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## *What kind of innovation policy does the bioeconomy need?*

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### **ABSTRACT**

**In recent years, the bioeconomy has established itself worldwide as a mainstay for achieving a sustainable economy. The targeted use of biological resources for industrial purposes can help to successfully reconcile ecology and economy in the long term. Like digitalization, biologization as the guiding principle of the bioeconomy has the potential to effect a fundamental change in industry. This change must be driven and supported by a committed research and innovation policy. The German Federal Government was one of the first governments worldwide to put the bioeconomy on its research policy agenda when it adopted the “National Research Strategy BioEconomy 2030” in 2010. The respective national policy strategy was published two years later. Since then we have been successfully implementing measures to establish the bioeconomy. Our research programme is currently being developed further. Our aim is to strengthen the biobased transformation process towards a sustainable economy and to attach special importance to innovative technologies. Furthermore, bioeconomy research policy will have to be aimed more strongly towards achieving international goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to showing what contribution the bioeconomy can make in this context. The success of the bioeconomy requires a societal discourse on how our society can reconcile economic growth and sustainability in future. This requires the adaptation and continued development of national agendas and initiatives as well as efficient international cooperation.**

### **The “bioeconomy” as a task**

What does a sustainable future mean? How can we succeed in reconciling ecology and economy? Are sustainability and economic growth a contradiction in terms or can they go hand-in-hand? Can we combine the great need for biomass with the responsible handling of available resources? How can we secure our prosperity and at the same time assume international responsibility? Research and innovation policies are a key to answering these questions. They set the course and establish framework conditions to enable science, industry and society to develop smart solutions and allow stakeholders to work together to initiate structural change aimed towards a biobased and sustainable economy. Technology and the engineering sciences have helped the industrial nations to extract and exploit metal ores, mineral oil, natural gas and coal. The results are impressive technological progress and social prosperity in many parts of the world. But we are paying a high price for this progress as demonstrated by the grand challenges of

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