



Stakeholder Forum 2019

#BBISF19

The role of consumer behavior for bioeconomy development

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A sustainable bioeconomy in the 21st century

Focus of current BE discussion:

- sustainable production
- economic growth
- employment

Present

Future

Broadening the BE discussion:

- consumption and resource use
 - 1:1 substitution ***not sustainable!***
-
- energy efficiency
 - circularity
 - waste prevention
 - ***sustainable lifestyles***

How do consumers perceive the bioeconomy?*

Can I make a difference?

- Most consumers practice a **mix of sustainable and unsustainable behaviors**
- Consumers not feeling in control are rather skeptical about bioeconomy

Are biobased products sustainable?

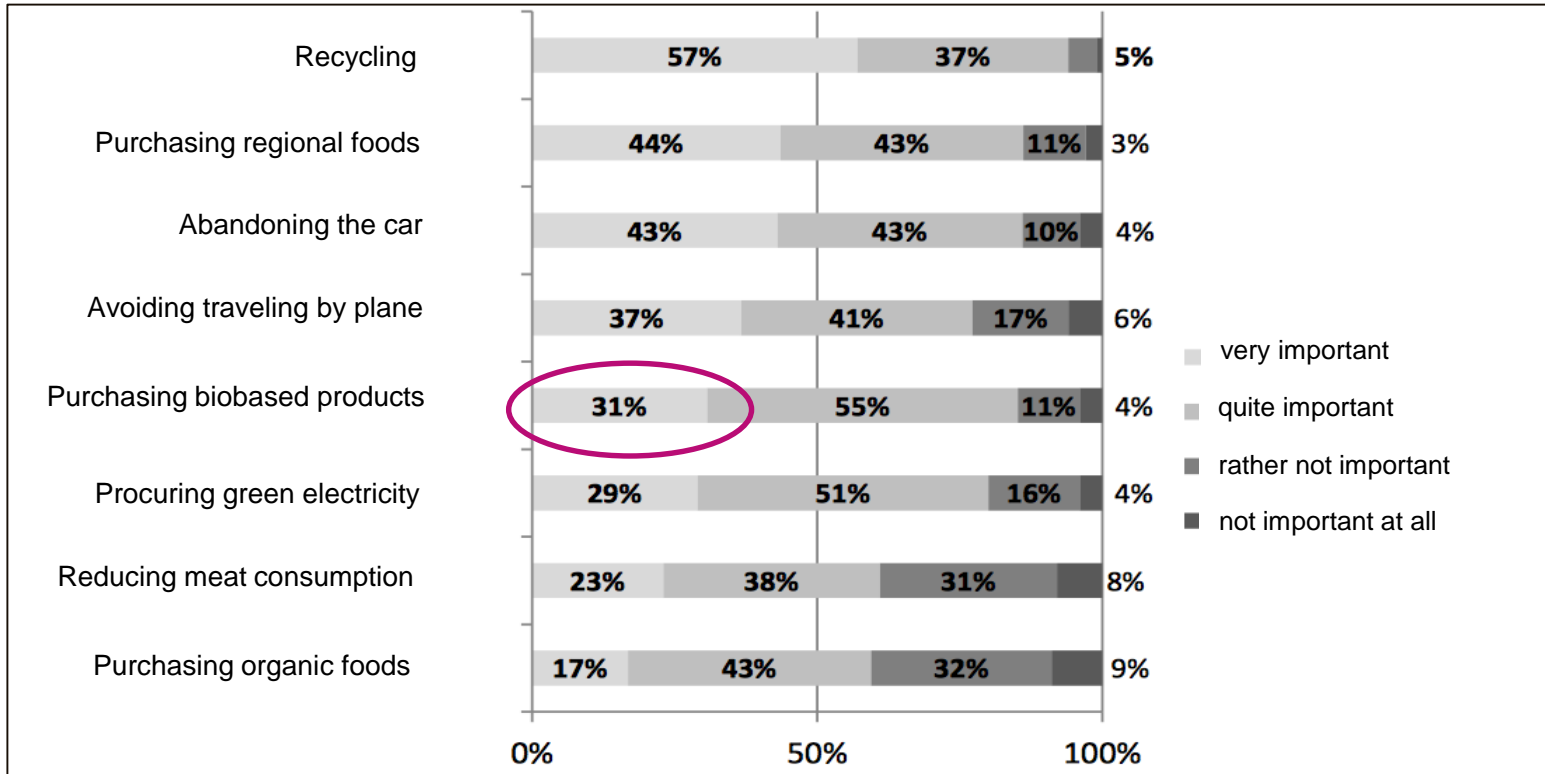
- Consumption of biobased products is generally perceived positively (mainly because of assumed health benefits)
- However: conflicting goals are well known

Who should pay?

- Higher consumer prices for more sustainable products are difficult, costs expected to be shared with producers

**Study with German consumers (Thünen Institute, 2019)*

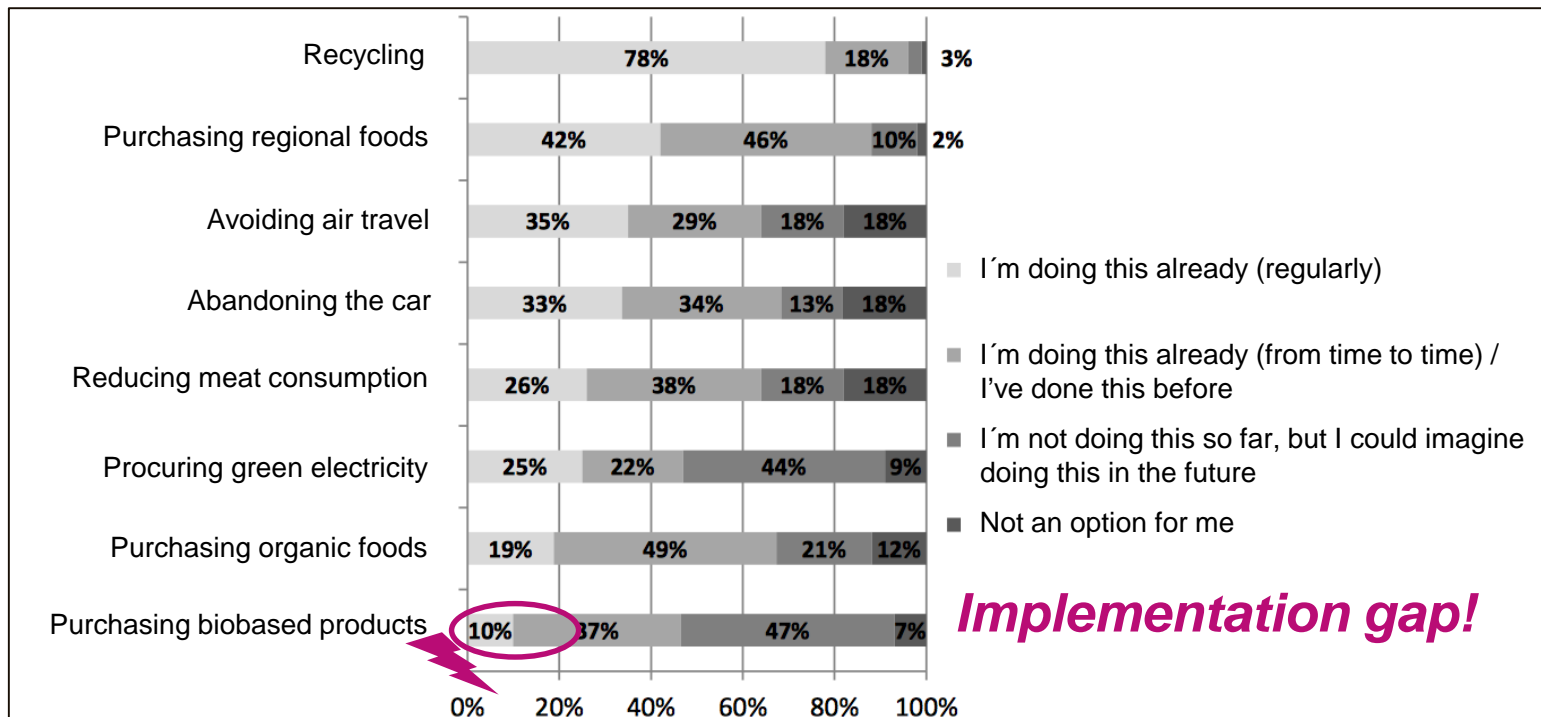
Perception of behaviors protecting climate & nature*



Source: Hempel et al. (2019). Bioökonomie aus Sicht der Bevölkerung. Available at https://www.thuenen.de/media/publikationen/thuenen-workingpaper/ThuenenWorkingPaper_115.pdf

*Study with about. 1000 German consumers (Thünen Institute, 2019)

Consumers do not act accordingly, yet*



Source: Hempel et al. (2019). Bioökonomie aus Sicht der Bevölkerung. Available at https://www.thuenen.de/media/publikationen/thuenen-workingpaper/ThuenenWorkingPaper_115.pdf

*Study with about 1000 German consumers (Thünen Institute, 2019)

We are all talking about the need for sustainable consumer behavior. However, the individual does little yet. How is that possible?

- **Classical cooperation dilemma:** sustainable consumer behavior is always an act of cooperation.
- **BUT:** As long as people make a difference between today and tomorrow, as long as they are very impatient when it comes to benefits, forward-looking cooperation is difficult.

→ **Apologetic narratives emerge:**

“Is that scientifically proven?”

“Technological innovations will solve the problem!”

“It needs an international solution!”

“I alone cannot do anything anyway!”

→ **Social norms** and the willingness to cooperate need to be strengthened!

What supports behavior changes?*

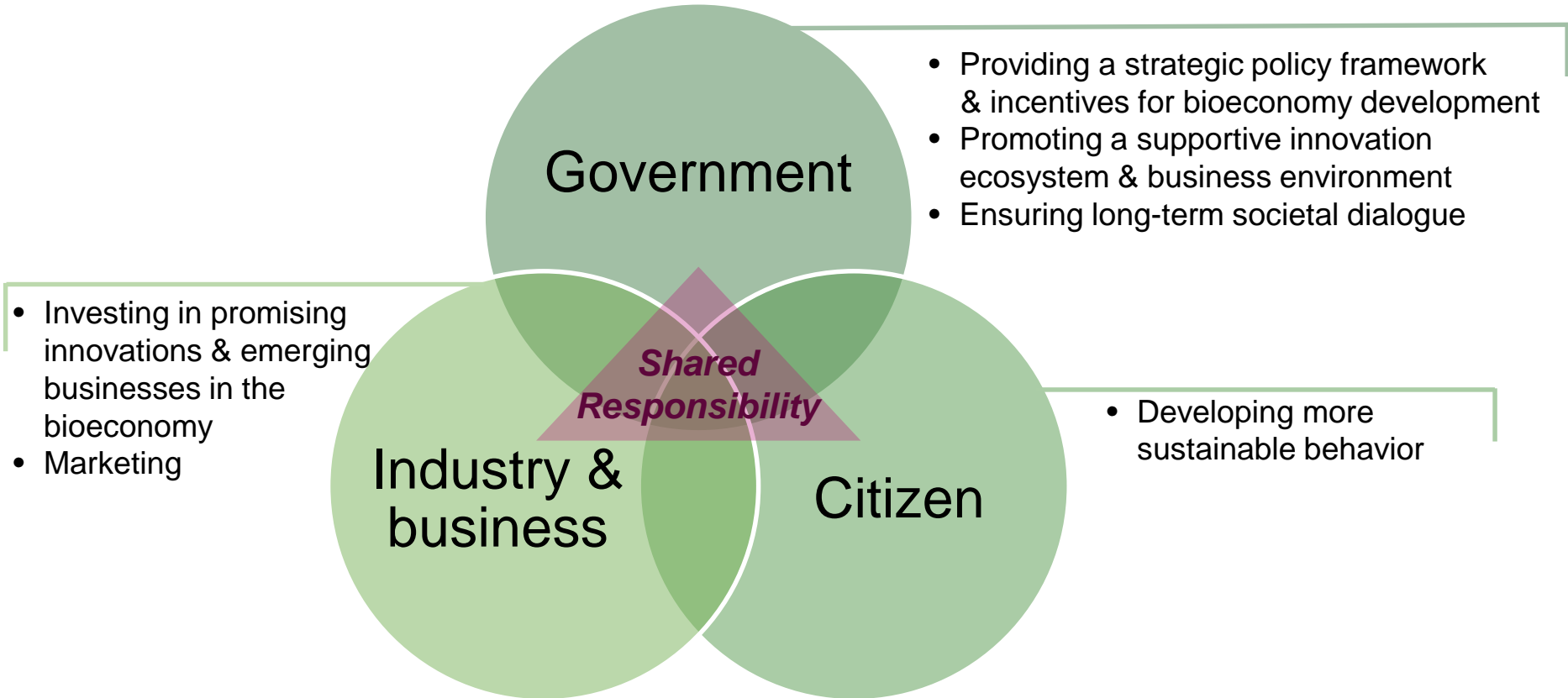
Consumers would like to see a step-by-step transformation

- Parallel existence of biobased & fossil-based alternatives
- Avoiding consumer uncertainty & confusion
- Respecting consumer heterogeneity in strategies for education & dialogue
- Ensuring the country's competitiveness
- Taking into account potential job losses

**Study with ca. 1000 German consumers (Thünen Institute, 2019)*

Source: Hempel et al. (2019). Bioökonomie aus Sicht der Bevölkerung. Available at https://www.thuenen.de/media/publikationen/thuenen-workingpaper/ThuenenWorkingPaper_115.pdf

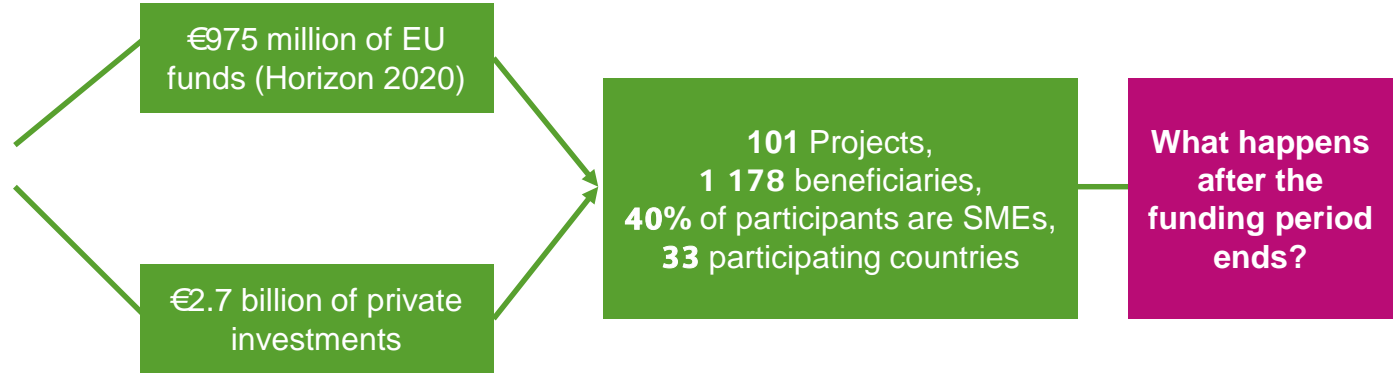
Who is responsible? For what?



Ensuring long-term political support



€3.7 billion investments
in bio-based innovation
(2014-2020)



Collaboration from research to application should receive continued support and specific encouragement!



Thank you for your attention!