



## Second BE-Rural inter-regional webinar

Overview	
Date	16 June 2020
Location	Online
Aim of the event	The second BE-Rural inter-regional webinar provided a better understanding of the current situation and plans for the future development of the bioeconomy in each OIP region by sharing best practices in the partner regions' bioeconomies.

### Short summary

The second BE-Rural inter-regional webinar held on 16 June 2020, was attended by 36 participants from Northern Macedonia, Poland, Latvia, Bulgaria, and Romania, representing national, regional, and local public authorities, cluster managers and other related stakeholders' categories as well as project partners.

The webinar has been positively evaluated by the participants both in terms of methodology, organisation, and content.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> webinar encouraged the exchange of best practices for promoting local food systems, funding opportunities and the role of bioeconomy in smart specialisation strategies. These three aspects proved to have a high replicability potential.

The main conclusion was that the mobilisation of regional actors, accompanied by a sustained effort to educate society from an early age, was the key factor for success.

### Background

The webinars are part of WP4 „Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Building” aiming at stirring the interaction and mutual learning between the OIP regions, in order to facilitate the learning process and to accompany the elaboration process of business models/strategies and roadmaps while ensuring a unitary approach. Hence, the first webinar was dedicated to an improved mutual understanding of the current situation and plans in each OIP Region.

## Methodology

The 2<sup>nd</sup> inter-regional webinar was conceived as an interactive meeting through an online communication platform that would facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise on best practices in the partner regions' bioeconomies. It builds on the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> inter-regional webinar, where participants expressed a desire to take a deeper look at the strategic processes taking place in each region.

Methodologically speaking, the webinar saw a mixture of online and classical workshops, i.e. in the case of Covasna, a physical meeting was organised – in line with the health protection measures against Coronavirus envisaged by the Romanian Government - while the communication with the other regions was carried out via an online platform. IPE took care of the overall moderation of the event.

36 participants from Northern Macedonia, Poland, Latvia and Romania, representing national, regional and local public authorities, cluster managers and other categories of relevant stakeholders, as well as project partners, were attended the webinar held on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2020.

A best practice template was made available before the workshop. Each region selected the most outstanding one and presented it at the workshop, followed by a session of questions and answers, as follows:

- Bulgaria: Strategy for Strengthening the Role of the Agricultural sector in the bioeconomy
- North Macedonia: Water Treatment Plant in Strumica
- Romania: "1 Village, 1 MW"
- Latvia: "The taste of the Region"
- Poland: Traditional fishing and tourism

The agenda of the webinar is presented in the annex of this report.

An online evaluation of the webinar was made available as a follow-up to the event. The evaluation form included a questionnaire designed to receive feedback on the webinar and to scope topics of interest for further meetings.

The evaluation questionnaire is presented in the annex of this report.

## Description of the webinar

The webinar started with a short presentation of the project, carried out by the project coordinator, Ecologic Institut, and then a short presentation for each participant. The webinar continued with the introduction of regional best practices, as follows:

### Bulgaria

Based on a SWOT analysis, an assessment was made of the needs of the agricultural sector in support of the bioeconomy. In this regard, strategic goals were set, and an action plan has been developed. For the sustainable development of the agricultural sector and the provision of biomass for the sectors related to agricultural production, they deemed necessary to introduce mechanisms for optimizing the production structure in the direction of increasing feed, essential oils, fibre and other crops. It is also necessary to adapt the regulatory framework related to the bioeconomy and the circular economy. Encouraging investment in the processing and recovery of waste products in the three sectors of the agricultural industry is a priority in the development of the bioeconomy

### Northern Macedonia

The construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant in the Municipality of Strumica has declared a priority development goal in the sector of environmental protection. Funding came from several sources and the total budget was more than 6 million euros. The number of inhabitants that are served is about 53 thousand. One of the main success from it is the fact the region has a significant increase in the quality



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of biodiversity. Also, large quantities of waste are being processed generating biogas with a high proportion of CH<sub>4</sub>

### **Romania**

Rural development in European Union is shown to be potentially positively impacted by renewable energy, especially by bioenergy. Romania already reached its national 2020 target for the share of renewable sources in gross final consumption of energy. The shift to smart agriculture and the connection to renewable energy using the entrepreneurs for bioenergy in Covasna County was highlighted as a case study. The “One Village – 1 MW” concept implemented in Covasna County, where biomass is considered as the major renewable energy source, was presented. This was concept was made possible thanks to the local mentality which is open and positive about new sustainable energy management systems. In Covasna, the biomass is considered the major renewable energy source (RES), contributing with around 73% to the total RES energy production, followed by wind energy with around 23% and solar energy with around 2%. Green Energy Innovative Biomass Cluster promoted the use of biomass for heating in a sustainable way in a project developing an integrated model of a community-scale energy system (plants of up to 1 MW of energy generating capacity).

### **Latvia**

Latvia presented their support programme for local agricultural producers and home producers “The taste of the region”. The main results of this activity were the creation of a catalog of Latvian producers and processors ([www.novadagarsa.lv](http://www.novadagarsa.lv)), featuring over 600 enterprises. Through group consultations and educational events, LRATC wants to strengthen confidence in the necessity of cooperation for business development. Since 2015, 288 new small food producers established their enterprises with the help of LRATC advisors.

### **Poland.**

Low value fish species are prominently present in the Szczecin Lagoon, but for many years they have not been valorised. With a lot of fish imports into the region, the tradition of consumption of local low-value fish species almost disappeared. There is a desire to create a bond between products from low value fish and the development of tourism, creating added value through the synergy of demand (touristic sector) and supply (fisheries). It is aimed to encourage the promotion of local producers through trade fairs, exhibitions and other events, and enable the consumer to know about the quality and traceability of the products.

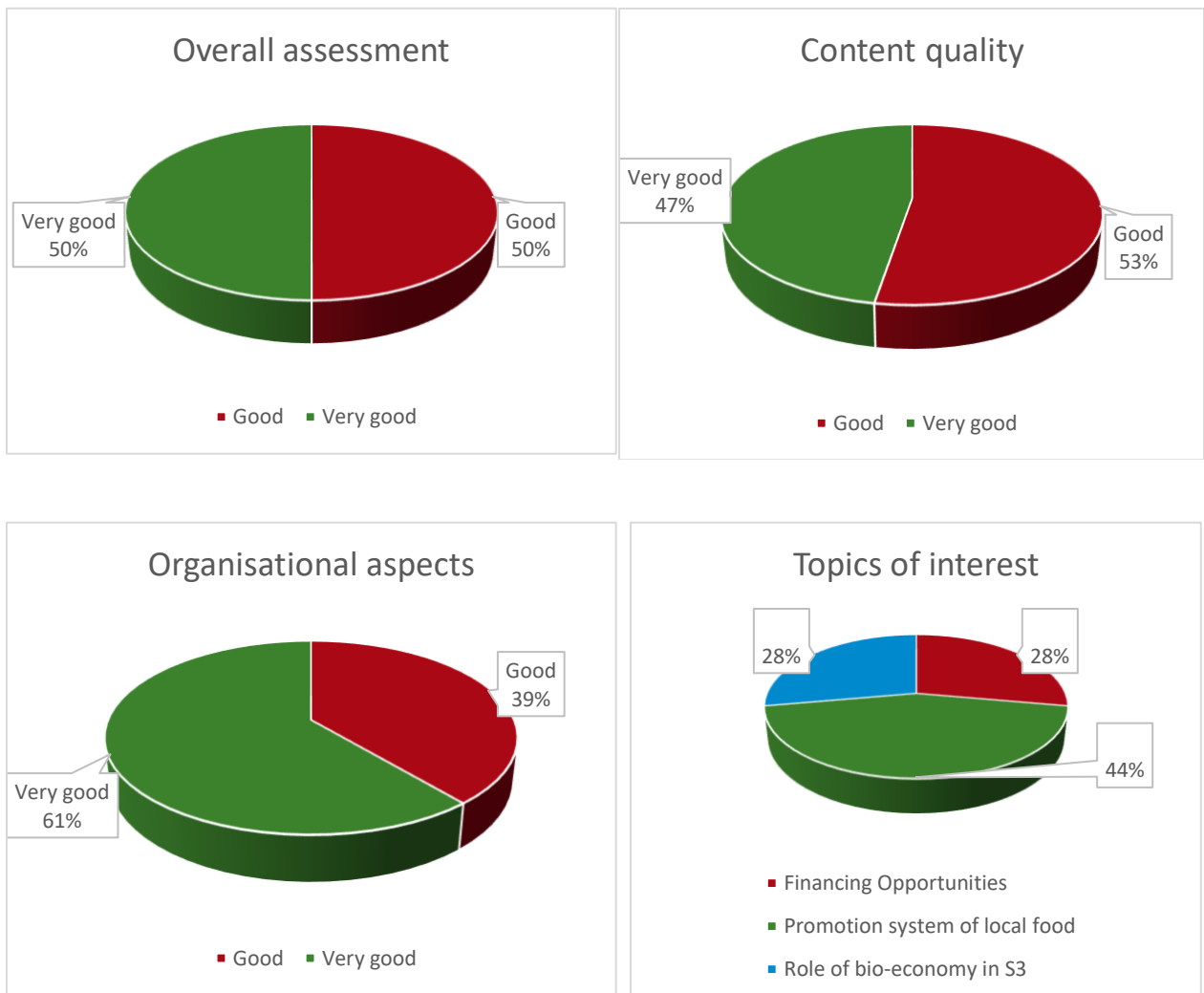
## **Evaluation of the webinar**

19 participants out of 36 participants have evaluated the seminar, i.e. 52.7%

50% of the respondents appreciated the webinar to be very good while other 50% considered it good. As to the quality of the content, 47% of the respondents regarded it as very good and 53% as good. Concerning the organisational aspects, 61% of the respondents answered with “very good”, 39% with “good”.



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When asked about what they liked best about the webinar, the answers pointed out:

- The variety of presented examples
- The level of cooperation achieved in some of the regions
- Very informative and inspiring content
- The discussions generated by the presentations
- The replicability potential of the presented examples

When asked about what they disliked about the webinar, the answers pointed out:

- Lack of involvement from local stakeholders
- Lack of comments from participants outside the consortium
- The duration (too long)
- Technical issues
- Presentations were too text intensive

Concerning the topics of interest for the next webinar, following ideas resulted:

- Promotion system of local food (44%)



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- Financing opportunities (28%)
- Role of bioeconomy in smart specialisation strategies (28%)

## Annex – Agenda

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter-regional Webinar – Task 4.1

Time	Topic	Comment
<b>Session 1: Introduction</b>		
10:00	Introduction <i>Tour de table</i>	Moderated by IPE
10:15	Presentation of the project	ECO
<b>Session 2: Best Practice Presentations</b> Each region should have a 10-15 min presentation followed by direct questions		
10:30	Bulgaria Strategy for Strengthening the Role of the Agricultural sector in the Bioeconomy	Martin Stoyanov, BIA, Q&A
11:00	Macedonia Water Treatment Plant Strumica	Emilija Mihailovska, SDEWES, Q&A
11:30	Romania 1 village, 1 MW	Tihamer Sebestyen, Green Energy Cluster, Q&A
12:00	Latvia "The taste of the region"	Sandra Eimane, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre, Q&A
12:30	Poland Traditional Fishing and Tourism	Marcin Rakowski, NMFRI, Q&A
<b>Session 3: Final Remarks</b>		
13:00	Conclusions and next steps	Moderated by IPE
13:10	End of the webinar	



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## Annex - Evaluation Questionnaire

1. Please make an overall assessment of the seminar  
(Very good, Good, Fair, Poor)
2. Please assess the content quality (topics, usefulness of information provided etc.)  
(Very good, Good, Fair, Poor)
3. Please assess the organisational aspects of the webinar (duration, virtual platform, etc. )  
(Very good, Good, Fair, Poor)
4. What did you like about the webinar?  
(long answer text)
5. What did you dislike about the webinar?  
(long answer text)
6. Which is the most important topic you would like to have it discussed in the next webinar?  
(Best practice examples explained in detail, financing opportunities, promotion systems of local food, other – text required)

## Annex – List of participants

Participants			
Name	Surname	Organisation	Stakeholder Category
Pavlova	Iliana	BIA Bulgaria	PP/OIP Facilitator
Lusi		BIA Bulgaria	PP/OIP Facilitator
Stoyanov	Martin	BIA Bulgaria	PP/OIP Facilitator
Dimitrov	Vladimir		
Robijns	Clément	BIOCOM AG	PP/OIP Facilitator
Anzaldua	Gerardo	Ecologic Institute	PP
Gerdes	Holger	Ecologic Institute	PP
Tarpey	Jack	Ecologic Institute	PP
Kiresiewa	Zoritzza	Ecologic Institute	PP
Eimane	Sandra	Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Center	Business



Lazdina	Dagnija	SILAVA	PP/OIP Facilitator
Makovskis	Kristaps	SILAVA	PP/OIP Facilitator
Daugaviete	Mudrite	SILAVA	PP/OIP Facilitator
Dimanta	Zanda	SVILPE	Business
Tuna	Emelj	SDEWES-Skopje	PP/OIP Facilitator
Mihajloska	Emilija	SDEWES-Skopje	PP/OIP Facilitator
Dimov	Ljupco	SDEWES-Skopje	PP/OIP Facilitator
Markovska	Natasa	SDEWES-Skopje	PP/OIP Facilitator
Vladimir		SDEWES-Skopje	PP/OIP Facilitator
Brać Mierzei	Rybacka	Lokalna Grupa Rybacka	Business
Całka	Małgorzata	Lokalna Grupa Rybacka	Business
Rakowski	Marcin	NMFRI	PP/OIP Facilitator
Szulecka	Olga	NMFRI	PP/OIP Facilitator
Vajda	Lajos	Agro Food Cluster	Cluster
Bernadett Andrea	Raduly	ASIMCOV	Business
Iorgulescu	Flaviu	CLUSTERO	PP/OIP Facilitator
Cosnita	Daniel	CLUSTERO, IPE	PP/OIP Facilitator
Vajda	Boglarka	Green Energy	Cluster
Tihamer	Sebestyen	Green Energy	Cluster
Pauna	Carmen	IPE	PP/OIP Facilitator
Iorgulescu	Raluca	IPE	PP/OIP Facilitator
Diaconescu	Tiberiu	IPE	PP/OIP Facilitator
Sulyok-Pál	Andrea	Pro Wood Regional Wood Cluster	Cluster
Gheorghita	Raymond		Business
Georgieva	Neli	Strathclyde University	PP/OIP Facilitator



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Kah	Stefan	Strathclyde University	PP/OIP Facilitator
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