

Bio-based Economy 'Combining agro and chemical'



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Fact sheet from the portfolio of the Department of Trade and Industry version January 2007

Status

The SBIR program is open to especially MKB (with a total of 1,1 million euro): financing research and development of high-quality applications. In 2007 the Interdepartmental Program direction Energy Transition (IPE) will formulate a government vision on bio-based economy that will be led by Trade and Industry.

Facts and figures

- Natural resources have always been used in the non-food sector (plant fibres, animal skins and wool have been used to make clothing; oils have been used to make cosmetics, lubricants and lamp oil; papyrus, cloth and wood have been used to make paper).
- As of January 2007 the obliged mixing of 2% of bio fuels will be implemented in the Netherlands.

Period

2005-2008

Parties involved

Trade and Industry; Ministries of Economic Affairs (EZ), Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), Transport, Public Works and Water Management (VenW), Finance (Fin), Foreign Affairs (BuZa); market parties, Wageningen UR, and other knowledge institutes.

More information

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agriculture, nature
and food quality

A bio-based economy uses renewable green resources to produce chemicals, materials, products and transport fuels as well as to generate energy. This contributes to sustainable economic development. A bio-based economy relies on effective collaboration between the agrofood sector and the chemical industry.

Context

The concept of a bio-based economy is gaining ground worldwide and offers all kinds of opportunities for the Dutch business sector. Biomass is seen as a 'green' raw material that can be used in the chemical industry and other non-food sectors to produce products and materials such as plastics, adhesives and paints, and to produce fuels and generate energy. This process usually involves some form of biotechnology. As far as the Netherlands is concerned, the prospect of using residual and by-product flows generated by the agrofood industry is of particular interest. This development is driven by the desire to strengthen the economic competitive position of the business sector, to address the problem of climate change, to reduce waste and the distribution of environmentally hazardous substances, and to be less dependent on oil. Several governments in the world are committed to developing a bio-based economy.

Areas of challenge

While Bio-based Economy has a strong international character and is dependent on continuous changes, the areas of challenge appear and disappear. Business and government faces the opportunity to acknowledge these areas of challenges.

Particular aspects

There are significant economic opportunities for the Netherlands in the production of high-grade applications. Greater sustainability can be realised by making full and intelligent use of the available resources and by-product and residual flows. The Platform Biobased Business supports companies within this theme. The platform is supported (financially) by Trade and Industry.

Challenges

The bio-based economy faces two challenges. Firstly, the development of new technology to convert green resources needs to be accelerated. Secondly, a wide range of parties (including the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ), the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) and the business sector) need to work together to promote and implement the concept.

Compatibility with Ministry policy

Since 2005 the Interdepartmental 'Energy Transition' Programme functioned as a framework for LNV and other ministries to develop a bio-based economy. The Platform Green Resources is a collaboration between representatives of companies, knowledge institutions and ngo's. The platform has a mediative role in society. The mission statement of Trade and Industry is to enforce the international position of competition of the agrosector in the Netherlands and make this sector more sustainable.

Benefits

The business sector stands to gain from an improved economic competitive position and from the contribution to a sustainable society. The bio-based economy offers an alternative to oil, which is both scarce and expensive. Products can be made more safely and with less risk to health. This also appeals to consumers.