



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 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 of industry, sciences and politics.

The DanuBioValNet project in pictures:



Source: Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking, Belgium

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.

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

There are two main **target groups** of the DanuBioValNet project: the policy makers on one hand - four Ministries are

involved, on the other hand clusters and their SMEs - nine cluster organisations and associations are involved. The policy level will benefit from the Joint Bio-based Industry Cluster Policy Strategy (JBICS), 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.

The overall DanuBioValNet project budget in Euro: 2,320,844.8
Start date: 01.01.2017 - End date: 30.06.2019

DanuBioValNet – the project successfully launched in Prague



The kick-off conference of the DanuBioValNet project was well attended. As many as 97 representatives from 67 organisations and 12 countries participated in the meeting. The stakeholders from cluster organisations and companies as well as representatives of higher education institutions, research and policymakers were given the information about all aspects of establishing a bio-based 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 in Germany and 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 development of bio-based 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 caused by climatic changes due to GHG emissions, where water shortages led to huge harvest losses and nearly put some companies out of business. He also said that he hoped this could 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 bio-based-industry network in the Danube region," Kindervater declared.

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

Several overview presentations provided concrete information on finance options for companies and universities for bio-based developments, such as Niko Finka, the representative of the Danube Transnational Programme from the Joint Secretariat in Budapest, and Elisa Tesselli, the Project Manager from the Bio-Based Industries Joint Undertaking in Belgium.

Rainer Fischer, the Head of Development of Fixing Systems and Plastics at fischerwerke GmbH & Co. KG, presented the company's Greenline product line, one of the first successful market launches of bio-based products. He explained how the idea of using bio-based 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 bio-based products on the market, including semi-bio-based plugs and fully innovative bio-based mortar systems.

Daniel Pohludka from a Czech company NAFIGATE Corp. presented a whole range of bio-based polymers made of fritting oil using the Hydal technology. Professor Vladimír Sedlárik of the Czech Tomas Bata University expressed a realistic view of biopolymers pointing out that using them is not automatically an advantage, particularly when it comes to a higher price of such materials.

The audience was 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 Baden-Württemberg 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 bio-based 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 bio-based 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 Organisation:

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

BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH, 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

Activities to follow:

The first step is to map the existing knowledge about clusters and a current state of development of bio-based value chains. These 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 mapping of 3 selected value chains will be implemented, followed by the roadmap reports for all three value chains. The stakeholders and actors, gaps and 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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Danube Transnational Programme

DanuBioValNet



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

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