

## Interregional Conference of the Vanguard Initiative Network: The Next Steps of Interregional Collaboration in Bio-economy

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Notes:

1. What Eastern and Northern Finland can bring to the VI Bioeconomy pilot?
  - a. The basis for enhanced cooperation is the shared smart specialization strategy for East and North Finland, which also identifies the competence areas – relevant for the bioeconomy pilot are listed under the Priority I: Clean solutions
  - b. Clusters and ecosystems that combine businesses, RDI-actors, and public authorities
  - c. Regional action plans for the Finnish Bioeconomy Strategy have identified development needs for bioeconomy – these are very well aligned with the work of the pilot especially in terms of enhancing the diversity and value of bio-based production.
  
2. What can we do to link our current work with the pilot?
  - a. First step from the regional authority perspective, is to introduce the bioeconomy pilot's work to relevant regional actors and ecosystems, so that they can get in contact with the pilot with practical development goals.
  - b. If this kind of discussion is fruitful and common interests are discovered, the next step will be to figure out which funding instruments are the most suitable for the task. It seems the I3 is well suited instrument for the Vanguard Initiative contents.
  
3. East and North Finland actors, themes and development needs
  - a. Actors: universities, universities of applied Science, research institutions, companies, accessible through clusters and regional councils.
  - b. Themes: industrial processes and sidestreams/circularity, material technology, energy-efficient machine and equipment manufacture, timber construction, bioenergy and biofuels e.g. biogas production and distribution, energy efficiency, energy storage and new technical solutions, wastewater processing and water treatment technology, circular water economy, sustainable food system
  - c. The need is to develop regional value chains for enhancing the added value of bio-based production – this is the key to combine the growing demand for renewables with the protection of bio- and geodiversity. We also need to consistently develop our international networks for efficient RDI and expertise/technology transfer, and for finding mutually beneficial business opportunities.