Biowaste, bio-economy and circular economy: experience of Flanders

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Background: Vision and strategy

- Approved by the Government of Flanders in July 2013
- Interdepartmental Working Group for the Bioeconomy (°2012)
- 7 starting points:
  - Bioeconomy: necessary because of major societal challenges
  - Bioeconomy: an economically, ecologically and socially sustainable economy
  - Transition required in order to make switch to an economy based on renewable raw materials
→ Biomass as a factor in the energy mix
→ Available biomass streams will be used according to an accepted cascade
→ European strategy and action plan for a bioeconomy serves as a framework
→ Learning from cooperation opportunities and inspiration from the strategies of other countries and regions
Why close biomass(residue) cycles?

- Transition from fossil-based to bio-based economy
- Biomass and biomass residues have multiple functions in sustaining ecosystems and their services
- Biomass is a renewable but scarce resource
- Multiple sectors want to use biomass and biomass residues
  - Agriculture
  - Wood and paper industry
  - Chemistry
  - Energy sector
  - ...
- Sustainable production and consumption needed due to multiple functions, scarcity and time dimension
From vision and strategy to action

- **Food & food waste**
  - Interdepartmental Working Group (°2011)
  - Study: Food losses throughout the chain (2012)
  - Declaration of commitment Together against food losses (2014)
  - Roadmap Food waste (2015)

- **P**
  - Business cases

- **Biomass residues action plan**
  - Focus on 3 sectors: agriculture/food; nature management & public space; wood from industry and households
  - Prevention, separate collection, recycling, energy (synergies with Flanders’ 2020 RE-goals)
  - Stimulating involvement of stakeholders by giving responsibility for elaborating actions

- **Renewed policy on household waste and similar industrial waste (2016)**
  - Intensifying and expanding separate collection of biowaste
Challenges

- Cooperation between policy domains and with a wide variety of stakeholders
- At a more abstract level agreement that a sustainable bio-economy is what we should aim at
- BUT difficult to find agreement on what sustainable production and consumption of biomass and biomass residues is and how to achieve it (e.g. sustainability criteria, concretization of cascading principle)
Need for a coherent EU framework

EU policy & biomass

FOOD/FEED

- Food/feed safety
- Product norms and rules (REACH, PEF, fertilisers regulation, ...)
- LULUCF
- ILUC
- Soil protection
- Biodiversity strategy
- Resource efficiency
- CAP
- Bioeconomy strategy
- Marine biotechnology
- Sustainable food
- Waste
- GMOs

MATERIALS

- Biobased products
- Forest strategy
- Non-biodegradable waste
- SC biomass
- Biodiversity criteria RED/FQD
- Industrial Policy

ENERGY

- RED
- FQD
- Energy/climate package

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Need for a coherent EU framework

- Several DGs develop relevant policies, but policies are not aligned – Circular economy approach offers a way forward
- Various important policy initiatives are on hold – uncertainty about future policy initiatives
- Strong incentives in one policy domain affect policies and policy development in other domains – no level playing field between sectors
- Market creation and market distortion: without coherent EU framework multiple difficulties can be foreseen
Useful links

- **Bioeconomy in Flanders. The vision and strategy of the Government of Flanders for a sustainable and competitive bioeconomy in 2030**

- **Food losses**

- **Flanders’ Nutrient Platform**

- **Draft biomass residues action plan**