

Manifesto on the bio-based economy

The contours of a bio-based economy – an economy that is based on renewable resources – are becoming ever clearer. Industry and civil society organizations in the Netherlands have come together to formulate a common approach to this important development and, wherever possible, form alliances to promote the transition towards a bio-based economy. In this manifesto, they commit themselves to promoting and supporting the establishment of a bio-based economy in the Netherlands in the most efficient manner possible.

We, representatives of industry and civil society in the Netherlands, declare the following:

Considering that

1. The bio-based economy offers great opportunities for the transition that is necessary to reduce greenhouse emissions, to reduce the ecological footprint (especially in high-income countries), to give socially vulnerable groups better access to sustainable means of living, and at the same time achieve sustainable growth of prosperity and well-being, in the Netherlands and beyond;
2. The Dutch business community, with its rich tradition of sustainable entrepreneurship, is well-placed to make a difference in the bio-based economy by developing sustainable, bio-based products;
3. The bio-based economy offers the Netherlands opportunities in the fields of employment, technology, social innovation and knowledge infrastructure;
4. The transition is a complex one, in an international environment, which, besides creating opportunities, also poses risks for humans, natural ecosystems, biodiversity and the climate;
5. Food security, the right to food and clean drinking water, and an increase in the production of food in a sustainable manner for people, soil and ecosystems, is a precondition for a sustainable bio-based economy;
6. A gradual replacement of fossil resources as the basis of our energy management system and our use of materials is instrumental to achieving the transition;
7. A key condition for a successful transition towards a viable, ecologically and economically sustainable bio-based economy is a transparent, freely accessible, international market for bio-based raw materials, based on sustainable value chains and regulated by harmonized laws and regulations;

8. The Netherlands, with its strong chemical industry, agro-food industry, logistics sector and energy sector, combined with a long tradition of cooperation between government, market and civil society, can play a leading role in the transition to a bio-based economy;
9. The signatories collectively wish to contribute to the transition to a bio-based economy in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the Social and Economic Council (SER), the Rathenau Institute, the Corbey Commission (CDB) and the WTC;
10. The support of the government and a strong independently functioning civil society is an important prerequisite for the development, both nationally and internationally, of the 'emerging market' that the bio-based economy represents;
11. The bio-based economy is a subject that cuts across the top economic sectors (agrofood, horticulture and seed stock, high tech, energy, logistics, creative industries, life sciences, chemistry, water);

Starting points

12. We therefore subscribe to the following principles in shaping the transition towards a bio-based economy:
 - a. The availability of and access to sufficient, safe and healthy food needs to be improved, and the same holds for the renewable resources that are needed to produce these foods;
 - b. The impact of current energy and material consumption per capita needs to be reduced, especially in high-income countries, and the strategy to reduce energy consumption needs to be continued or even expanded;
 - c. The Cascade Model should be used for the use of biomass:
 - priority should be given to high-value applications
 - the reuse of materials should be increased
 - waste products should be maximally utilized
 - biomass should be used for energy purposes only if there is no higher-value alternative
 - d. Renewable resources should preferentially be used in the country or region of origin;
 - e. Price speculation in commodities and land should be avoided as much as possible;
 - f. In biofuels, priority should be given to those sectors in which there is no sustainable and economically viable alternative, such as aviation and shipping;
 - g. Greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced significantly, taking into account the Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC);
 - h. Biodiversity and ecosystem services (including soil fertility) need to be conserved: nutrient cycles should be closed, natural resources/ecosystems should be protected and restored;

- i. The international trade market needs to be supported by installing balanced and harmonized laws and regulations, including binding sustainability criteria;
- j. Human rights are a prerequisite for a bio-based economy; it needs to be guaranteed that all stakeholders in the bio-based economy can contribute to this transition effectively and with dignity;
- k. Productivity needs to be improved: soil, nutrients, water, capital (machinery, investments) and labor, in a manner that is sustainable from the perspective of people, soil, biodiversity and ecosystems;

Actions

13. We hereby agree to shape the bio-based economy, in line with the principles stated above, and in changing partnerships, through actions such as:
 - investigating how production and distribution chains can be made more sustainable;
 - supporting promising and sustainable initiatives;
 - improving the quality of employment and education; actively coordinating education and science programs to support a bio-based economy in the future;
 - conducting joint fact finding and joint research based on the WTC's research agenda;
 - working on formulating sustainability criteria, certification of biomass, further development and enforcement of international laws and regulations and increasing social acceptance of the bio-based economy.

Concluding: we, the signatories to this Manifesto,

14. Are united in our pursuit of a sustainable bio-based economy that recognizes the carrying capacity of ecosystems and the primary needs of people as preconditions;
15. Commit ourselves to entering into a partnership to give shape to the bio-based economy, in line with the principles as stated above;
16. Agree to inform one another on lessons learned, dilemmas and aspirations, as much as is possible within the legal structure, in order to build the framework of a bio-based economy that offers opportunities for people, the environment and sustainable economic growth;
17. Ask the Dutch government
 - to actively promote these principles nationally and internationally, and to support them through appropriate policies and financial instruments;
 - to promote the monitoring of progress made in the bio-based economy, including developments regarding the labor market and sustainability;

- to be open to and contribute to initiatives that are born out of our partnerships.

This manifesto is valid for a period of three years, that is, until October 1, 2014. Before this date all parties will evaluate the agreements made, with a view to updating the manifesto.

The Netherlands, Delft, 29 September 2011

Signatories:

- *Argos Groep BV*
- *Arizona Chemicals*
- *Attero*
- *Avantium*
- *AVEBE*
- *Bosschap - Bedrijfschap voor bos en natuur*
- *Both ENDS*
- *Bruins & Kwast Biomass Management*
- *BTG Biomass Technology Group*
- *Bunnik Plants*
- *Branche Vereniging Organische Reststoffen*
- *Croda Gouda*
- *Den Ouden Groep*
- *DSM*
- *Dutch Biorefinery Cluster*
- *Eneco*
- *Energie Nederland*
- *Essent NV*
- *Friesland Campina*
- *Gebroeders Duijvestijn*
- *Greenchoice*
- *Havenbedrijf Rotterdam NV*
- *IUCN NL*
- *KLM*
- *Lans*
- *NatureWorks BV*
- *Natuurmonumenten*
- *NOM, Investerings- en ontwikkelingsmaatschappij voor Noord-Nederland*
- *Oxfam Novib*
- *Platform Bio-Energie*
- *Productschap Akkerbouw*
- *Productschap Tuinbouw*
- *Purac*
- *Rabobank*
- *Royal Cosun*
- *Solidaridad*
- *Staatsbosbeheer*
- *Stichting Natuur en Milieu*
- *Synbra*
- *VAR*
- *VNO-NCW*
- *VNP*
- *Wereld Natuur Fonds (World Wildlife Fund NL)*