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Introduction

The Bioeconomy (BE) represents a convergence of traditional and innovative sectors and industries toward a new bio-based paradigm. However, to date, the convergence is still incomplete in several domains. The issue is strictly connected with a missed development of a coherent and holistic Knowledge and Innovation System (KIS). In this vein, the traditional KIS, like the Agricultural one (AKIS), can be seen as the starting point to switch from a strictly sectorial perspective to a system open to all the other sectors involved in BE: the Knowledge and Innovation System for Bioeconomy (KISB). The present study aims to map the current structure of Italian KISB and identify entry points, in particular, for education and training policies and initiatives.

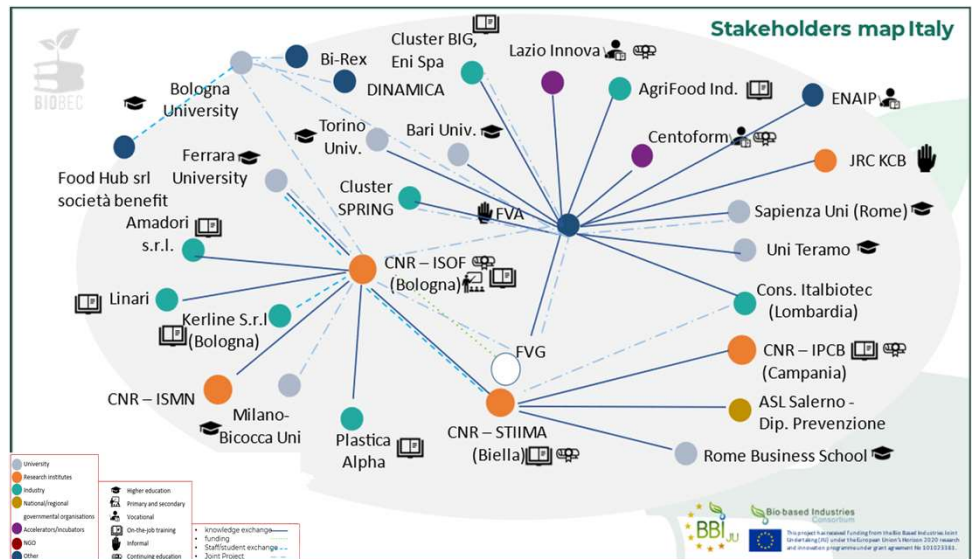
Data and research methodology

The study is conducted through desk research taking advantage of the wide literature on the AKIS, the substantial grey literature about the bioeconomy and the numerous outcomes from the EU-funded projects about the Italian bioeconomy. In particular, starting from a stakeholder map developed in one of these EU projects, the BIObec project, the study identifies the main actors involved in the Italian bioeconomy (public, private, public-private, etc.) and their relationships to establish the flows of knowledge and innovation. Finally, the stakeholder map is submitted to the representatives of each of these identified categories of actors through a focus group. After that, according to the received comments, the KISB map is finalized.

Results

The study is expected to give an overview of the actors and their connections in the Italian bioeconomy, identifying if the Italian KISB presents a main traction of the public or private type, or if it presents a balanced situation. Moreover, detecting the knowledge and innovation flows – then validated by the actors themselves through the focus group – the study is expected to provide also the main strength and weakness points of such connections.

Finally, the last outcome, the Italian KISB map, should allow a comparison between the Italian AKIS and the KISB.



Conclusions

The preliminary conclusions concern the fundamental difference between a well-established sector, such as agriculture, and a new one like the bioeconomy: many actors, involved in the KISB might be unaware of that, due to the low diffusion of the concept of bioeconomy in the Italian context. This aspect could lead to a greater need for communication and dissemination experts involved in KISB, compared to AKIS, to raise awareness among actors. Moreover, to allow the convergence of different sectors, the System may require professional figures who can facilitate this convergence. The widespread presence of these "connectors" can be seen as decisive for the bioeconomy, requiring, in case of their lack, a policy intervention that involves all the KISB.