

COUNTRY & ORGANIZATION-LED INITIATIVE

COLi GLOBAL SUMMIT

23-25 February 2026

Advancing Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches

VIENNA CALL FOR ACTION

for a sustainable forest-based bioeconomy

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"Advancing Sustainable
Forest-based Bioeconomy
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Cover Page: Participants from all over the world



Participants from all five UN regions and various organisations

Country and Organization-Led Initiative on Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches (COLI)

Austria has initiated together with Australia, Finland, Japan, Türkiye, FAO and IUFRO the Country and Organization-Led Initiative on Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches (COLI). It is a multi-year international initiative that aims to create a useful multilateral dialogue to foster the exchange on sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches by connecting as many interested actors as possible and making best use of synergies.

One highlight was the Global Summit on "Advancing Sustainable Forest-Based Bioeconomy Approaches", which took place in Vienna and online from 23 to 25 February 2026. The Summit was co-chaired by Austria and South Africa. More than 400 participants joined the event, both on-site and online, and representatives from more than 60 countries and over 100 organisations were registered.

The main outcomes of the Global Summit are the Vienna Call for Action (VCA) and the Co-Chairs' Summary. This brochure includes both the VCA and detailed recommendations for advancing a sustainable forest-based bioeconomy.

VIENNA CALL FOR ACTION

The **Vienna Call for Action** aims to scale up and evolve sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches (SFBA) in the spirit of collaboration. It is derived from the discussions at the Global Webinar Series 2025[1] and the Global Summit on Advancing Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches held on 23–25 February 2026 in Vienna, Austria, co-chaired by Austria and South Africa[2].

The Summit is co-convened by Australia, Finland, Japan, Türkiye, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat as part of the Country and Organization-led Initiative on Sustainable Forest-based Bioeconomy Approaches. The Initiative was designed in accordance with the UNFF19 High-Level Declaration (2024) and the G20 High-Level Principles on Bioeconomy, and recognizing tools, evidence, technologies and initiatives that exist to upscale bioeconomy approaches, such as the Principles for Responsible Timber Construction and the evolving Bioeconomy for Sustainable Transformation Partnership.

We, the participants at the Global Summit, emphasize that advancing SFBA is essential for the transitioning to nature positive, resilient, diverse, equitable and inclusive economies and societies. SFBA has the demonstrated and proven capacity to, enable societies and the planet to derive greater benefit from sustainably managed forests.

The challenge now is to drive systemic transformation at scale, taking into account the vast expertise of the forest sector as a fundamental basis for SFBA; moving from visibility to viability. To achieve meaningful impact, we call on governments, inter-governmental organizations, private sector, research and academic institutions, and other forest-related stakeholders to join forces and accelerate the following five collective priority actions at global, regional, national and sub-national levels advancing sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches:

1. **Take leadership for systemic transformation**
2. **Ensure an inclusive bioeconomy**
3. **Mobilize targeted financial resources**
4. **Create enabling conditions for forest-based value chains and innovation**
5. **Build collaborative partnerships at all levels**

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1 https://www.fao.org/forestry/our-focus/forest-products/sustainable-forest-based-bioeconomy-approaches/en

2 https://www.bmluk.gv.at/en/coli.html

1. Take leadership for systemic transformation

SFBA should be mainstreamed into policy, funded, and scaled up into practice and has to be based on sustainable forest management. Unlocking new growth opportunities for adding value with wood, non-wood forest products and ecosystem services through responsible value chains, resource efficiency and generating decent jobs are key. This is enabled through strong leadership, coherence of policies and inclusive decision-making at all levels to champion SFBA goals and benefits across climate, biodiversity, sustainability, natural resource management, energy, building, trade, social and industrial agendas.



EU Commissioner Jessika Roswall



The COLI Secretariat

2. Ensure an inclusive bioeconomy

SFBA should aim to be people-centered and rights-based. Scaling up such ambition requires empowering all forest-related stakeholders including foresters, forest owners, SMEs, forest cooperatives and smallholders, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Mechanisms that enhance co-creation, inclusive access to resources as well as fair and equitable distribution of benefits should be prioritized. More emphasis is needed on securing tenure rights, gender equality and integrated policies, knowledge transfer, and market participation. These measures will help to ensure that SFBA contributes in particular to sustainable rural development, improving livelihoods, alleviating poverty, protecting cultural values and traditional knowledge, and promoting social equality, resilience and inclusion.



Pumeza Nodada - Co-Chair South Africa of the Global Summit



3. Mobilize targeted financial resources

Financing is key for advancing sustainable forest-based bioeconomy approaches. Resources should move beyond project-by-project financing toward programmatic approaches that enable sector-wide transformation. This includes mobilizing substantial resources in global capital markets, such as blended finance mechanisms, de-risking instruments, access to start-up capital and green bonds. Furthermore, reorienting incentives toward renewable and bio-based solutions, tailoring solutions to local contexts and scaling up sustainable and transition investments are essential. Investments should equally focus on forest value chains, research and knowledge transfer in developing countries, where the potential for inclusive and sustainable growth is the greatest.

4. Create enabling conditions for forest-based value chains and innovation

To thrive SFBA needs a sustainable supply of wood and non-wood materials as well as supportive cohesive regulatory and market environments. All relevant actors should act now to promote and advance the implementation of sustainable forest management and ensure resource supply and promote skills, training and science-based capacity building. This includes, tackling trade-offs between land use and management objectives, supporting market access mechanisms, modernizing standards and codes, and recognizing the role of certification schemes in identifying responsibly sourced bio-based products. Public and private procurement policies can help guarantee early markets for sustainable bio-based solutions and support the cultivation of forest-based consumer markets, including through coordinated awareness raising. The scaling of technological, social, political, institutional, and financial innovations should be tailored to national and local circumstances, keeping rural development and global markets in mind.



5. Build collaborative partnerships at all levels

To realize its full potential and to maintain global momentum, SFBA should be implemented within collaborative multistakeholder partnerships at global, regional, national and sub-national levels. This benefits from holistic framing where forest-based knowledge, including technologies, approaches, sustainability metrics and indicators, Indigenous and traditional knowledge are shared across the globe, allowing planet-wide responses to the climate and environment crises as well as context-specific economic and social challenges. SFBA should be recognized in intergovernmental bodies and multilateral processes, such as FAO, UNFF, CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC, G20, WTO and the post-2030 Agenda. Multilateral processes should foster transboundary cooperation and equally strengthen existing regional forest governance frameworks as essential complements to global agreements. By linking national programs and actions with international frameworks, countries can create synergies across policy arenas. In this way, SFBA has the potential to contribute to planetary stewardship and the transition to equitable and inclusive prosperity.



Minister Norbert Totschnig - Co-Chair Austria of the Global Summit



Behind the Scenes of the Global Summit



Pierre Taty (FAO), Federal Minister Norbert Totschnig (Summit Co-Chair), Juliette Biao (UNFF), Pumeza Nodada (Summit Co-Chair), Jessika Roswall (EU Commissioner), Georg Rappold (Chair COLI Secretariat)

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section contains the detailed recommendations, as set out in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

Policy meets practice

- Develop integrated policy frameworks and metrics spanning forestry, agriculture, energy, and industry, to achieve integrated, coherent cross-sectorial plans that are anchored in measurable targets.
- Mainstream sustainable forest-based bioeconomy within national and multilateral environmental agreements and reporting frameworks.
- Accelerate and enforce regulatory reforms (e.g. building codes, trade rules, public procurement) to hasten sustainable forest-based bioeconomy adoption.
- Advance innovation, research and development, and create enabling conditions to move sustainable forest-based bioeconomy solutions from pilot stage to commercial reality, strengthening market uptake, competitiveness and long-term added value creation.
- Create platforms and governance mechanisms that expand the dialogue, co-design decision-making as well as capacity building, education and communication to foster implementation of sustainable forest-based bioeconomy with a focus on engaging youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local and rural communities.

Sourcing wealth and financing opportunities

- Reform fiscal and trade policies, enabling transformation, re-aligning subsidies from fossil-based industries to bio-based alternatives to make sustainable forest-based bioeconomy more competitive.
- Streamline standards for carbon and biodiversity credits to attract financial institution and investors, including easy access to markets.
- Enhance information on forest resources, trade, and supply and demand, sharing best-practice business cases and ensure transparency and accountability in financial flows by scaling guarantee schemes and risk-sharing mechanisms.
- Promote finance partnerships at all levels to support inclusive forest-based bioeconomy entrepreneurship.
- Build capacity for SMEs to access finance through creation of tailored financial products, such as microfinance for foresters, forest owners and smallholders, youth, women, local communities and Indigenous Peoples and other forest-related stakeholders.

Build the future with wood

- Integrate wood-based construction into housing, infrastructure and climate strategies, policies and programs.
- Integrate engineered wood and other sustainable wood-based construction materials into national norms and standards systems and building regulations.
- Align carbon accounting methodologies globally and improve traceability systems;
- Ensure the inclusion of substitution effect of wood products in reporting of climate change mitigation effect.
- Incentivize clean and circular production, including through pre-fabricated elements, off-site construction systems, and use of residues and low value wood parts.
- Develop international knowledge-sharing platforms on wood policy and wood-based construction systems, including integrated to other materials.
- Strengthen international cooperation in skills-building and technology transfer, especially to rapidly urbanizing regions in Africa and Asia.

Forest potentials beyond wood

- Empower local communities and Indigenous Peoples as stewards and key beneficiaries of forest landscape by securing land tenure and equitable resource rights, strengthening collective action mechanisms, and ensuring equitable benefit sharing to enable long-term stewardship and investment.
- Invest in research and development, technology transfer across cultivation, sustainable harvesting, processing, and storage, alongside infrastructure and skills development, to strengthen value chains, increase local value addition, and improve competitiveness of NWFPs.
- Integrate NWFPs and FES into provincial, regional and international strategies, supported by transition roadmaps and strengthened data systems that improve inventorying and monitoring of production, trade, and ecosystem with a goal of aligning policy, finance and markets.
- Promote stable and inclusive market structures through long-term purchasing commitments, sustainability-linked procurement, and producer aggregation mechanisms that enhance income reliability, reduce volatility, and enable communities to plan and invest sustainably.
- Expand public–private partnerships for payment of ESS and biodiversity credit, and other nature-based finance mechanisms, mobilizing investment to support conservation management while diversifying income and improving livelihood opportunities and stability.
- Strengthen enabling legal and policy frameworks to remove business barriers, support sustainable enterprise development, improve compliance, and ensure equitable and transparent resource use.
- Enhance regional and international cooperation to harmonize standards, improve monitoring systems, reduce environmental and market leakage, and support shared learning and coordinated implementation across jurisdictions.



Growing forest-based innovation

- Strengthen integrated innovation ecosystems linking research, industry, and communities to facilitate knowledge transfer and scaling of proven technologies.
- Make best use of traditional knowledge and existing expertise in the uptake of innovative solutions.
- Align policies, standards, and regulatory frameworks to ensure future sustainable timber supply, incentivize responsible and inclusive innovation development, adoption and commercialization of novel bio-based products.
- Promote cross-sectoral collaboration and public–private partnerships to connect stakeholders along the forest-based value chain, especially SMEs.
- Foster innovative skills development through education and training to unlock the full potential of the sector.



Thematic Sessions - Co-Creation Workshops

Advancing forest-based value chains

- Promote integrated planning that balances sustainable forest biomass production, biodiversity conservation, and rural livelihoods, with the demand for the derived products, while concurrently mobilizing diverse forest and tree resources, underutilized species, reclaimed timber, and circular material flows, supported by biodiversity safeguards, ecosystem protection, and science-based monitoring.

- Develop coordinated policy and regulatory frameworks that incentivize circular and cascading practices where appropriate, strengthen traceability and material transparency, integrate ecosystem services into valuation and accounting, and leverage public procurement and policy coherence to drive demand for sustainable bio-based products.

- Strengthen technical and institutional capacity across value chains by equipping actors with targeted training, technology transfer, and digital tools to accelerate innovation, improve processing efficiency and adoption of advanced forest-based solutions, while fostering science - industry collaboration, combining scientific and traditional knowledge, supporting entrepreneurship, and attracting youth and skilled workers to the sector.

- Mobilize long-term, risk-tolerant finance to support investment in processing facilities, value addition, and local enterprises, including blended finance and private–public partnerships, while also improving access to finance across the full innovation cycle, reducing administrative barriers, de-risking investments through guarantees and policy support, and bridging financing gaps between research, demonstration, and commercial deployment.

- Enhance inclusive participation by creating mechanisms for meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, particularly smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth in decision-making, benefit-sharing, and innovation processes, and by supporting inclusive market participation, entrepreneurship, cooperative models, and advisory services that activate forest owners and industries, local enterprises, and community actors

- Scale strategic partnerships across sectors and borders to unlock innovation, investment, and markets in forest-based value chains, through joint platforms, stronger public–private cooperation, and targeted regional knowledge exchange that reduces imbalances and accelerates sustainable bioeconomy growth.



Forest Fund
Republic of Austria

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