



PROJECT UPDATES



POWER4BIO and BE-Rural join forces

The two H2020 projects [POWER4BIO](#) and BE-Rural, which operate in distinct, but adjacent regions, issued a [Joint Guidance Document](#) on small-scale technologies and business models for regional bioeconomies. Addressing a broad range of stakeholders, the paper demonstrates the relevance of both projects with regard to the participatory development of **local bioeconomy strategies and roadmaps**.



Let's communicate in our OIP languages!

Through concerted efforts from the facilitators of BE-Rural's five Open Innovation Platforms (OIPs), the [Handbook on regional and local bio-based economies](#) is now available in [Bulgarian](#), [Latvian](#), [Macedonian](#), [Romanian](#), [Polish](#), and [German](#). The handbook had been developed earlier this year, providing an overview of the different options for the use of biomass in a regional bioeconomy, a sustainability impact analysis of the implementation of a regional or local bioeconomy, and a detailed picture of viable models for future small-scale bioeconomy-related businesses, among others.



BE-Rural to increase understanding of the bioeconomy

Are you teaching geography, biology, environmental technology and/or business management? What about integrating in your course some aspects of the **bioeconomy** and how they relate to **sustainability**? BE-Rural project partner, University of Strathclyde finalised this summer a series of **educational materials** explaining the links between bioeconomy, circularity, and sustainability. You will find in [this report](#), inter alia, presentation slides with notes for teachers, quizzes, interactive workshops, and games, as well as a review of one hundred free online educational resources about the themes of bioeconomy, circular economy, and the SDGs. >>> [Read more](#)

FOCUS ON...

Szczecin and Vistula lagoons, Poland

This regional Open Innovation Platform covers two lagoons that present similar economies: Szczecin Lagoon and Vistula Lagoon. Overall, a population of some 200,000 people live around the lagoons, mainly working in the fishery and tourism sectors. Both lagoons border the Baltic Sea and are densely populated with low value fish species. Fishery Local Action Groups exist in the two regions, which provides a compelling starting point for closer cooperation in the fishery sector.

[Learn more about Szczecin and Vistula lagoons](#)

3-MINUTE Q&A WITH...



Boris Mannhardt, CEO, **BIOCOM AG**

- What is the role of BIOCOM AG as a project partner of BE-Rural?

Not only we at BIOCOM AG proudly lead the communication, dissemination and exploitation of project results, but we also steer **awareness-raising initiatives** to make sure that the general public, besides the European bio-based community, hears and

knows about BE-Rural. To this end, we set up **bio-based pop-up stores** in the BE-Rural innovation regions, among others. The two pop-up stores that have been organised in Latvia and in Poland this year showed the level of enthusiasm and curiosity, which bio-based innovations at regional and local level can trigger. We are very much looking forward to the many other events and activities that lie ahead of us while making sure the European bio-based community hears and knows about BE-Rural.

- As one of the key communicators behind BE-Rural, which target groups are you seeking to engage?

The bioeconomy is **no longer a niche sector** involving a limited number of interested stakeholders. It includes **a full spectrum of actors** who must be mobilised for the BE-Rural consortium to achieve project results and hopefully go beyond the expectations set out by the European Commission. From local governments, regional businesses and start-ups to academics, NGOs and the civil society; they all have an important role to play in the development and promotion of rural bioeconomies.

- How do you value the importance of such a project like BE-

Rural for the advancement of local and regional bioeconomies in Europe?

It is crucial that the bioeconomy is properly delivered at regional level for farmers, fishers, woodcutters, pharmacists, and students to be able to tangibly see and feel what the economy of tomorrow will be made of. Innovative bio-based technologies need to get out of the labs to be understood and adopted by the general public. **Sustainability can't be secured if it is not implemented at the grassroots**, and therefore can neither be dissociated from inclusivity. How, otherwise, could the global climate change be mitigated, if it is not fought at local scale? In the context of an ambitious European Green Deal, the inclusion of rural regions is now more than ever key to sourcing new environmentally friendly jobs as well as substantial investments, and thereby, paving the way to a **full exploitation of the bioeconomy potential** in Europe.

EVENTS



Deepening exchange of best practices between regions

While our first **inter-regional webinar** was dedicated to improving the general understanding of the current situations around the different Open Innovation Platforms with regard to their political contexts and main priorities for the development of local bioeconomy strategies, this second webinar, organised on 16 June 2020, focussed on the exchange of experience about the **promotion of local food systems, funding opportunities**, and the role of bioeconomy in the implementation of **smart specialisation strategies**. A key outcome highlighted throughout the webinar was the high **replicability across regions** of these three aspects. [>>> Read more](#)



Everyday bio-based products on display

Raising awareness amongst citizens about the **bioeconomy potential** and innovative **bio-based products** developed in rural areas is one of the key objectives of BE-Rural. To engage and create a **dialogue with the general public**, two bio-based pop-up stores were built this year in the OIP regions of [Vidzeme, Latvia](#), and [Szczecin Lagoon, Poland](#). [Find out more](#) about the BE-Rural Bio-based Pop-up Store.

A banner for the BE-Rural Mid-Term Conference. It features a green background with a yellow vertical bar on the left. In the top right corner, there is a small inset photo of two people, a woman and a man, sitting at a table in front of a bookshelf. The text on the banner is white and yellow.

BE-Rural Mid-Term Conference

Exploring the bioeconomy as a central pillar of regional recovery plans during and after COVID-19

BE-Rural reaches its midpoint

On 8 September 2020, the online BE-Rural Mid-Term Conference brought together more than [80 participants](#), coming from the OIP regions, but also from the European Commission, academia, and governmental institutions, to discuss the **integration of the bioeconomy** into national and regional **COVID-19 recovery strategies**. Making our national economies more **sustainable and resilient** in a post COVID-19 society through further **leveraging of local resources** was one of the [key messages](#) to take away from the speaker talks and break-out discussions.

COVID-19: BE-Rural's adaptation

In our previous newsletter, April 2020, we had outlined the need for keeping communication and interactions between [project partners](#) coming from various European locations at the highest possible level in spite of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe. In order to maintain cross-regional mutual learning and the establishment of networks within the five focal regions, which are key processes for the successful delivery of the project, a dedicated guidance document on virtual knowledge exchange and capacity building activities in the OIP regions was developed by BE-Rural partner, University of Strathclyde. The paper proposes to re-think ways in which certain activities related to knowledge exchange and capacity building are to be delivered - the main purpose behind the suggested guidelines being to keep the project's momentum up and the project's implementation on time despite the ongoing restriction measures imposed in European countries.

Please don't hesitate to [connect with us](#) if you wish to receive more details on this guidance document!

BE-RURAL ON STAGE

21-23.04.20 // European Commission workshop on "Environmental Sustainability and Regional Dimension of Bio-based Sectors" // *Online*

This semi-public event was geared toward the European Commission services. Project coordinator Holger Gerdes, Ecologic Institute, participated and presented relevant updates from the BE-Rural project. His talk focussed on lessons learnt regarding effective stakeholder and public engagement in regional bioeconomies.

11.05.20 // ["Bioeconomy: for a sustainable future" Conference](#) // *Online*

Dr Elsa João, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, represented the BE-Rural consortium at an online conference hosted by the Biochemistry Students' Association of the Coimbra Academic Association, in partnership with Académica Start UC, a programme of awareness-raising and education for innovation and entrepreneurship carried out by the University of Coimbra and the Coimbra Academic Association, Portugal. Her presentation delved into the key principles of the circular economy and how they relate to the bioeconomy.

06-09.07.20 // [European Biomass Conference and Exhibition](#) // *Online*

Steered by the European Commission since 1980, the European Biomass Conference and Exhibition (EUBCE) is a global event for biomass research, innovative applications and technology development. The BE-Rural project was presented [in the form of a poster](#) prepared by project partner WIP Renewable Energies. The poster shows background information on the bioeconomy, the approach and objectives of the BE-Rural project as well as some selected project results. These include an overview of bio-based technology solutions, an examination of bio-based business models, a handbook on regional and local bioeconomies, together with a PESTEL and SAT analysis of the OIP regions, which help understand better their overall environment and assess their bioeconomy potential. These outcomes set the base for future activities within the BE-Rural project. The corresponding proceeding paper can be found [here](#).

[28-29.09.20 // Joint Bulgarian-Romanian Cluster Event "Bioeconomy as driver for green, sustainable and inclusive growth: clusters and their role as key players" // Online - St. Konstantin & Elena, Bulgaria](#)

The BE-Rural consortium participated in a hybrid conference (taking place both onsite and online) organised as part of the EU Green Week by the Bulgarian and Romanian Cluster Associations, together with the European Clusters Alliance. The programme was exclusively dedicated to demonstrating the importance of regional clusters in driving the bioeconomy as an essential vector for green, sustainable, and inclusive growth. On the first conference day, BE-Rural partners gave an opening remark as well as a presentation about the actions that may be pioneered by clusters in European agri-food ecosystem recovery plans. In addition, facilitators of the OIP regions attending the conference participated in a consultation aimed at evaluating the opportunities and challenges for developing a bioeconomy strategy at local and regional level.

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



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