

Investing in Nature-Positive Futures: Innovation and Place-Based Finance for Bioeconomy and systems change

12 June 9:00-17:00; Climate KIC office, Place du Congres 1, 1000 Brussels

The transition to a nature-positive economy cannot be driven by technology and capital alone – it depends equally on the social fabric that enables communities, institutions and regions to innovate together, bottom-up. This workshop, proposed by Climate KIC, brings together three inter-dependent themes to explore how widely understood innovation becomes a catalyst for systemic change – a mutually reinforcing transformation dynamics.

First, bioeconomy as a systemic opportunity and emerging industry with high potential to boost EU competitiveness. Moving beyond siloed sector narratives, we examine how bio-based value chains can be redesigned at regional and landscape level, integrating ecological regeneration with economic viability. Drawing on Climate-KIC's experience of system innovation as a form of social institution-building, participants will explore how multi-actor coalitions shift the rules, relationships and mental models that currently lock in unsustainable resource use, forming the foundational layer upon which new financial and innovation approaches can build.

Second, Place-Based Finance Labs as an innovation instrument to deliver on topics like bioeconomy. We showcase how tailor-made financial mechanisms – co-designed with local governments, communities and investors – can unlock capital for nature-positive projects which mainstream finance does not (yet) fund. These labs embody the principle of Multi-Level Governance: aligning EU policy frameworks with national programmes and sub-regional realities so that investment flows to where transformation is actually happening, thereby operationalising and scaling the systemic opportunities identified in the bioeconomy domain.

Third, innovation in it's widest sense, and as an expression of social capital. Through concrete impact stories, we illustrate the full spectrum of innovation – technological, business-model, social and policy – already benefiting nature, people and economy. Framed through the Multi-Level Perspective on socio-technical transitions, these stories demonstrate how place-based experiments, supported by the right social networks and institutional conditions, can challenge and ultimately reshape current systems closing the loop between systemic opportunity (bioeconomy) and enabling mechanisms (finance and innovation) delivering real-world transformation.

The workshop will combine:

Short practitioner presentations with facilitated dialogue, inviting participants to map the connections between finance, bioeconomy and social innovation in their own contexts.

The aim is to showcase what is already happening and to collectively identify the governance, investment, policy conditions needed to scale nature-positive innovation across European regions – turning the EU Green Week theme of “investing in a nature-positive economy” into actionable insight.

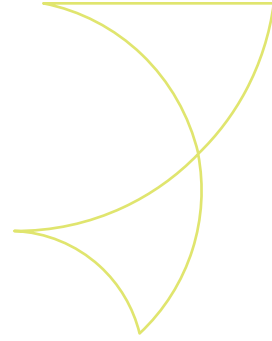
Speakers will include:

Climate KIC experts from place-based systems transformation, finance, industrial transition

Irish Municipality participating in Deep Demonstrator and Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation (tbc) – implementing bioeconomy

Farmers Network representative





Innovators – from Climate KIC startups programme

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