

**Call for expression of interest
Members of the working group on primary producers
of the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking**

Brussels, 17/01/2025
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1. Introduction

The Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking

The Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) is a public-private partnership between the European Union and the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC). The CBE JU was established by the [Council Regulation \(EU\) No 2021/2085](#) of 19 November 2021 establishing the joint undertakings under Horizon Europe (hereinafter "Council Regulation").

The general objectives of the CBE JU are:

- a) accelerate the innovation process and development of bio-based innovative solutions;
- b) accelerate market deployment of the existing mature and innovative bio-based solutions;
- c) ensure a high level of environmental performance of bio-based industrial systems.

The main decision-making body of the CBE JU is the Governing Board that also has the overall responsibility for its strategic orientations. The Governing Board is composed of 10 Board members representing equally the two CBE JU's founding members, the European Commission and the BIC.

The CBE JU is led by the Executive Director, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the CBE JU and who is supported by the executive programme office. The CBE JU is assisted by advisory groups: The states' representatives group, the Scientific Committee, and the deployment groups. The CBE JU Governing Board can set up other advisory and working groups for a determined period of time and to fulfil a specific purpose in addition to the bodies of the joint undertaking referred to in Article 14 of the Council Regulation.

More information on the CBE JU can be found on the CBE JU website <https://www.cbe.europa.eu>.

The CBE JU working group on primary producers

In accordance with Articles 17.2.(x) of the Council Regulation, the CBE JU Governing Board can set up, as required, advisory or working groups, including in collaboration with other joint undertakings, in addition to the bodies of the joint undertaking referred to in Article 14, for a determined period of time and to fulfil a specific purpose.

Taking also into consideration the [CBE JU impact assessment](#), the CBE JU Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda ([CBE JU SRIA](#)), the CBE JU Governing board has decided to establish a working group on primary producers to propose specific actions to address the challenges and use opportunities for the agricultural, forestry and aquaculture & fisheries primary producers that might influence, impact and/or hinder the deployment of circular bio-based solutions and innovations, ensuring that primary producers benefit from their involvement in new and innovative circular and bio-based value chains.

The CBE JU working group on Primary Producers will pursue the following **two main objectives**:

1. Enhancing the role and support an effective and rewarding engagement of primary producers along the circular bio-based systems and value chains;
2. Ensuring that primary sectors benefit from the economic, social and environmental opportunities offered by circular and bio-based innovations and solutions (supported by long-term sustainable and feasible business models).

The **activities** proposed for this group are organised in the following blocks:

- Actions to improve awareness and better understanding on opportunities and benefits offered by circular bio-based innovations in general and, in particular, about the opportunities offered by CBE JU.
- Measures to enhance cooperation and communication among all the actors of the entire value chain, including primary producers, industry, regional stakeholders, advisors, and end-users.
- Measures to promote the development, deployment, and replicability of business models that balance the sharing of power and profit for primary producers across novel circular bio-based value chains.
- Actions to capitalise on existing initiatives and create synergies with relevant initiatives to support the activities of the working group and facilitate knowledge transfer.
- Activities to fill gaps in advisory services offered to primary sectors in the Member States and encourage the wider use of available knowledge among primary producers across the EU.
- Specific widening actions to mobilise primary producers from regions with unexploited potential for bio-based value chain development to be involved in the working group and engaged in circular bio-based value chains.

The CBE JU working group on primary producers should develop and implement an **action plan**, including a clear road map of actions (i.e., what, who, how & when) to achieve the objectives expected for the working group on primary producers. The CBE JU working group on primary producers **will be supported by a funded project (coordination and support action)** with an available budget of **3 million EUR**.

More information on the CBE JU working group on primary producers, including its concept note, can be found on the CBE JU website: <https://www.cbe.europa.eu>.

2. Composition of the CBE JU working group on primary producers

The CBE JU working group on primary producers shall be a balanced group of stakeholders and shall consist of **organisations representing the agricultural, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture primary sectors (hereinafter called members)**.

In the context of CBE JU, primary producers are defined as entities operating in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture primary sectors performing activities related to the production, harvest, handling, and storage of biological resources before being either processed or distributed. The production of biological resources is a key part of the activities of the entity.

The CBE JU working group on primary producers is composed of members. Each member will nominate two representatives to attend the meetings and represent the members in the activities of the working group as explained below.

a) Members

The type of **members** envisaged for this working group are:

- Primary producers with a legal entity (operating in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries or/and aquaculture sector);
- Cooperatives of primary producers (e.g., farmer's cooperatives);
- Other organisations representing primary producers, or associations of primary producers, or networks of primary producers; or entities providing advisory services for primary producers. These organisations can operate at European, regional, national or local level.

b) Representatives

Each member should nominate **two expert representatives** (hereinafter called representatives), one main and one alternate. The representatives will participate to the meetings and other activities of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers.

Each member should ensure that the proposed representatives have the professional capacity and expertise needed to participate in the activities of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers as explained in section 4c) of the call for expression of interest.

Each member should communicate to CBE JU Programme Office any change in the appointed representatives, including the replacement of former representatives or nomination of new representatives.

c) The Steering Group

Within the CBE JU's working group on primary producers, a core group of experts will be constituted who will be responsible for steering the activities of this working group (hereinafter called **Steering Group**). The Steering Group will play a pivotal role in the preparation of the first Action Plan and in overseeing the execution of this working group's activities.

3. Duration and constitution of the working group

Duration of the appointment

Members of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers shall be appointed for a term of three years which can be renewed for one additional term.

Meetings and indemnities

The working group on primary producers will meet at least once per year.

The reimbursement of travel expenses, including a daily allowance and an accommodation allowance, incurred for the participation on the working group annual meeting will be reimbursed in accordance with the European Commission rules for reimbursement of experts¹. The CBE JU shall only bear the costs of one representative (main or alternate) for each of the members.

Confidentiality

For each task they perform, the appointed representatives from the selected members of the working group shall demonstrate appropriate ethical conduct and must respect the confidentiality of the information and documents to which they will have access. They will be required to sign a declaration attesting to their commitment.

Independence and absence of conflict of interest

The representatives nominated by the members of the working group will be appointed on a personal basis. They are required to sign a declaration of absence of conflict of interest.

Constitution of the working group

The official constitution of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers will take place during the first meeting of this working group.

The CBE JU's working group on primary producers will elect the Chair and Vice Chairs and will set up the Steering Group taking into consideration the expertise of proposed candidates, and a balanced representation in terms of geographical distribution, primary sector representation and gender.

¹ Commission Decision of 5 December 2007 'Rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by people from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity'.

4. Call for expression of interest

In compliance with article 17.2.(x) of the Council Regulation, the CBE JU Governing Board established the specific criteria and selection process for the composition of the working group aiming to balance representation in terms of geographical distribution, gender, sector and expertise.

In this context, the CBE JU is organising this call for expression of interest to draw up a list of stakeholders' candidates for appointment as **members of the CBE JU working group on primary producers**.

The call for expression of interest is published on the website of the CBE JU and promoted through various channels in order to reach organisations from different countries and different primary sectors aiming to ensure a balanced geographical distribution and an appropriate primary sectors' representation within this working group.

The states' representatives group of the CBE JU is invited to promote this call for expression of interest.

a) Selection procedure

The procedure for the appointment of the members of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers is launched through this call for expression of interest prepared by the Executive Director of the CBE JU who oversees the process under the responsibility of the Governing Board of the CBE JU.

The CBE JU Programme Office, the European Commission and the Bio-based Industries Consortium will carry out the eligibility assessment of the expressions of interest submitted on the basis of the eligibility criteria set in section 4b).

Following the eligibility assessment, the Executive Director of the CBE JU will present the results to the Governing Board, including the list of organisations deemed eligible, their geographical spread and the coverage of the different primary sectors.

Based on the lists, the Governing Board will decide on the appointment of the eligible organisations as Members of CBE JU's working group on primary producers striving to achieve a manageable and balanced group of stakeholders in terms of geographical and primary sectors representation.

The call for expression of interest will remain open for the full duration of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers to allow the Governing Board to include new members, subject to eligibility criteria. A first cut-off should be set after at least one month of its opening to allow the first appointment procedure to be carried out and to establish this working group without delay. Subsequent cut-offs and the consequent appointment procedures should be taken once per year.

b) Specific eligibility criteria

Candidate organisations of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. In terms of the **type of organisation**, the organisation falls into one of these categories²:
 - Primary producers with a legal entity (operating in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries or/and aquaculture sector); or
 - Cooperatives of primary producers (e.g., farmer's cooperatives); or
 - Other organisations representing primary producers, or associations of primary producers, or networks of primary producers; or entities providing advisory services for primary producers. These organisations can operate at European, regional, national or local level.
2. In terms of the **commitment and capacity of the organisation** to contribute to the objectives and areas of action envisaged for the CBE JU's working group on primary producers, the organisation should have:
 - A mandate or mission linked to the use and/or promotion of opportunities offered by circular bio-based innovations for the primary sector in line with the objectives of this CBE JU's working group;
 - The capacity to engage with other relevant actors within the value chain, in particular with the industry, policy-makers and other stakeholders operating at national, regional, and local levels;
 - Submitted a commitment letter, which confirms that they have the appropriate profile and the capacity to provide the necessary resources to contribute to the activities envisaged for this CBE JU's working group.
3. In line with the **type of activities** envisaged for this CBE JU's working group, the areas of activity of the members shall fall under one or more of the following:
 - Primary production of biomass;
 - Development or/and promotion of business models for the primary sector based on the value offered by circular bio-based innovations;
 - Advisory services or/and peer-to-peer counselling for the primary sector;
 - Cooperation and knowledge transference between primary production, research and innovation, and industry;
 - Communication, networking, or/and awareness creation of opportunities offered by circular bio-based innovations for the primary sector;
 - Education, development of skills, or/and capacity building of primary producers;
 - Facilitation of investments for and financial support to primary producers.

²The working group on primary producers will engage in its activities with other actors of the value chains (e.g. industries, policy makers, local authorities, financial entities, knowledge brokers, etc.)

c) Process to nominate the members representatives

Each member should propose two representatives during the application procedure that have the professional capacity and expertise needed to participate in the activities of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers, including:

- Relevant background and expertise on the challenges and opportunities encountered by primary producers (i.e., agriculture, forestry, fisheries or/and aquaculture) on the ground that might influence, impact and/or hinder the deployment of circular bio-based solutions and innovations;
- Availability and commitment to participate at least in one meeting per year and actively contribute to the discussions and activities of this working group;
- Good oral communication skills in English to be able to contribute effectively to the discussions and activities of this working group.

The fulfilment of the expertise criteria should be proved by the necessary supporting documentation.

5. How to apply

Interested organisations are requested to submit their expression of interest by filling in a structured application form: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/CBEJUWGPP>

The following **supporting documents** should be provided in addition of the completed **application form**:

- 1) The member's **commitment letter**, which confirms that they have the appropriate profile and the capacity to provide the necessary resources to contribute to the activities envisaged for this CBE JU's working group.
- 2) Any other relevant supporting document deemed necessary to allow the CBE JU Programme Office, the European Commission and the Bio-based Industries Consortium to verify that the eligibility criteria are met by the candidate members.
- 3) A **curriculum vitae of the nominated representatives**. The CV should describe applicant's professional and academic experience proving have the professional capacity and expertise needed to participate in the activities of the CBE JU's working group on primary producers.

During the application, the candidate organisations should indicate the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria and their nominated representatives.

In the application, each candidate is also requested to express their **interest in participating in the Steering Group** by proposing their representatives as potential members of the Steering Group (more information on the composition of the working group is provided in section 2 above).

Candidate organisations are requested to send their expression of interest with the enclosed supporting documents to primary.producers@cbe.europa.eu by 28 February 2025 at 12.00 (noon) Central European Time.

The CBE JU reserves the right to request any further evidence it deems fit and relevant to verify the fulfillment of the above-mentioned eligibility criteria, the organisation status or/and the expertise and experience the nominated representatives. All expressions of interest will be treated as confidential.

6. Equal opportunities

The CBE JU applies the EU policy of equal opportunities and accepts applications without distinction on the grounds of age, race, political, philosophical or religious conviction, gender or sexual orientation and regardless of disabilities, material status or family situation.

7. Protection of personal data

The CBE JU will ensure that any personal data submitted with the application are processed as required by Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC. You can find more information on who we treat your personal data in the specific privacy policy.