



Bioeconomy Going Rural

## PROJECT UPDATES



### A close look at the market conditions of the OIP regions

In order to support the design and development of **regionally-relevant bio-based products and services** in the frame of the regional [Open Innovation Platform regions \(OIPs\)](#), BE-Rural partners at Ecologic Institute, Berlin, developed [a guidance document](#) that combs through the **market conditions** of the participating regions. This analysis is meant to support the OIP facilitators and their stakeholders in identifying **bioeconomy potentials** at the local level.



### Inter-regional webinars help exchange best practices

BE-Rural's regional strategy and roadmap development is well on its way, after the completion of **three inter-regional webinars** that have fostered mutual learning and helped gather knowledge and good practices **across the Open Innovation Platforms**. Building off each other, the three webinars helped complete the political, social and economic picture in each region to further the **elaboration process of bio-based strategies and roadmaps** and relevant business models. [>>> Read more](#)

## FOCUS ON...

### Covasna, Romania

Located in Transylvania in the eastern Carpathian mountains, which is in central Romania and is part of the country's Centru Region, this regional Open Innovation Platform looks to capitalise on its bioeconomy potential, notably in the areas of mineral substances and forestry. Thanks to a large rural population and more than half of the county's surface covered in forest, the region benefits from rich opportunities in wood processing and in the development of underused biomass, with further implications for rural

unemployment or marginalised communities. Attention will be focused on addressing fragmented value chains and implementing the circular economy concept within the county's industrial sectors (i.e. wood and furniture, textiles, agro-food, mechanical engineering, green energy).

[Learn more about Covasna](#)

## 3-MINUTE Q&A WITH...



**Dr Elsa João**, Director MSc Sustainability and Environmental Studies, **University of Strathclyde, Glasgow Scotland**

### - What is the role of the University of Strathclyde as a project partner of BE-Rural?

At the University of Strathclyde, I am the director of one of the oldest [sustainability MSc degrees](#) in the UK, running since 1992. My work on sustainability is what led me to be part of the BE-Rural project. As part of the project, I work collaboratively with project partners on developing [education materials for bioeconomy](#) and in running educational events. Three [educational events](#) are being organised in each of the five regions, as well as a [teachers' summer school](#) on the bioeconomy on **May 25, and June 1 and 8 2021**.

### - How have you been able to connect raising awareness on the value of the bioeconomy with the theme of sustainability?

The European Commission is taking steps towards a sustainable bioeconomy and has developed a bioeconomy strategy to promote the bioeconomy and to avoid reaching ecological limits. The sustainability implications of the bioeconomy, and of specific bio-based products, permeates all the learning materials developed under BE-Rural and explicit reference is often made to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The educational resources for bioeconomy, circular economy and sustainability **build upon a "strong sustainability" approach**, with avoidance of trade-offs between social, economic and environmental issues. This fits with the ecological limits advocated by the European bioeconomy strategy.

### - How would you describe your experience so far with the students and pupils who have been learning the concept of bioeconomy, which is often new to them?

It has been exciting to develop **innovative and fun educational resources**. These [resources](#) consist of four aspects: 1) a review of 100 free online educational resources, 2) power point slides for presentations with notes for teachers, 3) workshops, quizzes and games, and 4) suggestion of extracurricular activities (such as school clubs or societies). Games allow students to become more involved in their learning, so in addition to the lecture sides, the educational materials include games, quizzes and workshops related to bioeconomy, sustainability, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and circular economy. The teaching resources also address how best to deliver learning materials online, to broaden the application of these resources and also as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### - How do you value the importance of such a project like BE-Rural for the advancement of local and regional bioeconomies in Europe?

The EU aims to build the world's leading bioeconomy and thus raising awareness of the value of bioeconomy and how it relates to sustainability is fundamental. The BE-Rural project is a key contributor to this goal. The educational materials and educational events also aim to promote the **development of regional bioeconomy strategies**, which is the overall aspiration of BE-Rural. To facilitate this, the educational materials have been translated into Bulgarian, Latvian, Macedonian, Polish and Romanian. I am very proud of the work that I am doing for BE-Rural and the co-creation of knowledge with such a great team has been a privilege.



### Three-day teachers' summer school on the bioeconomy

Calling all teachers interested in developing curricula and **educational material on sustainability and the bioeconomy!** Mark your calendars as BE-Rural will host a digital [summer school for teachers](#) on the following days:

- **Day 1** - Tuesday 25 May, 14:00-17:30 CET - Introduction to the bioeconomy and overview of the bioeconomy educational resources developed by BE-Rural.
- **Day 2** - Tuesday 1 June, 14:00-17:30 CET - Bioeconomy of different sectors (e.g. fisheries, agriculture) and how best to integrate bioeconomy teaching in schools in Bulgaria, Latvia, North Macedonia, Poland and Romania.
- **Day 3** - Tuesday 8 June, 14:00-17:30 CET - Developing the industrial biotechnologists of the future: the innovative work of IBioIC with Scottish schools.

[>>> Register here <<<](#)



### Educating the youngest generation about the bioeconomy

The OIPs have been busy over the past few months organising a number of educational events **engaging pupils, students and teachers** on the broad theme of '**Sustainability and the Bioeconomy**'. The specific focus of these events was tailored to the interests and needs of each region. For example, in Jelgava, Latvia, a Bioeconomy booth with educational materials was set up, students were targeted in three events in Stara Zagora, Bulgaria, while teachers from the Strumica region, North Macedonia received two dedicated trainings and more than 200 students and pupils from this region were taught about the sustainable bioeconomy. [>>> Read more](#)



### More than 30 capacity building events organised so far

In the past two years, the OIP facilitators have been very busy mobilising over 200 local and regional stakeholders through **capacity building and knowledge exchange** events. Those stakeholders were mainly from public

authorities, academia, local businesses, NGOs, and other relevant sector clusters and associations, among others. The main objective of this series of engagement activities was to involve them in the design and co-creation of an effective **bioeconomy strategy or roadmap** for their region. [Click on one of the OIP regions here to find out more.](#)

## BE-RURAL ON STAGE

### **18. 11.20 // [GBS2020: BE-Rural and POWER4BIO join forces to discuss the potential contribution of local bioeconomies to a post-COVID-19 economic recovery](#) // Online**

At the occasion of the [Global Bioeconomy Summit 2020](#), BE-Rural and POWER4BIO organised a **joint breakout session** on how **local bioeconomies** can be a vector contributing to an economic rebound in a **post COVID-19 society**. The breakout session was part of a [workshop on "Rebooting the economy – sustainability, growth, and climate action delivered by the bioeconomy"](#), hosted by the European Commission's DG Research & Innovation, and co-organised by BE-Rural, POWER4BIO, the Region Grand-Est, France, BIOVOICES, BIOEASTsUP and Submariner. The workshop involved speakers from all over the world, including the likes of Anne Bogdanski, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Godfrey Nzamujo, Songhai Center, Benin, and Blake Simmons, Biological Systems & Engineering, Berkeley Lab, among others.

### **03-05.03.21 // [Bioeconomy Innovation Week](#) // Online**

BE-Rural Project Coordinator, Holger Gerdes, Ecologic Institute, presented the BE-Rural project activities in the third session scheduled on the second day of the [Bioeconomy Innovation Week](#). The session focused on the **role of projects** in exploiting the potential of **bioeconomies in the CEE countries**.

The Bioeconomy Innovation Week was a high-level virtual conference organised within the POWER4BIO project. The theme of the conference nodded to the potential of the bioeconomies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in the light of the new **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**, the **European Green Deal** and the **COVID-19 pandemic**. The conference brought together different key actors in the bioeconomy sectors, for example, high-level policymakers, representatives of the European Commission and scientists from key bioeconomy projects and initiatives that are active across the CEE countries. Among them, several bioeconomy hubs and networks from the EU were also involved.

[Click here to find out more about BE-Rural](#)



#### **CONTACT:**

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