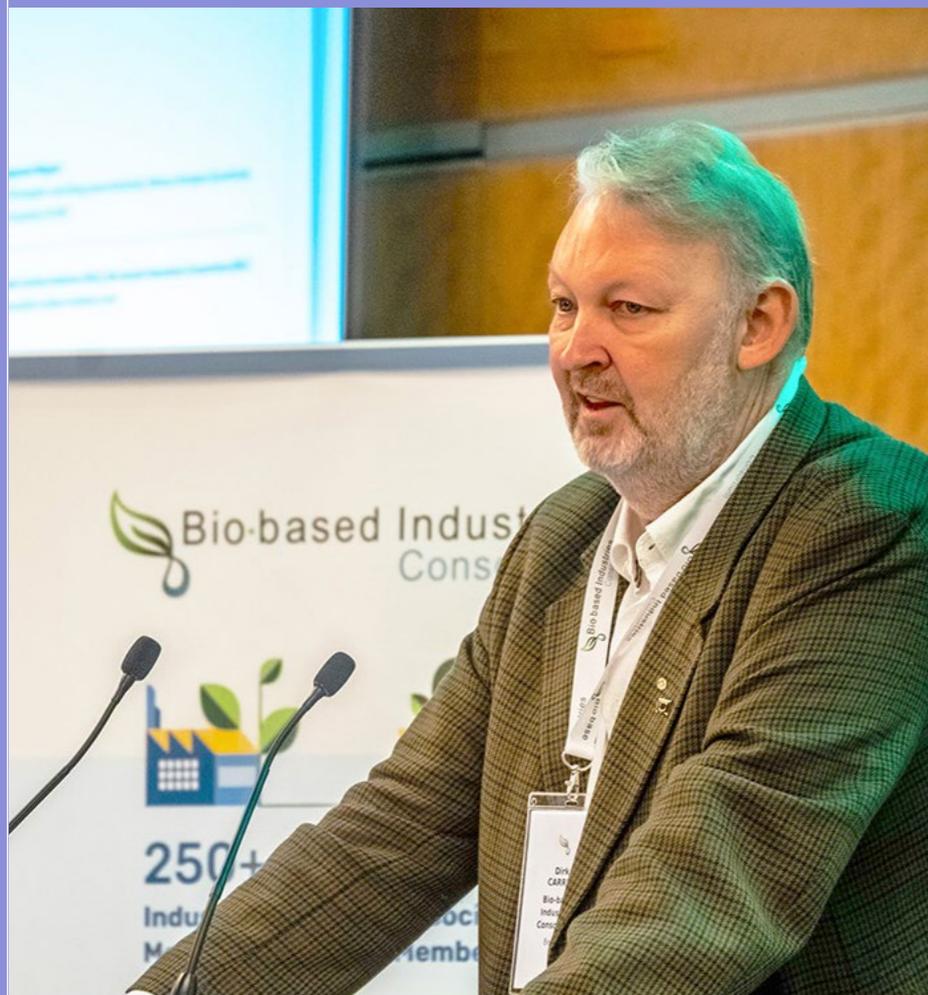




 Bio-based Industries  
Consortium

# Annual Report

# Message from the Executive Director Dirk Carrez



Thank you for taking the time to read about how BIC spent 2025.

First and foremost, I would like to warmly thank our members for their continued engagement, active participation and strong support throughout the year.

By the end of 2025, BIC counted 375 Industry Members representing all sectors of the bio-based economy, alongside 340 Associate Members. This breadth of membership has reinforced BIC's position as the most unique and truly collective voice of the European bioeconomy, creating concrete opportunities for collaboration, innovation and the development of new value chains across Europe.

During the year, we reorganised our activities around three core focus areas: innovation and scale-up, access to finance and funding, and policy support. This restructuring was driven by the clear objective of addressing the two "valleys of death" that continue to challenge Europe's ability to move from laboratory research to full-scale production. In this report, you will find an overview of our main activities and the results achieved across each of these priority areas.

Innovation remained at the heart of BIC's work, with networking and the development of the Annual Work Programme for the CBE JU – our partnership with the European Commission – continuing to be a key activity.

At the same time, our efforts to improve access to finance and keep investments in Europe expanded significantly. These ranged from collaboration with Tech Tour connecting start-ups and SMEs with investors, to the development of a concrete action plan aimed at supporting scaling up and larger investments. These efforts were complemented by the announcement of new IPCEIs (Important Project of Common European Interest) for biotechnology and biomanufacturing.

Policy engagement was also a major priority in 2025, in particular, our support for the development of the new Bioeconomy Strategy published last year.

This Annual Report holds special significance for me, as it will be my last as Executive Director. After almost 14 years in this role, I will be stepping down, feeling incredibly fortunate to have worked alongside inspiring industry leaders who are both strategic and pragmatic. Together, we have helped shape an industry fit for the future – one that produces in Europe, uses European renewable feedstocks, and invests in defossilisation and a circular economy.

To all our members, our colleagues at the CBE JU, EU and national policymakers, and the many partners and friends I have had the pleasure to work with over the years: thank you for your trust, your support, and the strong, constructive alliances we have built together.



## Message from the Chairman Rob Beekers

2025 has been an intense and productive year for BIC, as the activities and achievements outlined in this Annual Report demonstrate. A central priority during the year was the publication of the new EU Bioeconomy Strategy. Released at a pivotal moment, the Strategy is a welcome step forward, notably through the inclusion of a dedicated action plan and timeline. This reflects long-standing calls to reinforce the industrial dimension of the European bioeconomy.

While the Strategy provides a strong assessment of the barriers that continue to hinder investment and market development, its success will ultimately depend on the translation of analysis into concrete action. Europe's bioeconomy will only reach its full potential if these challenges are addressed through clear, targeted and ambitious measures.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a decisive year for implementation. The continuation of the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) would play a critical role in addressing the first innovation "valley of death," supporting the transition from laboratory research to demonstration scale. However, for the bioeconomy to generate real market impact, dedicated measures must also tackle the second "valley of death," enabling the move from demonstration to full industrial production, and supporting the creation of lead markets.

There is now clear and robust evidence that the European Union has sufficient biomass resources to strengthen both autonomy and competitiveness. This includes the sustainable use of first-generation agricultural biomass (such as starch, sugar and oilseed crops) for non-food applications without compromising food security. Ensuring access to all types of sustainably sourced biomass will be essential in unlocking this potential.

In the current geopolitical context, there is an urgent need to translate strategic ambition into bold and concrete actions. Measures that stimulate market demand for bio-based products, alongside policies that improve access to finance for innovative investments, will be critical.

As a result, 2026 will undoubtedly be a challenging year, but it also presents unique opportunities to make our industry more sustainable, more attractive to investors and more competitive on a global scale.

# Strengthening our structure & engagement

In 2025, we realigned BIC's operational structure to ensure that what we do is clearly geared towards making **our members' bio-based businesses and innovations profitable and marketable.**

Our services and activities fall under at least one of these categories: Access to Finance, Innovation & Scaling Up, and Policy Support.



Access to finance



Innovation and scale-up



Policy support

In 2025, BIC

Hosted **4** live events



**13** Organised webinars

**5** Wrote and co-authored publications

Sponsored **1** international event

Wider reach on social media

 **15.4K**
 **103.7K** views
  **7.9K**
 **420**

## Board changes

After four years on the Board, we bid farewell to **Serge Creutz** of Dow.



We welcomed new Board member **Stuart Aske** of P&G.





It is our responsibility to citizens to build a competitive and thriving economy. The future is not fossil. **The future is living, circular, and regenerative. The future is bioeconomy.**

Teresa Ribera, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission for Clean, Just and Competitive Transition



Europe, with its strong focus on **biobased and sustainable materials**, is the place to be for **innovative businesses.**

Jessika Roswall, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

Our goal is simple but bold – to make Europe the best place in the world to **design, build and scale bio-based materials.**

Agata Kotkowska, Deputy Head of Unit, DG Environment, European Commission



# Encouraging financing for bio-based industries



Two events co-organised with **Tech Tour** demonstrated our commitment to improving access to finance for bio-based start-ups and SMEs. Together, the events connected these companies with around 80 investors, including venture capital firms, angel investors, investment banks, and large corporations.

The **Tech Tour Circular event**, held in April in Ghent, Belgium, saw 36 companies present across five categories. The **Tech Tour Biobased Programme** took place in November in Wuppertal, Germany, where 38 companies were chosen to pitch for investment.

Their innovations spanned across bio-based chemicals, products and materials, biomanufacturing and biorefining, waste valorisation and circular



technologies, wood-based products and materials, agriculture and food/feed products, and sustainable packaging.

[Watch the Tech Tour Biobased Programme event video](#)

In May, we organised a **WCEF Accelerator webinar**, exploring how public-private partnerships drive investments in the circular bioeconomy; and innovative approaches to overcoming challenges such as permitting, market acceptance and funding gaps. The session featured success stories from European initiatives, as well as examples from around the world.

[Watch the webinar recording](#)

At BIC, we know the potential biomanufacturing represents for Europe's bioeconomy, if only the financing problems can be overcome.

To this end, we produced a **policy brief on financing biomanufacturing in Europe**. In this document, we explained the two valleys of death - namely, the first from pilot to demonstration scale, and the second, from demonstration to industrial production. The brief then goes on to list concrete and ambitious key actions to implement, in order to overcome the two valleys of death.

**BIC Chair Rob Beekers** underlined these points and reinforced these messages in an **interview** filmed before the summer.

[Read the policy brief](#)

[Watch the interview](#)

# Advancing bio-based innovation and scaling up



In our role as the private partner of the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU), we worked alongside CBE JU and European Commission staff to **promote the 2025 CBE JU call for proposals at CBE Info Days** held in several countries, including Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Croatia and Romania.

We also collaborated closely with the European Commission to **define the topics for the 2026 CBE JU open call for proposals**. The call features 13 topics of high relevance to the bio-based industries and includes four flagship topics, each supported with €20 million in funding.



The CBE JU call features **13 topics of high relevance to the bio-based industries** and includes four flagship topics, each supported with **€20 million in funding**. In total, **€170.7 million** is available under the call.

With more than 340 participants, the **2025 edition of the BIC Matchmaking Event** was the largest in the history of BIC. As every year, many BIC members joined us at the event in February in order to make valuable business and research connections – especially in relation to the 2025 CBE call for proposals.

More than 25 Industry Members who had recently joined BIC introduced their companies, areas of work and potential for collaboration during three pitching webinars over the year.



[See the Matchmaking Event photo album / BIC Members access only](#)



BIC members had another opportunity to meet each other in person at the **Industry Members Networking Event in Brussels** in October. It was a day of guest speakers, meetings and workshops, followed by a networking dinner.



[Watch the Networking Event video](#)



It was also the occasion at which the top three winners of our **Bio-based Innovation Student Challenge (BISC-E) 2025** received their prizes. The highest number of students ever took part in the competition, representing 13 countries.

The “Sea to Skin” team representing Wageningen University in the Netherlands took the top spot for their innovative use of a brown seaweed derivative to replace fossil-based UV filters in cosmetics.

The winner of the 2025 BIC Open Innovation Competition was the Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry. They successfully met the challenge set by Metsä Group, which concerned the valorisation of softwood bark, a byproduct of Metsä’s mills.

 [Watch the BISC-E Competition videos](#)

Our ongoing participation in the **BOOST4BIOEAST Horizon project** saw us working alongside project partners to prepare for the launch of the first BOOST4BIOEAST Open Innovation Challenge.

BOOST4BIOEAST aims to increase bioeconomy deployment in the Central Eastern European and Baltic countries.

 [Read more about the BOOST4BIOEAST project](#)

Many of our **webinars in 2025** highlighted innovation and scaling up. One focused on **fibre-based packaging**, with an in-depth description from Smithers on the future perspectives in Europe and globally, and the main drivers and innovations.

At a webinar on **bioplastics**, the nova-Institut gave an overview of the current status and the future opportunities for companies making bio-based (plastic) packaging in Europe.

These were illustrated through case studies from BIC members, which also featured in an article in Agro & Chemistry.

 [Read the article on bioplastics](#)

**Dual use - the production of goods, software, or technology for both military and civilian purposes** – is increasingly presenting new revenue streams for industrial biotechnology and biomanufacturing. We explored in a webinar that included the presentation of a report by VCG.AI. This was followed up by another feature in Agro & Chemistry.

 [Read the article on dual use](#)



The **BIC Trend Report 2024-2025** aimed to serve as a roadmap for improving and increasing biomanufacturing based on best practices and commercial needs. The report contains tangible business cases and solid policy recommendations, with inspiration from global developments in biotech and biomanufacturing, including the use of artificial intelligence.

 [Read the BIC Trend Report 2024-2025](#)



BIC Deputy Director Marco Rupp was a guest on the **BioCircular Loop podcast**, where he covered a range of subjects, including the challenges of biomass availability, the need for market creation, and the future outlook for bio-based industries in Europe amidst global geopolitical changes and growing demand for critical raw materials.

 [Listen to episode 14 of the BioCircular Loop podcast](#)

In September, we hosted a panel on **“Partnering with Europe to accelerate U.S. biomanufacturing”** at Bio Innovations Midwest in Omaha, Nebraska.

Lively conversations highlighted how the EU and US can complement each other, with bio-based companies encouraged to take full advantage of the strengths of each market and not be scared to cross the Atlantic to capitalise on opportunities.

# Advocating favourable EU policies



2025 was a year of anticipation, as we waited for the release of the updated **EU Bioeconomy Strategy**. As well as taking part in the consultation process, we also published a position paper. The paper urged policymakers to strengthen the bioeconomy's industrial dimension, protecting existing and fostering new investments. We asked for the inclusion of a package of legislative and non-legislative actions to accelerate defossilisation and to fully unlock the potential of biomanufacturing.

We also interviewed **Head of Unit at DG Environment Agata Kotkowska** to find out a policymaker's



Read the  
position paper



Watch the  
interview

Scaling  
biomanufacturing:  
a priority for the new



**EU Bioeconomy  
Strategy**



perspective on how to push Europe's bio-based industries forward.

Representatives from some of BIC's Industry Members joined us in Brussels in June for a high-level meeting in the context of the **EU Startup and Scale-up Strategy and the CBE JU**. The meeting was hosted by EU Commissioner for Startups, Research and Innovation Ekaterina Zaharieva.



European  
Bioeconomy  
Alliance



In the second half of the year, **BIC chaired the European Bioeconomy Alliance (EUBA)**, the coalition of 16 prominent organisations representing European bioeconomy sectors.

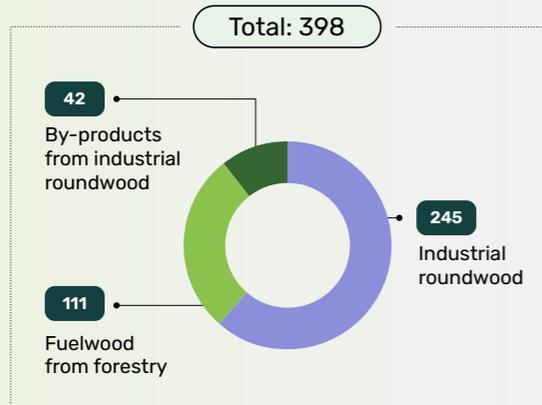
As part of EUBA, we commissioned an expert study asserting that using first-generation agricultural biomass to produce bio-based energy and materials in Europe, results in important benefits for food security, biodiversity, agriculture and climate change mitigation.



Read the Biomass study



**Wood supply in the green LRD scenario in 2050, in the EU**  
million tonnes dry matter



Biomass was again the focus of **another report BIC published – this one in partnership with the Renewable Carbon Initiative**. This publication, researched by the nova Institute, demonstrates that agricultural and woody biomass can be sustainably supplied to meet at least 20% of the future carbon demand of the chemical and materials industries in 2050.

For EU policymakers, the report provides a clear framework to scale biomass, drive innovation, shape policies, and advance sustainability.

[Read the Biomass/chemicals report](#)



As part of EUBA, we organised with EurActiv a panel discussion on **“Europe’s Bioeconomy Strategy – what are the key opportunities and challenges?”**.

BIC’s Dirk Carrez was joined on the panel by Agata Kotkowska, MEP and AGRI Committee member Jessika van Leeuwen, Sonja Canger from the Permanent Representation of Denmark to the EU, Professor Richard Harrison from Wageningen University and John Brosnan from the Irish Co-operative Organisation Society.

Europe is not using its bio-based potential. The **EU Bioeconomy Strategy** can change that.



**What needs to change?**

Here’s what BIC recommends to the EU Commission

- 1** Set ambition
- 2** Expand supply
- 3** Build demand

Following the publication of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy in November, BIC had various opportunities to welcome it and give our perspective. We still held the Chair of EUBA when the alliance released a statement saying that “real impact depends on meaningful actions and consistent implementation”.

In the **BIC response to the Strategy**, we stressed the importance of continuing the CBE JU and the need for “concrete, bold and ambitious measures”.

[Read the BIC position on the EU Bioeconomy Strategy](#)

BIC’s Dirk Carrez was interviewed by **ENDS Europe** to give a more detailed response to the recently-released EU Bioeconomy Strategy.

[Read the interview](#)

We took part in a number of consultations on EU policies and initiatives, including the **new EU budget for 2028-2034, the Bioeconomy Strategy, the Biotech Act, Circular Economy Act and the Start-up Strategy**.

BIC also advocated at EU and national level to endorse the setting up of an **IPCEI (Important Project of Common European Interest)** for the bio-based industries.

# Promoting the value of bio-based



BIC staff were guest speakers, panellists and representatives at many external events throughout the year.

- **European Rural Circular Bioeconomy Conference**
- **Bio Innovations Midwest, Nebraska**
- **Agenda SP+Verde, São Paulo**
- **Bioeconomy Innovation Spaces: Partnerships between Industry and Research for Bio-based Innovations from Germany**
- **CLIC Innovation Oy forum, Helsinki**
- **Danish Presidency of the European Council event**
- **Portugal CBE Info Day, Aveiro**

## PROMOTING THE VALUE OF BIO-BASED



As part of the Horizon Europe BIO2REG project, we supported the publication of the **“Regionalization concept for circular and systemic bioeconomy model regions”**.

The aim of the document is to outline a practical framework for initiating and further developing circular and systemic bioeconomy model regions. Launched in September, the BIO2REG Network provides a platform for regions to connect, exchange knowledge, and build partnerships that promote sustainable change and green economic growth across Europe.

Overall, the BIO2REG project supports regions in unlocking the bioeconomy’s transition potential by facilitating access to practical expertise, strategic frameworks, and financial support.



[Read the publication](#)

# The outlook for 2026

After nearly 14 years at the helm of BIC, **Dirk Carrez will officially step down as Executive Director** in March 2026. Dirk has led BIC since its inception, growing it from an industry membership of 12 to an organisation with more than 350 Industry Members.

Dirk will stay on until the middle of 2026 to help with the transition to **BIC's new Director, Philippe Mengal**. Philippe is familiar with BIC's workings and some of our members. He was formerly the Executive Director of BBI JU – now CBE JU – holding this position until 2022.

BIC will continue its partnership with Tech Tour, organising two events to help bio-based SMEs and start-ups get private investment – **Tech Tour Circular** in May and the Tech Tour Biobased Programme in November.

In June, BIC will host a panel at **World Bio Markets on financing the bio-based industries** – specifically from demo scale to production.

And, as usual, we will strive to bring you as many insightful reports as possible, including a study on **Extended Producer Responsibility for food waste and a new Trend Report**.



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#BetterwithBiobased

