

Bioeconomy and Justice (BioEcoJust)



The aim of the BioEcoJust consortium is to find out how probable a bioeconomic future is, what decisions need to be made for reaching it, who the principal decision makers are, and how their responsibility in making the crucial choices can best be described and evaluated, especially in terms of here-and-now and intergenerational justice. An integral part of the consortium's work is to make private and public decision makers aware of the consequences and responsibilities related to bioeconomic choices.

The project started by defining the bioeconomy (systemic) and bioeconomic solutions (piecemeal) *and* by honing the justice instrument for analysing futures research findings.

1. Defining bioeconomy

Foresight scholars at the Finland Futures Research Centre have explored the long-range future of the bioeconomy. Since the time span of the project ranges over 100 years, they have engaged in both futures and multidisciplinary research. Using their archive of collected literature and continuous horizon scanning (collecting relevant trends and weak signals) they have identified several distinct ways of presenting the future of the bioeconomy, each expressing different values surrounding its implementation and use. Concentration on bio-utilisation, bio-mimicry, bio-recovery, and bio-equality all produce different visions on how the future can unfold. In addition, at least three dominant narratives offer different yet in their own right meaningful solutions that may come to have considerable social impacts. The narratives are forest-based bioeconomy, regenerative agriculture (soil carbon sequestration engaging and reinventing agriculture, potentially also aquaculture), and the promise of algae to be developed to produce a wide variety of high-value products. Each approach has its merits and drawbacks, and suggests its own decisions for the future. The practical aim is to map the bioeconomy system to produce evidence-based narratives that can offer compelling and challenging scenarios for the expert network, which will engage in the Delphi process at the next stage of the futures research work.

2. Justice and forest bioeconomy

Philosophers at the Aalto University School of Business have, for the time being, narrowed down their scope to forest bioeconomy. Their main findings so far are that approaches to justice and attitudes towards forest divide into six spheres (presented in the figure below) *and* that a country's take on bioeconomic solutions can be predicted, in theory, by the ideologies, or political moralities, held by its governing political parties. Work continues on the interest- and tradition-based reasons why nations do not in reality fall into their places as neatly as projected.



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