Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA)

Interreg
Danube Transnational Programme
DanuBioValNet

Newsletter 01/2017

Bioeconomy in the Danube region - Cross-clustering partnership for boosting eco-innovation by developing a joint bio-based value-added network

Summary of the DanuBioValNet project

The transition of a fossil-based to a bio-based industry addresses some of the main challenges identified in the Danube region. The dependency on fossil resources will be reduced and the climate change targets supported by reducing the GHG emissions. Furthermore the eco-innovations will support the regional development by diversifying the local economy and creating new employment opportunities. The development of new bio-based value chains from primary production to consumer markets needs to be done by connecting enterprises from different regions and industries. But due to a missing holistic transnational approach, the Danube actors in bio-based industries still operate disconnected and cannot properly benefit from the potential.

Therefore the project is to develop new methods and tools to connect enterprises transnationally. Clusters as the representatives of many enterprises are chosen to organise the industry cooperation and creation of new value chains because they are sustainable partners and guarantee the upgradeability in the dimension industry, sciences and politics.

The main goal and specific objective of DanuBioValNet is to facilitate eco-innovations in the bio-based industry by improving framework conditions and making better use of clusters, potential and diversity of the Danube region. The project focuses on three levels: policy, clusters and enterprises.

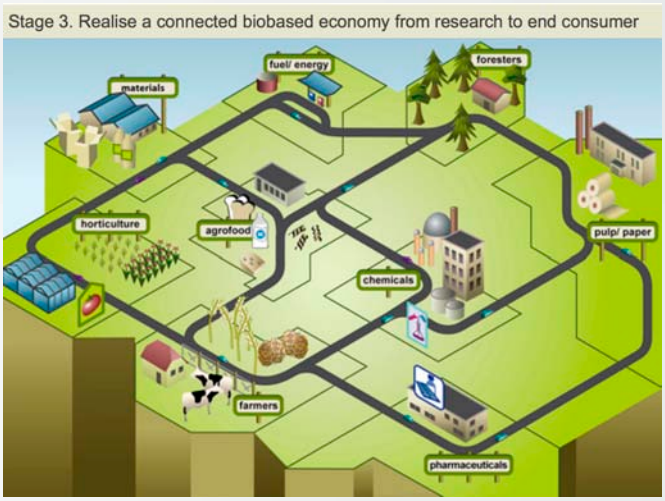
Suggested value added chains of the project are: advanced-packaging, eco-construction, phyto-pharmaceutical industry.

The main **target groups** are on one hand the policy makers - four Ministries are involved, on the other hand clusters and their SMEs - nine cluster organisations are involved. The policy level will benefit from the JBCS, which can be used as a political framework. It is planned to address at least 25 representatives of regional public Authorities, 30 representatives of business support organisations, 420 representatives of SME`s and 40 representatives of higher education and research organisations.

Budget in Euro Overall: 2320844,8
Start date: 01.01.2017 End date: 30.06.2019

Project in pictures:

Stage 1. Reinforce innovation and extend current infrastructure across the economy



Source: Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking, Belgium

The project successfully launched in Prague

The kick-off conference of the Interreg Danube DanuBioValNet project was well attended. As many as 97 representatives from 67 organisations and 12 countries participated in the meeting. Stakeholders from cluster organisations and companies as well as representatives of higher education institutions and policymakers were given information about all aspects of establishing a biobased industry in the Danube region and what is required to turn plans into reality. The many speeches and lectures covered issues ranging from the cultivation and use of medicinal plants to the development of marketable products in the field of construction and the establishment of bioenergy villages in Romania.

The welcome address by the Vice-Chairman of the Czech government's R&D Council, Arnost Marks, was the first to highlight the high value that countries in the Danube region place on the establishment of a biobased industry as a future part of their economies. The Deputy Minister for the Economic Section and Information Technology in the Czech Ministry of Agriculture, Zdeněk Adamec, emphasised, amongst other things, the importance of climate-friendly economic practices. He also spoke about droughts like in 2015 in the Czech Republic, where water shortages led to huge harvest losses and nearly put some companies out of business. He also said that he hoped this can be prevented in the future. Prof. Dr. Ralf Kindervater gave an overview lecture, in which he also addressed the opportunities that a shift to a bioeconomy in the Danube region can offer. "Today, we are witnessing a historic launch of a future biobased-industry network in the Danube region," said Kindervater.

Funding programmes and best-practice examples of bio-based products

Several overview presentations provided concrete information on finance options for companies and universities for biobased developments (BBI, Interreg Danube programme or special funding programmes for cluster organisations).

Rainer Fischer, head of Development Fixing Systems Plastics at fischerwerke GmbH & Co. KG, presented the company's Greenline product line, one of the first successful market launches of biobased products. He explained how the idea of using biobased raw materials instead of fossil resources is already happening in existing entrepreneurial decisions. fischerwerke GmbH & Co. KG with its high focus on sustainability, has already placed a number of biobased products on the market, including semi-biobased plugs and fully innovative biobased mortar systems.

Daniel Pohludka from a Czech company called NAFIGATE Corp. presented a whole range of biobased polymers from the polyhydroxyalkanoates group that are already being used by a number of companies. Prof. Vladimir Sedlarik of the Czech Tomas Bata University expressed a slightly critical view of biopolymers and pointed out that using them is not automatically an advantage, particularly when it comes to the higher price of such materials.

The audience were particularly interested in the lecture given by Prof. Dr. Rainer Luick (Rottenburg University of Applied Sciences). Luick spoke about the importance of medicinal plants in phytopharmaceuticals and cosmetics for companies across the Danube region, including for example the large number of pharmaceutical companies in BadenWürttemberg that have a long tradition of using medicinal plants as well as Eastern European countries that are the traditional suppliers of raw materials to the phytopharmaceutical and cosmetics industries. All attendees were keen to find out about the development of this value-creation chain that particularly focuses on using sustainable, nature-compatible harvesting methods. Luick highlighted that the equitable distribution of profits will also need to play an important role in this process. Currently, it is usually the poorest of the poor who cultivate or harvest medicinal plants. Luick therefore emphasised that ensuring they have good future prospects is another important goal for the Danube region as it moves towards a biobased economy.

Over the next two years, the DanuBioValNet project aims to create new value-creation networks in a broad range of industry sectors. Regional and national cluster organisations are expected to be the major drivers of the change towards a biobased industry, and it was with this in mind that a cluster brokerage event was organised alongside the meeting. By the end of the event, 22 cluster organisations had already made initial contact with each other.

Project Organization:

The overall responsibility of the implementation of the entire project was taken by

BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH from Germany.
www.bio-pro.de

Other partners:

National Cluster Association, Czech Republic, www.nca.cz

ClusterAgentur Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany, www.clusterportal-bw.de

Anteja ECG, Slovenia, www.anteja-ecg.com

PROUNION, Slovakia, www.prounion.sk

Romanian Cluster Association, Romania, www.clustero.eu

Association of Business Clusters, Bulgaria, www.abclusters.org

Business Upper Austria – OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH - Upper Austrian Food Cluster, Austria, www.lebensmittelcluster.at

Ministry of Economy, Romania, www.minind.ro

Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Croatia, www.minpo.hr

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Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenia, www.mizs.gov.si

Croatian Wood Cluster, Croatia, www.drvniklaster.hr

Institute for Economic Forecasting, Romania, www.ipe.ro

Business Upper Austria – OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH - Cleantech-Cluster, Austria, www.biz-up.at

Innovation Center of Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Serbia, www.inovacionicentar.rs

Montenegro Vine Cluster, Montenegro, www.winesofmontenegro.me

Ministry of Finance and Economics Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany, mfw.baden-wuerttemberg.de

Following activities

The first step is to map existing knowledge about clusters and a current state of development of bio-based value chaines. Activities shall provide information about where the current and future regional hot spots of innovation are located, including their strengths and industry - academia competencies. In the second stage, the in-depth value chain mapping of 3 selected value chains will be implemented, followed by the roadmap for implementation. Stakeholders and actors, gaps, missing links along the value chains will be identified, as well as unrelated industries and emerging linkages among clusters, demands, applications fields and eco-innovation opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

All mentioned steps contribute to one of the specific objectives to develop a Joint Bio-Based Industry Cluster Policy Strategy for the Danube Region in order to improve the framework conditions for cluster to cluster / SME cooperation along bio-based industrial value chains across regions.

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Innovative and socially responsible Danube region

Budget in Euro
Overall: 2320844,8

ERDF Contribution	IPA Contribution	ENI Contribution
1857124,54	115593,54	0

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