

INNOVATION-LED

BIOECONOMY

STRATEGY

Developing an innovation-led bioeconomy strategy for Eastern Africa

Preamble

The transition of eastern Africa countries into middle income economies is a key goal that can be achieved through investing in a knowledge-based bioeconomy. A bioeconomy refers to the production, utilization and conservation of biological resources, including related knowledge, science, technology and innovation to provide information, products, processes and services in all economic sectors aiming towards a sustainable economy. (GBS, 2018) A key feature of a bioeconomy is extending biomass production and processing beyond food, feed and fibre to include a range of value-added products with potential applications in many sectors, such as the agriculture, health and energy sectors.

This project responds to the lack of a common bioeconomy strategy for eastern Africa with a view to developing a regional framework that will in a holistic way support strategic interventions in health, agriculture, industry, energy and environment sectors among others in the region. It is evident that innovation systems in participating BioInnovate Africa countries are crippled by uncoordinated, incoherent and conflicting policies that lack functional mechanisms for a broader integrated policy making process across sectors to achieve shared goals and targets. Moreover, there are lack of policies to support linkages among various innovation actors both in the public and private sectors. The development of a vibrant bioeconomy characterised by bioscience innovation, research and development require that governments in the region develop more effective and coordinated policies, incentives and guiding frameworks, which can steer and support innovation in key areas.

To this end, the project in close consultation with Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Councils, Commissions and relevant ministries in the six BioInnovate countries will develop a regional innovative driven strategy and a policy agenda to catalyse national bioeconomy strategies, policies and interventions towards achievement of inclusive economic growth in the region.

Project outcome

The regional strategy will build on the strong foundation laid by the East African Community (EAC) through the East African regional STI policy aimed at creating an enabling environment for increased STI investments supporting sustainable regional development and socio-economic transformation.

By the end of the implementing period, the project will achieve:

- Approval of an innovation-driven bioeconomy strategy for Eastern Africa by the EAC governing bodies.
- Increased knowledge and awareness about the state of bioeconomy issues, landscape and development in Eastern Africa.

Specifically, the project will conduct in-depth assessments, empirical studies and carry out a highly consultative process to solicit input from various stakeholders including those from other parts of the world to support development of the strategy.

Local and Regional benefits

A well-drafted bioeconomy strategy and policy agenda will create an enabling policy, business and regulatory environment necessary to propel the development of a knowledge-based bioeconomy in the region. As a result, governments in participating eastern Africa countries will adopt and domesticate the strategy at national level and benefit from optimal use of national resources, knowledge generation and innovative biobased goods and services.

Project Partners

- East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO), Rwanda.
- African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS), Kenya
- Stockholm Environment Institute SEI – Africa Center, Kenya.
- The Scinnovent Centre Limited, Kenya.
- Bio-innovations Company Limited, Uganda

Project leader

Gertrude Ngabirano - East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO), Rwanda.