



Bio-based pop-up store in Strumica region

Overview

Date	30.07.2021 - 03.08.2021
Location	Municipality of Strumica, North Macedonia
Aim of the event	<p>The aim of the bio-based pop-up store and participatory events was to raise awareness of the BE-Rural project and the diversity of more than 50 bio-based products among citizens and stakeholders in the Strumica region. The pop-up store that was part of the Strumica Open Festival showed innovative and sustainable eco-designs from more than 20 different countries, videos, and provided reading and promotional material in Macedonian. This concept sought to inform and encourage the public on the benefits and challenges of the bioeconomy, and its synergies with the sustainable development goals. At the opening event, the delegation from the Polish Open Innovation Platform shared experiences with Macedonian counterparts about their bioeconomy development processes adding value to BE-Rural's co-creation and mutual learning concept. As part of the pop-up store, two side events made significant impact and set the ground for prosperous bioeconomy development. This first event was envisioned as a unique culinary experience, "Eat the bioeconomy" by offering a bio-based menu, enhancing the bioeconomy possibilities to local stakeholders. The second event, World Cafe session invited stakeholders to discussed the barriers that slow down the development of bioeconomy practices in the region, and the appropriate solutions to this issue. With the pop-up store the bioeconomy in the region will be more approachable, vivid and closer to the local stakeholders, encouraging them to utilise the agricultural residues in order to expedite the implementation of bioeconomy roadmap.</p>

Short summary

The bio-based pop-up store exhibited many innovative and sustainable bio-based products including Macedonian bio-based products such as bee wax packaging, aloe vera tights, seed soaps and clothing made from hemp and flex. This shows how bioeconomy can contribute to the achievement of selected UN's SDGs, as the products were allocated to one SDG (SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 15 Life on Land). The idea of the pop-up store was to inform walk-in visitors about the aim of BE-Rural and the potential of the bioeconomy, introduce the concept of the pop-up store, show the exhibited products and give background information and link the exhibition to the SDGs.

The topics, such as sustainability, circular economy, recycling and reusing were mentioned at the **Official opening**, as they are the foundation of the pop-up store. This approach can attract new business opportunities to the region, creating an enabling environment for the municipalities to go along with the EU Green Deal and conduct much needed bioeconomy roadmap and strategy. Another important issue that was discussed was the stakeholders' engagement and ways to attract and maintain their contribution and active participation in the overall bioeconomy development process. The partners from Poland, as a more advanced country disseminated their knowledge on bioeconomy related documents, as well some best practices, that our region could build upon. Furthermore, both parties debated the common barriers that prevent full use of valuable feedstock. Possibilities for joint cooperation, twinning and further steps were discussed for enhanced mutual communication between the municipalities.

"Eat the bioeconomy" was envisioned as a side event in the pop-up store in order participants to get an overall idea of the bio-based products, thus to extend their views of the bioeconomy. Beside all the products displayed in the pop-up store, the intention was to raise awareness for alternatives and use of residues in the food industry. This event was used as another occasion to exchange experiences between the BE-Rural partners and to set the ground for establishing further communication. A fruitful discussion on this manner was developed, as Polish partners expressed willingness to assist Strumica partners in building the bioeconomy roadmap. Main hurdles and viable funding opportunities were shared in the latter part of the event. Next steps might include better collaboration and a study visit in Świnoujście if the covid circumstances allow such gathering.

The **World style café** was one of the key activities in the pop-up store. The idea was to gather understanding of what prevented the region to develop bioeconomy practices and to identify the key stakeholders in the region who will be responsible for developing the bioeconomy. The first round of the discussion was dedicated to narrow down the competent stakeholders needed for successful roadmap creation. The participants mentioned that the agriculture processing and cannery companies, but also wood processing industries and textile company, disperse studies, three vocational high school related to bioeconomy and agriculture institute, the Fund for Innovations and Technology Development, Centre for development of the South-East region, well-developed NGO sector and already established cross border communication could give really valuable impact in the focus areas of the roadmap. The second round of the discussion was focused on the region's obstacles to move forwards with the development of the roadmaps for bioeconomy, among which are the reluctances of innovative and modern products and technologies, lack of capacities of the research institutes, deficiency of specific funding for bioeconomy, dated believe for high prices on the bio-based products, absence of concrete bioeconomy measures in the strategic documents, deficit of suitable and up to date educational materials, insufficient knowledge, willingness or support to incorporate the bioeconomy concepts in the educational system, language barrier, etc. The participants mapped the stirring and driving areas in the process of the elaboration of the bioeconomy roadmap, and the business sector and cross border cooperation got the highest ratings as most prominent topics to develop.

During the tours in the pop-up store, the discussions were directed to which products could be currently integrated in lifestyle, relevant options from the region and most needed in the near future. The local aspect was addressed, meaning which of the products could be produced in the region and how the stakeholders would implement the bioeconomy on local level. Furthermore, it was discussed how resources, mainly agricultural residues of the region could be used to produce alternative products. The guided tours created contacts to many stakeholders, most of them agreed to receive information about further project activities. The next steps will be sending the BE-Rural newsletters and materials to local stakeholders, and their involvement in the creation of the bioeconomy roadmap for Strumica region.



Annex

- **Agenda**

30.07.2021 - Official opening	
13:00 – 13:30	Official opening of the pop-up store <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strumica's mayor welcoming words • Introduction of BE-Rural partners (SDEWES-Skopje, BIOCOM, NMFRI)
13:30 – 14:00	Tour through the bio-based pop-up store <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guided tour and explanation of the exhibition of eco-designs and bio-based products
14:00 – 15:00	Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cocktail reception • Media coverage (interviews)
30.07.2021 - Eat the bioeconomy	
19:00 – 19:10	Reception and welcome
19:10 – 19:30	Explanation of the “Eat the bioeconomy” menu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bio-based cutlery and straws • Drinks from algae and bread residues • Snacks from insects and leftover vegetables • Pasta from Chlorella algae
19:30 – 20:30	Networking and Macedonian traditional food tasting
31.07.2021 - World Style Café	
19:00 – 19:10	Welcome and introduction
19:10 – 19:50	Explanation of the “World style cafe” workshop: Setting the ground for our bioeconomy roadmap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers of the key areas • Mapping stakeholders
19:50 – 20:10	Bio-based pop-up store visit
20:10 – 20:40	Networking
01.08.2021 – Bio-based pop-up store exhibition	
17:00 – 23:00	Guided tours and walk-ins
02.08.2021 – Bio-based pop-up store exhibition	
17:00 – 23:00	Guided tours and walk-ins
03.08.2021 – Bio-based pop-up store exhibition	
17:00 – 23:00	Guided tours and walk-ins



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 818478.

- Participant list

Participants			
Name	Surname	Organisation	Stakeholder Category
Natasha	Markovska	SDEWES-Skopje	OIP Facilitator for Strumica region
Emilija	Mihajloska	SDEWES-Skopje	OIP Facilitator for Strumica region
Aleksandar	Chebotarev	SDEWES-Skopje	OIP Facilitator for Strumica region
Ljupcho	Dimov	SDEWES-Skopje	OIP Facilitator for Strumica region
Svetlana	Dimova	SDEWES-Skopje	/
Clement	Robijns	BIOCOM	Project manager
Lily	Teitelbaum	BIOCOM	Project manager
Barbara	Michalska	FLAG Zalew Szczeciński	Deputy Mayor of Świnoujście City, Deputy Head of SWG Szczecin Lagoon
Marcin	Rakowski	NMFRI	Head of Polish CS in BE-Rural
Michał	Marczak	FLAG Brać Mierzei,	Communication and promotion specialist
Weronika	Kasza	FLAG Zalew Wiślany	Investor service and project implementation specialist
Kosta	Janevski	Municipality of Strumica	Mayor of municipality of Strumica
Tomislav	Andreev	Municipality of Strumica	Public authority
Panche	Bezhovski	Municipality of Strumica	Public authority
Toni	Milushev	Municipality of Strumica	Public authority
Zule	Stojanova	Municipality of Strumica	Public authority
Gjorgji	Kantandziev	Municipality of Strumica	Public authority
Stanisha	Bjadov	Municipality of Strumica	Technical support



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Tome	Timov	Municipality of Strumica	NGO "Hortieko"
Mitko	Shiov	Municipality of Strumica	NGO "Planetum"
Sime	Nikolov	Municipality of Strumica	/
Metodi	Popchevaliev	Municipality of Strumica	/
Vasko	Popchevaliev	Municipality of Strumica	/

The official opening was attended by around 20 stakeholders, public representative from Strumica and Szczecin Lagoon and Vistula Lagoon, along with SDEWES-Skopje and BIOCOM. The first event "Eat the bioeconomy" welcomed approximately 15 participants, members from the stakeholder working group, SDEWES-Skopje, BE-Rural partners from Poland and BIOCOM. The second event, World style café, was attended by 15 stakeholders covering different sectors. Overall, the bio-based pop-up store was visited by more than 200 participants including the tours with walk-in visitors with various backgrounds.

- **Photographs**

More photographs from the pop-up store are accessible [here](#).

- **Other visual information**

The bio-based pop-up store was publicized via BE-Rural website and social media (Twitter and Instagram), billboard in the city centre, promotional material from the Strumica Open Festival and promotional material of the pop-up store (flyers, brochures, posters). The pop-up store received coverage on several regional and national TV and radio channels, such as *SRnet*, *Strumica Denes*, *Strumica Online*, *Klimatski Promeni*, *TV sitel*, *TV Telma*, *TV MRT* (23"00"), and *TV VIS*, among others.



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