



# Hungary

Empowering the Central and Eastern European Countries to Develop Bioeconomy Strategies and Action Plans



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CEE2ACT

**Hungary's bioeconomy is growing particularly in sub-sectors such as bioenergy as a response to the recent energy crisis.** However, the country still lacks a national bioeconomy strategy, which contributes to limited coordination among key stakeholders.

Against this backdrop, the Hungarian National Bioeconomy Hub (NBH) creates an umbrella structure that brings together organisations from other bioeconomy initiatives. This is to strengthen stakeholder coordination for bioeconomy implementation. Positioning itself as the Hungarian Bioeconomy Forum (HBF), the Hub bridges the different interests of key stakeholder groups, where industrial actors focus more on bioenergy, while research & academia as well as policy actors focus on sustainable food, agriculture and forestry.



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## Challenges

The Bulgarian Hub faces challenges that are contributed by the absence of a national bioeconomy strategy. A low level of stakeholder motivation, differing interests among stakeholder groups, and the private sector's hesitancy are key challenges reported by Geonardo, the Hungarian Hub Coordinator.

Another challenge facing the Hub is establishing a presence in the country and gaining recognition from other bioeconomy initiatives. It requires considerable time and efforts to participate in relevant events. While full collaboration was not always possible due to scheduling conflicts and other challenges, **creating synergies with existing initiatives is considered a good practice.**

Despite the challenges, a policymaker from the Ministry of Agriculture saw **bottom-up initiatives like CEE2ACT as important to bring a message to higher political levels** to give more priority to bioeconomy.



## Key successes

In Hungary's current contexts, the establishment of the Hungarian Hub, or the Hungary Bioeconomy Forum, is an achievement. It plays a role as an umbrella structure incorporating partners from previous and ongoing initiatives. A core group of engaged stakeholders were present and contributed actively through information sharing.

The Hub managed to gain recognition from other initiatives such as BIOEAST, and international organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Also, the Hub establishes a bilateral cooperation with a sister project, namely BOOST4BIOEAST. Despite being non-binding, the agreement has enabled mutual participation in events and information sharing between the two projects.



## Bottom-up stakeholder engagement

For a successful bottom-up stakeholder engagement, the Hungarian Hub found face-to-face meetings to be the most effective format, as opposed to email communication or surveys. Short meetings (up to four hours) are found to be the most optimal. One-on-one sessions, e.g. breakfast meetings, was introduced at a later stage, that also proved to be effective.

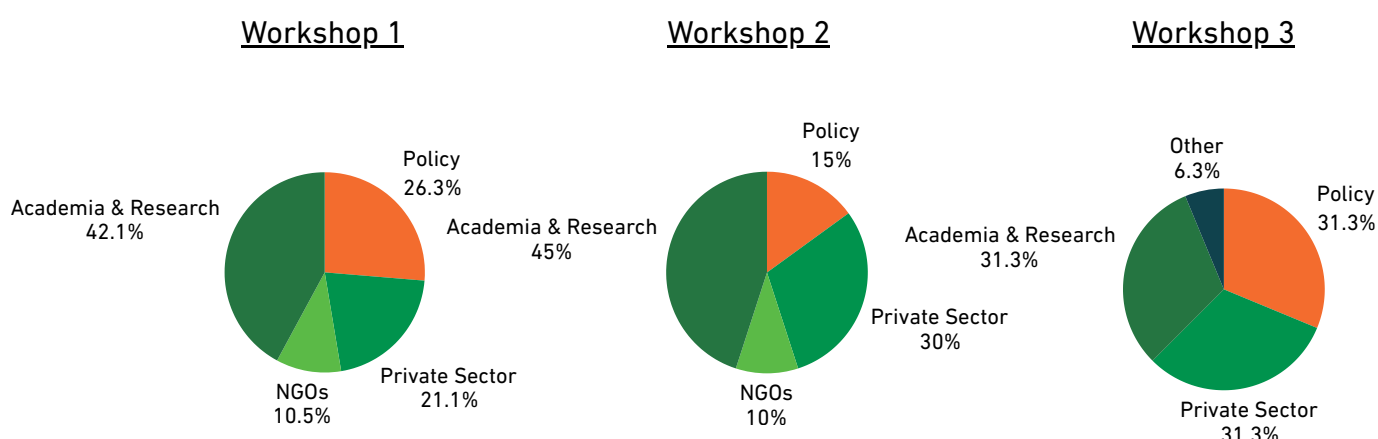
Stakeholder attendance in the three workshops conducted by the Hub shows a consistent trend. The academia and research, policymakers as well as private sector are well represented in all workshops, with lower participation from NGOs.

The first workshop (2023) laid the ground with the presentation of bioeconomy concepts and video materials from other EU countries, which were well received by key stakeholders.



## Bottom-up stakeholder engagement

The second workshop (2024) focused on knowledge transfer and methodology. The materials for knowledge transfer were considered valuable, albeit requiring adjustments to fit the local contexts. Practical examples – through YouTube videos and site visits – can help bridge the information gap. The third workshop (2025) focused on the development of a national bioeconomy roadmap, which was viewed by stakeholders as an opportunity to contribute to a national-level document, thus receiving more substantive attention.



A hub survey conducted during the third workshop yielded a limited number of responses, despite the workshop being relatively well attended. As a result, the findings may not fully reflect the range of participant views. Nonetheless, the responses indicate a trend consistent with other CEE2ACT hubs: more than half of respondents expressed satisfaction with the hub workshop.



**The Hungarian Hub co-creates an MoU to consolidate its membership and outline the shared objectives.** The process of introducing and drafting the MoU was slow and, in many ways, reflected the broader challenges of limited stakeholder proactivity. To encourage more participation from stakeholders, the Hub keeps the MoU content general and avoids too specific commitments that may discourage stakeholder participation.



The process of co-creating the MoU is seen as an important step for the Hub, especially in the context of the long-anticipated national bioeconomy strategy.





## Sustainability and the Role of CEE2ACT

Ensuring the Hungarian Hub's sustainability beyond the project lifetime is key. The Hub Coordinator, Geonardo, signed a cooperation agreement with the Hungarian Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (ÖMKi) which coordinates a sister project, namely BOOST4BIOEAST. This cooperation will enable the Hungarian Hub ("Forum") to continue beyond the CEE2ACT's duration. It is their vision is to maintain the Forum as an umbrella platform, able to host multiple initiatives and serve as a neutral space for exchange. The Forum will remain open to all stakeholders working on bioeconomy.

The CEE2ACT project has played a critical role in enabling the Hub to take its shape, through structured methodologies and tools, particularly the bottom-up stakeholder engagement framework and knowledge transfer materials. The Hub valued the peer-to-peer learning opportunities, noting that **peer exchanges with other CEE2ACT Hubs has helped them adapt their approach**. While cultural and contextual differences limit how much could be replicated, examples from other hubs provide inspiration and practical ideas. Overall, the Hungarian hub coordinator described the CEE2ACT's support as necessary and highly beneficial.



## Lessons Learned and a Way Forward

The Hungarian Hub's experience offers several lessons about bottom-up stakeholder engagement in environments where bioeconomy is not yet a high political priority. The combination of face-to-face engagement with practical examples—such as site visits, video materials, and peer learning—is most effective in building awareness and initial trust. Clear and credible institutional backing, whether through cooperation agreements or public endorsements, is needed to overcome skepticism. Third, patience and persistence are critical in bottom-up stakeholder engagement.



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