

SUSTRACK

Policy priorities for a transition to a sustainable circular bio-based economy

SUSTRACK is a three year project aimed at supporting policymakers in their efforts to develop sustainable pathways to replace fossil and carbon-intensive systems with sustainable circular biobased systems at the EU and regional scale, contributing to achieving the European Green Deal's objectives.

SUSTRACK RESULTS IN A NUTSHELL

IDENTIFYING THE MOST IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL BARRIERS TO THE TRANSITION TOWARDS A CIRCULAR BIO-BASED ECONOMY THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

During the first year, SUSTRACK identified the most relevant barriers to the transition to a circular bio-based economy (CBBE) under six clusters: cultural, economic, environmental, governance, structural, and technical through a broad literature review. The outputs were further analysed during the second year through a comprehensive stakeholder consultation aimed at validating these challenges and identifying additional ones impeding the transition. The final step was to prioritise barriers hindering the transition to CBBE and identify interdependencies among them via implementing multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods. The findings lay the background for policy actions, ensuring a smoother transition.



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SUSTRACK OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED ITS MONITORING TOOL

SUSTRACK launched its monitoring tool, a free, user-friendly online platform designed to facilitate understanding of Europe's bioeconomy transition. Its core objective is to make bioeconomy data and knowledge accessible to a wide audience. It allows users to explore existing indicators informing on bioeconomy from different perspectives, including sustainability pillars and contribution to sustainable development goals (SDGs). It also offers the possibility to conduct quick assessments of bioeconomy progress across European countries.



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FROM FOSSIL TO BIO-BASED CHAINS: DISCOVER THE SUSTRACK CASE STUDIES

As part of the project's sectoral focus, SUSTRACK identified eleven case studies across four high-impact sectors: chemical, textile, plastics, and construction. To get a clearer grasp of the challenges and good practices these sectors are facing, each case study compared bio-based value chains to their fossil-based counterparts, with detailed stakeholder mapping and assessments across market, policy, and sustainability dimensions.



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FORECASTING THE TRANSITION TO CIRCULAR BIO-BASED ECONOMY: A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

SUSTRACK exploited the Green Economy Model (GEM), a systems-based decision-making tool that forecasts the socio-economic and environmental impacts of policies up to 2050, to explore 'what-if' scenarios for bio-based transitions, offering a valuable perspective on how bio-based policies add value over traditional models and showcasing evidence-based insights to inform sustainable policy design across sectors and countries.



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FINDING POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE TRANSITION.

SUSTRACK is currently identifying policy instruments, and will continue to build on these findings, focusing on the identification of actionable policy solutions that address transition barriers effectively. Subsequently, the project will identify policy priorities among existing instruments as well as new policy recommendations for a sustainable CBBE transition.

To structure this task, SUSTRACK identified a working definition of the CBBE that assembles key elements from EU policy strategies and scientific literature. In a second step, a review of scientific articles, project reports and grey literature is currently being used to collect a wide array of actionable policy instruments and options, existing and proposed of various types, including market-based policies, direct regulation, information instruments and other. Based on this review, possible policy gaps will be identified. In a third step, based on extensive stakeholder discussions, policy priorities will be identified.



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