



Towards a Shared Vision for Enhancing Resilience and Competitiveness of the African Bioeconomy

Concept Note

Date: August 25 – 26, 2026

Venue: Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club, Nairobi, Kenya.

Co-organized by: icipe/BioInnovate Africa, East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO), Stockholm Environment Institute – Africa Centre, and AKADEMIYA2063

1. Background and Rationale

The bioeconomy offers Africa a transformative opportunity to convert its abundant biological resources into sustainable economic value, while addressing pressing challenges around food security, climate change, industrial and economic development, and job creation. As global interest in bio-based solutions, bio-based trade, and investments accelerates, the case for a coordinated African response has never been stronger. This workshop convenes experts from Eastern Africa and other regions of Africa to share regional experiences and initiate dialogue on a shared continental vision for enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of the African bioeconomy.

On policy and strategy, South Africa and Namibia have emerged as continental pioneers, having launched dedicated national bioeconomy strategies in 2013 and 2024, respectively. In December 2022, the East African Community (EAC) announced a dedicated regional bioeconomy strategy for East Africa 2022–2032 – the only one yet of its kind on the continent. Ethiopia published its dedicated national bioeconomy strategy in December 2024, while Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya have advanced their efforts to prepare dedicated national bioeconomy strategies. More broadly, Eastern and Southern Africa are particularly well positioned to advance the bioeconomy agenda, owing to the regions' strong research ecosystems, maturing regulatory environments, and dynamic innovation and entrepreneurship capacities.

On connecting globally, partners in East Africa, including icipe/BioInnovate Africa, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) – Africa Centre, and EASTECO, in collaboration with the International Advisory Council on Global Bioeconomy (IACGB), co-hosted the 4th Global Bioeconomy Summit on 23–24 October 2024 in Nairobi, Kenya – the first time the GBS was held outside Germany since its start in 2015. GBS 2024 made several recommendations, including the need to integrate bioeconomy strategies into broader economic policy. Additionally, in 2025, South Africa hosted the G20 and continued discussions on the G20 Initiative on Bioeconomy, focusing on financing, metrics, standards, and governance.

In June 2025, the European Commission published its second Bioeconomy Strategy, expanding trade opportunities for bio-based products and raising expectations of international investment in industrial development. Since then, Africa's policymakers have discussed the value of regional bioeconomy strategies anchored on regional economic blocs. In September 2025, a West Africa Bioeconomy Workshop in Senegal advanced the dialogue on national and regional bioeconomy strategies, highlighting growing momentum across African countries to harness biological resources and connect traditional knowledge to drive sustainable economic development.

Given this growing national, regional, and global momentum, there is a strong case for Africa to articulate a shared continental vision for enhancing the resilience and competitiveness of the African bioeconomy. Such a vision would support the implementation of Africa's Agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA), the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and other related continental initiatives. This regional workshop will bring together experts from regions of Africa and beyond to share experiences in developing and implementing regional bioeconomy strategies, paving the way for a continental bioeconomy strategy.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Discuss the state of bioeconomy development in Africa, focusing on sustainable industrialization, business and investment opportunities, and the contribution of traditional knowledge.
- Discuss lessons learned, challenges, and opportunities emerging from implementing dedicated regional and national bioeconomy strategies or frameworks.
- Contribute to a longer-term process toward a continent-wide bioeconomy strategy.

3. Expected Outcomes

- This workshop is expected to advance a shared understanding of bioeconomy development in Africa.
- The workshop is expected to contribute to a broader African narrative on bioeconomy and opportunities for investment and international cooperation, which can be shared at the Global Bioeconomy Summit scheduled for 20–21 October 2026 in Dublin, Ireland.

4. Participants

The workshop will bring together a diverse group of 50 to 70 stakeholders, including:

- Policymakers from relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies (e.g., science and technology, agriculture, environment, industry, energy, and finance).
- Researchers and academics working on bioeconomy-related topics.
- Representatives of regional bodies.
- Representatives from continental bodies.
- Innovators, entrepreneurs, and private sector actors active in bio-based sectors.
- Civil society and community-based organizations, particularly those linked to traditional and indigenous knowledge.

5. Draft Final Agenda

Day 0 – 24 August 2026

- **Arrival and check-in at hotel**
- **Invite-only high-level visit to the icipe Duduville Campus**

Day 1 – 25 August 2026

08:30 – 09:00 **Registration and Coffee**

09:00 – 09:30 **Opening Session**

Opening Statements:

- Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, Director General, icipe
- HE Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, African Union Special Envoy for Food Systems (Video message)
- HE Moses Vilakati, Commissioner DARBE, African Union Commission
- Hon. Dr. Deborah Mlongo Barasa, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, Kenya

09:30 – 11:00 **Moderated High Level “Popcorn” Panels**

- Hon. Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, Principal Secretary, State Department for Science, Research & Innovation, Kenya
- Hon. Dr. Henry Musa Kpaka, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sierra Leone
- Mr. Fidèle Bingwa, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment, Rwanda

- H.E. Elias M. Magosi, Executive Secretary, SADC
- H.E. Andrea Ariik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General, EAC

- H.E. Caitríona Ingoldsby, Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland, Kenya
- H.E. Matt Baugh, British High Commissioner to Kenya
- H.E. Sebastian Groth, German Ambassador, Kenya

Moderator: Dr Eliane Ubalijoro, Director General, Landscape Alliance

11:00 – 11:30 **Group Photo & Coffee Break**

11:30 – 12:30	Presentation and Launch of the Kenya National Bioeconomy Strategy	Hon. Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak, Principal Secretary, State Department for Science, Research & Innovation, Kenya
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	Session 1: Setting the Scene - Bioeconomy in Africa	- Launch of the African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development (AJFAND) Special Issue on Bioeconomy in Africa –Prof. Ruth Oniang'o (Editor in Chief) Prof. Judith Kimiywe & Mr. Michael Okumu. - State of the Bioeconomy in East Africa Report 2026 : Sustainable Industrialization in East Africa – Dr Fortunate Muyambi, EASTECO & Dr Dr. Niall O'Connor, Dr Ivar Virgin & Dr Alphayo Lutta, SEI Africa.
15:00 – 17:00	Session 2: National and Regional Experiences, Stocktaking, and Pathways	Station-based sharing from countries and regions on their experiences implementing national/regional bioeconomy strategies. Session convenors: - Dr Teklehaimanot Haileselassie & Ms. Yordanos Ali Hassen, Ethiopia - Dr Rael Adhiambo, Prof Thomas Rewe & Dr Roselida Owour, Kenya - Dr Fortunate Muyambi, EASTECO - Prof Anicia Peters & Paulus Mungeyi, Namibia - Dr Hlupheka Chabala & Ben Durham (Virtual) South Africa - Dr Laurent Bochereau, European Commission
18:00 – 19:30	Cocktail Reception	

Day 2 – 26 August 2026

09:00 – 10:30	Session 3: Traditional Knowledge as an Integral Part of the African Bioeconomy	Moderated panel discussion on indigenous and local knowledge systems, benefit-sharing (including biodiversity credits), ethics, and convergence with modern science. Panellists: - Ms. Ginette Karirekinyana, Karire Products Ltd, Burundi - Dr Hlupheka Chabala, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, South Africa - Mr Joseph Nguthiru, Hyapak, Kenya - Dr Raquel Matavele Chisumba, Center for Research and Development in Ethnobotany, Mozambique - Dr Wanjiru Kamau-Rutenberg, Alliance Bioversity International and CIAT, Nairobi, Kenya - Moderator: Dr Katrin Glatzel, AKADEMIYA2063
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10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break	
11:00 – 13:00	Session 4: African Bioeconomy Value Chains I	Participants break into three groups; Each group selects a representative for plenary report-back: • Group 1 – Critical and emerging bioeconomy value chains (incl. role of SMEs): Dr Peter Minang, Landscape Alliance; Mr Trystan Nadasen, GrainSA / Nampo Ltd; Mr. Jonathan Dass, Giraffe Bioenergy • Group 2 – Synergizing bioeconomy within existing continental frameworks (CAADP, STISA, AfCFTA): Dr Diana Akullo Ogwal, AfCTA; Dr Debisi Araba, AKADEMIYA2063 • Group 3 – Financing mechanisms for the bioeconomy in Africa: Ms Norika Salih, FSD Africa; Ms Indekhwa Anangwe, Nature Finance; Dr Martin Fregene, AfDB; Mr Thierry Latreille, IFAD/AgriPDB
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break	
14:00 – 15:00	Session 4: African Bioeconomy Value Chains II	Report back and discussion from Session 4 • Group leads / rapporteurs
15:00 – 16:00	Session 5: Moving towards an African Bioeconomy Vision	Moderated panel conversation: • H.E. Moses Vilakati, African Union Commission • H.E. Elias M. Magosi, Executive Secretary, SADC • H.E. Andrea Ariik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General, EAC • Moderator: Dr Debisi Araba, AKADEMIYA2063
16:00 – 16:30	Closing Session 6: Final Reflections and Closing Statement	• Icipe/BioInnovate Africa; EASTECO; SEI-Africa; AKADEMIYA2063
16:30	END	