

BE-Rural: Bio-based strategies and roadmaps for enhanced rural and regional development in the EU

1. Background

Definition of the Bioeconomy Concept (European Commission 2012):

The Bioeconomy encompasses the production of renewable biological resources and the conversion of these resources and waste streams into value-added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products and bio-energy.

The concept foresees to introduce healthy, safe and nutritious **food and feed**, to provide new **chemicals**, building-blocks and polymers as well as **bioenergy and biofuels** replacing fossil energy, to develop new, **more efficient and sustainable practices and technologies**, and to deliver solutions for green and sustainable chemistry. Thereby, the bioeconomy contributes to **mitigating climate change**, provides an important **renewable carbon source** and brings **new business opportunities, investment and employment** to rural, coastal and marine areas, fosters regional development and supports SMEs.



Figure 1: Bioeconomy Policies in Europe (dark green: dedicated bioeconomy strategy; green: bioeconomy-related strategy; green-striped: bioeconomy-related strategy, dedicated bioeconomy strategy is under development; light green: dedicated bioeconomy strategy is under development) (changed according to von Braun 2017)

2. BE-Rural: Approach and Objectives

The goal of BE-Rural is to realise the potential of regional bio-based economies by supporting relevant actors in the participatory development of bioeconomy strategies and roadmaps.

The BE-Rural project...

- **supports** modest and moderate innovator countries in the development of regional bioeconomy strategies and roadmaps,
- **increases awareness**, education and understanding of the bioeconomy,
- **mobilises engagement** among regional stakeholders and citizens in view of the development of inclusive and balanced bioeconomy strategies and roadmaps,
- **builds capacity** among regional stakeholders regarding the assessment of innovative bio-based business models and their potential impacts.

The actions take place in five target regions: **Stara Zagora** (Bulgaria), **Szczecin Lagoon and Vistula Lagoon** (Poland), **Strumica** (North Macedonia), **Covasna** (Romania) as well as **Vidzeme and Kurzeme** (Latvia).



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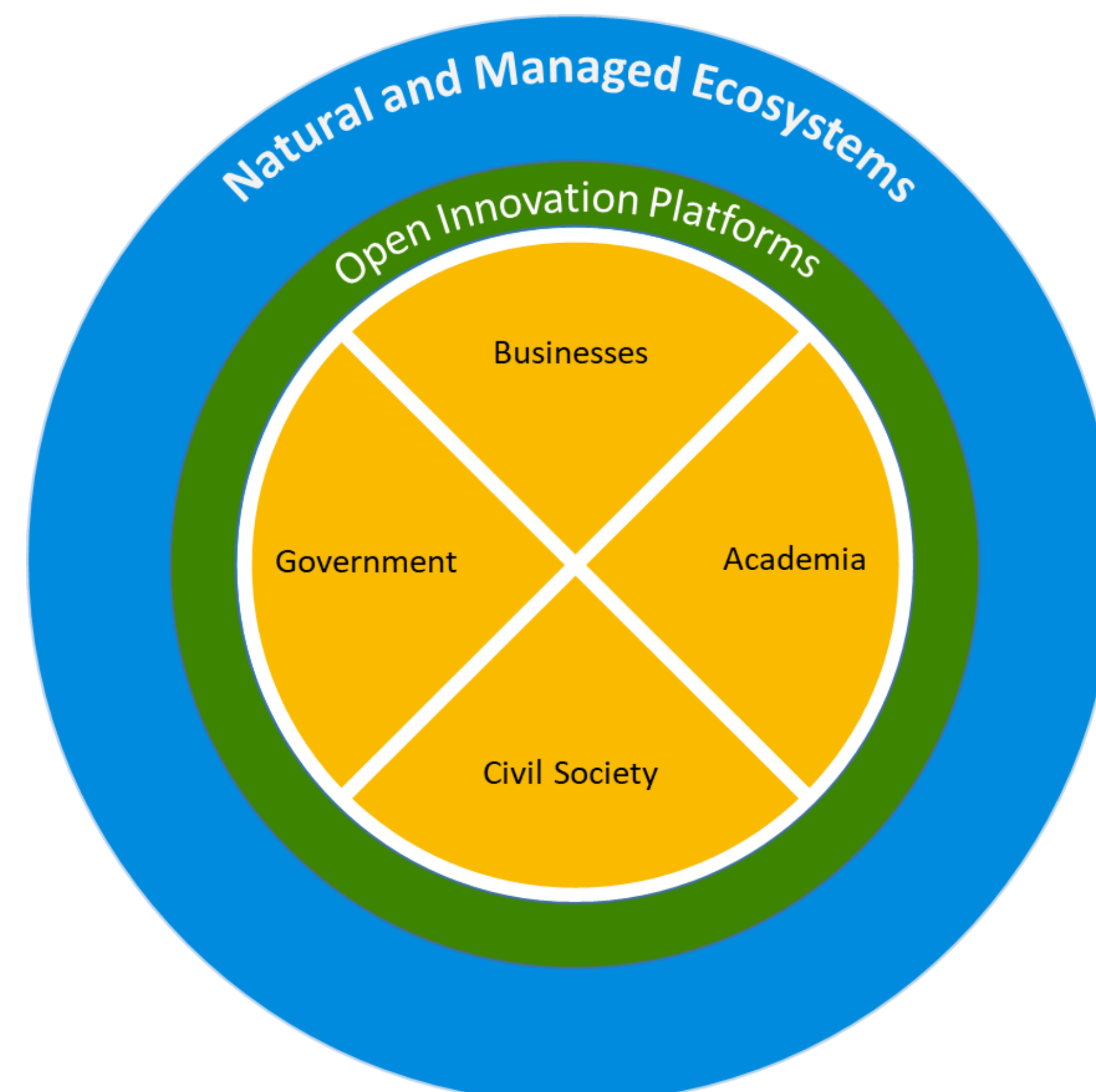


Figure 2: The Quintuple Helix as a model for open innovation (Abhold et al. 2019)

3. Selected Results

The following recent results can be found under: <https://be-rural.eu/results/>

- Factsheet overview on sustainable **technology options** for regional bioeconomies
- Illustration of **good practice business models** for regional bioeconomies
- Analysis of the **bioeconomy potential** of the target regions with the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)
- Compilation of an overview of the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal conditions for each target region (**PESTEL-analysis**)
- **Handbook** on regional and local bioeconomies

In collaboration with the Horizon 2020 project POWER4BIO, a joint guidance document was developed that shows selected project deliverables surrounding biobased solutions and technologies, as well as business models and best practices: <https://bit.ly/37Wjiyl>



4. Ongoing Activities and Outlook

The initial work carried out in BE-Rural sets the foundation for the implementation of a series of regional Open Innovation Platforms to kick-start the co-creation process, bringing together key stakeholders from academia, policy, business and civil society to develop ideas and capitalise on this bioeconomy potential. Activities will include research & innovation capacity building workshops, educational seminars and webinars, summer schools, and Bio-based Pop-up Stores. Building from this, the proposed 'Network of Knowledge' will aim to share knowledge and lessons learned from the Open Innovation Platforms at an inter-regional level, further disseminating best practices, closing the information gap on issues related to sustainability, and increasing capacities of regional authorities and stakeholders.

References

- Abhold K., Gerdes H., Kiresiewa Z., Davies S. (2019): Sustainability and Participation in the Bioeconomy: A Conceptual Framework for BE-Rural.
- Carus M., Dammer L. (2018): The "Circular Bioeconomy" – Concepts, Opportunities and Limitations.
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