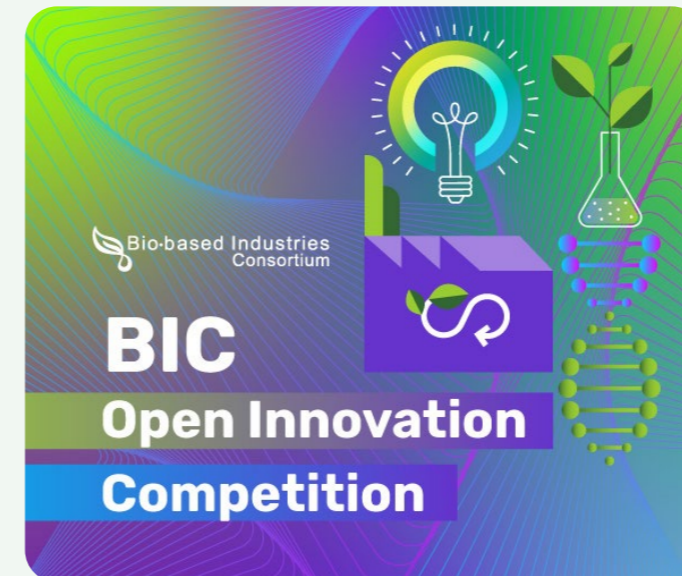
For the OIC 2024, BIC Industry Member Evonik set the challenge. We received 4 applications for the challenge solution, however Evonik decided

not to follow up with any of them. OIC 2025 is already underway, with the first challenge set to be launched at the MME 2025 in February.

- In our capacity as the private partner in the **Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking**, we joined CBE JU and European Commission staff in promoting the CBE JU call for proposal 2024 at the CBE Info Days in several countries, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Greece, Lithuania and Poland.

During 2024, we once again worked closely together with the European Commission to define the topics for the [2025 CBE JU open call for proposals](#). The call includes 13 topics of high relevance for the bio-based industries and funding of 20 million euros each for four flagships. A total 172 million euros of funding available through the 2025 call.

The CBE Work Programme 2025, including the call for proposals, was approved by the CBE JU Governing Board in December and is available on the CBE JU website. The deadline for submitting proposals will be on 18 September 2025.



Bio-based Industries Consortium

Mapping Hungary's bio-based potential

Country Report



Helping members **secure the financing to grow**



➤ BIC co-organised two events with Tech Tour. The inaugural **“Tech Tour Circular 2024 Programme”** held in Ghent, Belgium, in April saw 40 startups and SMEs that operate in Europe’s circular bioeconomy pitch in six sessions to more than 70 potential investors, government agencies, clusters and advisors. The event also hosted the final round of the 2024 Belgian BISC-E national competition.

➔ [Read more about the Tech Tour Circular programme](#)

➤ For the third year in a row, the **“Tech Tour Bio-Based Industries Programme” (TTBIP)** took place in Wuppertal, Germany. During this event in November, more than 30 groundbreaking SMEs pitched in front of top investors and industry experts. The aim is to drive progress in the bio-based industries by facilitating financial and strategic partnerships.

➤ We dedicated time to introducing BIC members to an important EU tool for funding research, development and infrastructure projects, via national funding of projects until TRL 9 called **“Important Projects for Common European Interest” (IPCEI)**. To explore the potential for IPCEI in the bio-based industries, we completed a feasibility study and organised a webinar on IPCEI.

➤ BIC continues to work on bridging the gap between bio-based investment opportunities and financial incentives at regional level through the **BIC Regional Funding Platform**.

Twice a year, we reach out to regions to collect data on funding for advanced projects in the bioeconomy (at least TRL 7 – demonstration in operational environment or higher) to compile a database. The database has a search engine, which you can use with certain keywords like type of funding instrument, bio-based feedstock and bio-based products.



Helping policymakers advance the bio-based industries



- 2024 was a busy year for BIC's public affairs work – particularly with regard to EU biotechnology and biomanufacturing. We recognise the mutual importance of biomanufacturing for Europe and for the bio-based industries, and wanted to focus on actions that drove this message home.

Following the European Commission releasing its **"Communication on biotechnology and biomanufacturing"**, we organised a workshop to explore what regulation it will take in Europe for biomanufacturing with around 30 participants from EU Institutions, civil society and industry.

BIC also joined 17 other bioeconomy-focused organisations to sign a joint statement outlining core principles that we asked the Commission to embed into their consideration.

- BIC was consulted by the EU Commission on the so-called Draghi Report on **"The future of EU competitiveness: a competitive strategy for Europe"**.

Through our contribution, we outlined the importance of the bio-based industries for a truly competitive Europe.

- Making the bio-based industries concrete for policymakers is a crucial part of our work. We organised in June a visit to **CBE JU project sites and facilities owned by BIC members**.

The group of 30 included representatives from the European Commission's DG GROW and the Director General, Kerstin Jorna. They were taken to the PLENITUDE/Cargill site in Sas van Gent, the Netherlands and the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant in Ghent.



We need to make business easier and faster in Europe. I will make speed, coherence and simplification key political priorities in everything.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

- EU elections took place in 2024 – politics that have a very big impact on the future development of Europe’s bioeconomy sector and the bio-based industries.

Following the confirmation of the new EU Commissioners, BIC wrote to several of them who have a particular interest in and relevance to our sector, congratulating them on their appointments and asking to meet with them in the future.

- BIC participated in two days of high-level bioeconomy events alongside our partners in the [BOOST4BIOEAST](#) Horizon project in Budapest in December. The event was organised by the Hungarian Presidency of the European Council.

We took part in a workshop/panel discussion and previewed the BIC Country Report on Hungary, released to coincide with the Hungary’s presidency. BOOST4BIOEAST aims to increase bioeconomy deployment in the Central Eastern European and Baltic countries.



The untapped market potential for the bioeconomy is significant. Scaling up should go hand in hand with improving the ecosystem integrity that provides biomass for generations to come.

Jessika Roswall, European Commission Director-General for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

- We worked extensively with other bioeconomy associations to amplify our key messages towards the EU policymakers. This resulted in the release of several joint statements and position papers on:

- biogenic carbon accounting in the Product Environmental Footprint (PEF),
- the role of regions and industry for a thriving bioeconomy,
- supporting the initiative for a European Sustainable Carbon Policy Package, and
- the proposed EU Green Claims Directive.

BIC was a signatory to the Antwerp Declaration, which calls for a European Industrial Deal to complement the EU Green Deal and safeguard quality jobs in Europe.

➔ [Read the Joint Statements and position paper in the media section](#)

- Alongside consortium partners [Forschungszentrum Jülich \(FZJ\)](#) and its [BioökonomieREVIER](#) initiative, we co-organised the first [BIO2REG](#) expert workshop in June.

The event included funding experts, regional representatives and bioeconomy practitioners. The aim was to share success stories, identify gaps and explore effective funding strategies for bioeconomy transitions at the regional level.

Our participation in the Horizon Europe BIO2REG project aims to assist regions to unlock the transition potential of the bioeconomy by helping them access operational know-how, frameworks and financial support.



Helping everyone understand the value of bio-based

HELPING EVERYONE UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF BIO-BASED

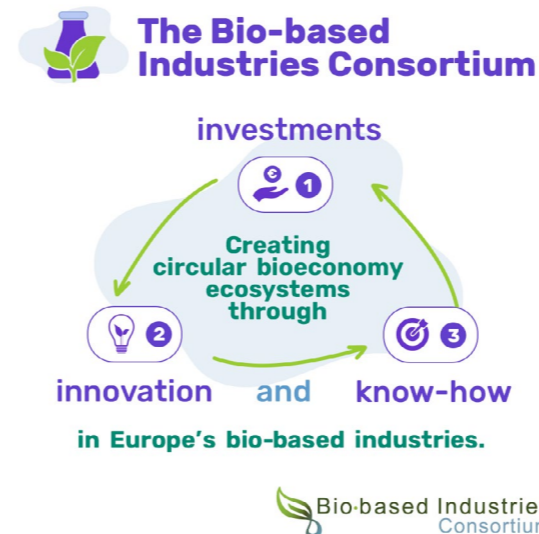


➤ Wanting to capitalise on the elections being so high on the news agenda, we carried out a six-week **social media campaign** that targeted not only new MEPs, but also the general public.

Our campaign clearly explained the meaning of bio-based, why it's important and how we can keep growing it.

➤ Reinforcing the message about the value of Europe's bio-based industries, we published "**European Bioeconomy in Figures 2008-2021**", the seventh in a series of market reports that BIC commissions from nova-Institute.

The report provides quantitative data on turnover and employment figures in the EU bioeconomy, highlighting the bio-based industries.



The magic of bioeconomy is its capacity to offer solutions across industrial sectors, be it agri-food, chemicals, fertilisers, construction, textiles or packaging...and more.

Kerstin Jorna, European Commission Director-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs



BIO4HUMAN

Bio4HUMAN –
Identifying bio-based
solutions for waste
management
applicable to the
humanitarian sector

Funded by
the European Union

➤ The collection of bio-waste became mandatory in EU Member States on 1 January 2024 following the Waste Framework Directive (WFD). However, due to various issues with the collection of bio-waste, the current capture across the EU27 (plus Norway and the UK) is below 26% of the theoretical potential. This bio-waste could be a valuable resource for the bio-based industries.

To raise awareness about this, we not only collaborated with [Zero Waste Europe \(ZWE\)](#) on a **report** about this (including case studies with best practices and country fact sheets), but also hosted a free **webinar**, which was attended by around 200 participants.

- ➔ [Watch the bio-waste webinar](#)
- ➔ [Read the bio-waste report](#)

➤ September marked the start of a Horizon Europe project that BIC is participating in. [Bio4HUMAN](#) aims to bring together humanitarian organisations, bio-based sector actors and circular economy experts to solve solid waste management challenges in humanitarian settings. The focus is on providing results to two countries receiving humanitarian aid – South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).



↑ **Marco Rupp, BIC and Ruth Oniang'o, Sasakawa Africa Association.**

➤ BIC held a workshop on “**Private-Public Cooperation in the bioeconomy as a driver for (re)-industrialization**” at the [Global Bioeconomy Summit \(GBS\)](#) in Nairobi, Kenya in October.

GBS was attended by around 500 high-ranking representatives from politics, science, youth, civil society and the business sector from more than 70 countries.



We also had a presence at several other events during 2024 including:

- the World BioEconomy Forum in Helsinki
- two events in Copenhagen – the “High-Level Summit on BioSolutions” and one organised by Denmark’s Ministry of Higher Education and Science and Food & Bio Cluster Denmark
- the Bioeconomy Changemakers Festival organised by the European Commission’s DG RTD
- the opening of the SWEETWOODS Flagship by Fibenol in Estonia and the FDCA Avantium Flagship in the Netherlands
- BIOKET
- World Bio Markets
- IFIB and ECOMONDO

Helping to match youth skills to the bio-based industries



↗ For the second year in a row, a French student team won the **Bio-based Innovation Student Challenge Europe (BISC-E)**. A total of 17 countries took part in the national competitions, with teams from Belgium, France, Latvia, the Netherlands and Slovenia making it to the final round.

Winning team BIOSURFERS from [AgroParisTech](#) took first place with their innovative method for producing a biosurfactant lipopeptide, whilst eliminating some of the problems of this process.

The team members were invited to the BIC Industry Members' Networking Event in October, where they presented with their prize – including a one-year complimentary BIC industry membership.

➔ [Read more about BISC-E](#)

HELPING TO MATCH YOUTH SKILLS TO THE BIO-BASED INDUSTRIES



↑ Team members of Biosurfers: Erick Cruz, Sajjad Malekzadeh, Carla Mendiola, Luisa Olarte, Rangsimatiti Saichompoo and Raffi Shakhmuradian.





- In February, we hosted students on the Winter School of [Talent4BBI programme](#).

Their two-day visit included presentations from BIC staff, CBE JU, Procter & Gamble and Food & Bio Cluster Denmark; a tour of the European Parliament; and a visit to the Bio Base Europe Pilot Plant in Ghent.

- For the seventh time, BIC served as a mentor in the [Blue Bio Value](#) acceleration programme, with the aim of boosting the participation of marine and aquatic actors in the bio-based industries.

This programme for startups is run annually by the [Oceano Azul Foundation](#) in partnership with [BLUEBIO ALLIANCE \(BBA\)](#) and [Maze](#).

BIC coached six of the shortlisted 20 startups. Three of the six made it to the top 10, and one startup, [Everything Seaweed \(EvSe\)](#), was among the three winners. EvSe develops advanced materials from seaweed, including nanocellulose to replace PFAS in coatings. EvSe has since merged with Californian startup [Macro Oceans](#).



The Human Capital Agenda (HCA) aims to ensure the bio-based industry has the human capital with needed skills and competencies to expand and sustain its future.

Nelo Emerencia, BIC BISC-E Coordinator

- Assisted by BIC's Human Resources Network (HRN), consisting of HR managers of BIC Industry Members, Nelo Emerencia wrote a **Human Capital Agenda (HCA)** for the bio-based industry, which was presented to the BIC board in June 2024.

The HCA presents actions to ensure that the bio-based industry has the human capital with needed skills and competencies to expand and sustain its future.

A first step in implementing the HCA for the bio-based industry is to link with the AWP 2025 topic HORIZON-JU-CBE-2025-CSA-01 Develop and deploy new curricula and knowledge exchange practices relevant to bio-based systems.

BIC in 2025 and beyond...



➤ BIC takes on the presidency of the **European Bioeconomy Alliance (EUBA)** – a cross-sector alliance of bioeconomy organisations dedicated to mainstreaming the bioeconomy and achieving its full potential in Europe. During our time at the helm, activities will include a live event targeting EU policymakers.

➤ February sees another edition of our popular **Matchmaking Event**, giving many BIC members the opportunity to meet in person in Brussels.

➤ We're happy to be teaming up with Tech Tour again for two separate events, offering more pitching opportunities to startups and SMEs.

The **Tech Tour Circular Programme 2025** will take place in Ghent (Belgium) in April and the Tech Bio Based Programme will be held in Wuppertal, Germany in November.

➤ Among our 2025 publications will be a new Trend Report, looking at the current situation and possible future of biomanufacturing regulations in Europe, in order to make policy recommendations for improving and increasing biomanufacturing based on best practices and commercial needs.

And a new biomass study jointly funded by BIC and the **Renewable Carbon Initiative (RCI)** will try to demonstrate that there is enough biomass to defossilise the chemicals and derived materials sector by 2050.



Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC)

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#BetterwithBiobased