



Newsletter 01/2018

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



www.interreg-danube.eu/danubiovalnet

BBCEI successfully launched

Cluster Management Excellence is still not fully developed in the Danube region. There is a lack of systematic cluster support scheme and existing clusters are often missing critical mass of industry. None of the previous EU programmes addressed this issue properly.

Excellent cluster management is required for maximising the benefits which can be achieved by cluster initiatives in their efforts for supporting industry, research, and education in the region and by this supporting public authorities in their efforts for regional development.

Cluster initiatives dealing with Biobased Industries are significantly challenged since they support an emerging industry, which has specific demands that cannot be properly addressed by traditional networking and matchmaking.

The DanuBioValNet Synthesis Report has identified more than 100 cluster initiatives dealing with elements of Biobased Industries. At least 50 of them address core topics of this sector.

The idea of BioBased Cluster Excellence Initiative (BBCEI) is to support biobased cluster initiatives in improving cluster management excellence in the Danube Region to better address the upcoming challenges in the field of Biobased Industry. This can be reached by mutual benchmarking and Bronze Labelling of cluster organisations according to the European Cluster Excellence Initiative Approach (www.cluster-analysis.org). The BBCEI has been successfully launched in August 2017. More than 25 Cluster Initiatives of the 8 DanuBioValNet partners' regions have expressed their interest. Thus, it is the largest Cluster Benchmarking Initiative since 2011. Although the initiative is still ongoing, clusters from Romania, Montenegro, Baden-Württemberg, Slovakia and Czech republic have been already successfully benchmarked and received the European Label for Cluster Management Excellence. It is expected that BBCEI can be successfully finished by the end of this year. Valuable insights on size, structure, financial models and main objectives of Biobased cluster initiatives have been found. In the context of the BBCEI, many cluster managers already received ideas and recommendations how to strengthening the cluster organisation in order to better support the competitiveness of their SME members.

Two Slovak Clusters related to bioeconomy awarded by Bronze Label

Two Slovak clusters related to bioeconomy have been benchmarked by the European Secretariat for Cluster Analysis. The representatives of the **Bioeconomy Cluster** and the **Hemp Cluster** were interviewed on 4th October 2017 in Pecs, Hungary by Dr.-Ing. Gerd Meier zu Köcker from VDI/

VDE-IT during the 1st Danube Competitiveness in Practice event. Both clusters were awarded with the **European Cluster Management Excellence label in BRONZE**.



Newly benchmarked cluster is active in Bioeconomy policy in Slovakia

The Bioeconomy Cluster (recently benchmarked under DanuBioValNet project) has significantly contributed to the revision of the Action plan of the Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation in Slovakia (RIS3). For the first time, bioeconomy appeared as one of priorities in a strategic document in Slovakia. RIS3 Action plan consists of 5 main domains. The Bioeconomy Cluster as a member of the working group for domain Healthy Food and Environment has actively participated in the preparation of the domain and supported inclusion of bioeconomy among priorities.

Events – awareness workshops – conferences

Awareness workshop in Bulgaria

The Association of Business Clusters made an important step to raise the awareness about the prospects and challenges of the biobased industry in Bulgaria. Its Executive Director Svetlin Ranguelov presented the DanuBioValNet project to several cluster managers and stakeholders during the workshop in Plovdiv on 7 November 2017. As the communication manager of the project, he shared in

deep the details about the project, partners taking part in it, the need of bolstering bioeconomy and the opportunities that it creates not only for Bulgaria but for the entire Danube region.

The three value added chains of the DanuBioValNet project were described and the example of the Phytopharma chain



was raised because of the specially invited guest Nikolina Uzunova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian National Association Essential Oils, Perfumery and Cosmetics /BNAEOPC/ – the largest and strongest player in this field in the country.

The project workflow and actions were explained together with the expected outcomes, and how the participants can get involved and benefit. An open invitation was given for the next project events in Bucharest, Romania and Stuttgart, Germany.

Source: Association of Business Clusters, Bulgaria

6TH Romanian National Cluster Conference

Over 250 participants representing the European Commission and national governments, regional development agencies and innovation actors, industry and academia, clusters and cluster associations from all over Europe debated on 22 and 23 November 2017 in Bucharest about the role of clusters in the smart specialisation process, integrating value chains and triggering business driven innovation. Particular foci were put on the Danube Strategy and the Danube Transnational Programme, tools for cluster development with particular emphasis on bioeconomy as developed by the DTP "DanuBioValNet Project" approach and on internationalisation solutions for bussiness by Afaceri.ro platform. Around 50 B2B/C2C meetings took place in the adjacent EEN brokerage event.



The conference has been co-organised by the Romanian Cluster Association, the Ministry of Economy, the National R&D Institute for Agricultural Machinery, the Institute for Economic Forecasting of the Romanian Academy and the Association for the Knowledge Economy Promotion. The event took place with the support of the CEC Bank, the Romanian Regional Development Agency "Centre", the Institute for Research and Automation Design and enjoyed the patronage of the Ministry of Research and Innovation.



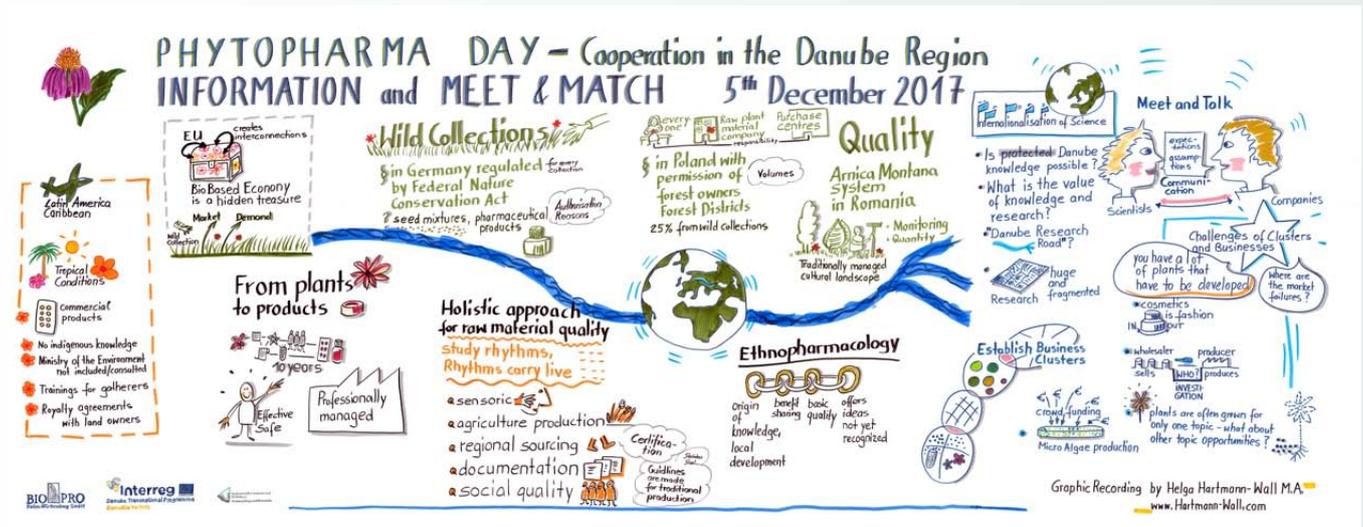
Started as a regional event of the INTERREG IVC "Clusterix" project in 2012, the conference has reached its full maturity and represents the best practice example of international policy learning transfer process pursued all along the years by the INTERREG Europe "Clusterix 2.0" approach. The relevance of the event has been aslo proven by the presence of three Romanian Ministries. i.e. for Research and Innovation, Economy and European Affairs. In their opening speeches the according state secretaries emphasised the role of clusters in shaping up the regional and national innovation ecosystems, driving industrial change and fostering international cooperation.



For next year a joint Romanian-Hungarian Cluster Conference is in plan and high hopes have been set for 2019 as the candidature for the organisation of the European Cluster Conference under the Romanian Presidency early 2019 has already been launched.

Source: Clustero, Romania

Phytopharma sector stakeholders in the Danube region extend networking activities



On 5 December, almost 50 stakeholders from the phytopharmaceutical sector in the Danube region gathered in Stuttgart for the Phytopharma Day. The event provided insights into the work of collectors and growers of medicinal plants in Germany, Poland and Romania, and featured presentations by Baden-Württemberg companies. The participants also had the opportunity to discuss the extent to which science and industry could increase their networking activities in this sector in the Danube region.

Dr. Sabrina Weisenburger from a company called Dr. Willmar Schwabe GmbH & Co. KG explained in her presentation that the development of new drugs can take a long time, sometimes up to ten years. Ralf Kunert, Managing Director of naturamus GmbH, a wholly owned subsidiary of WALA Heilmittel GmbH, explained in his presentation why the company is so keen to ensure fair conditions for the growers of their medicinal plants. Dr. Florin Pacurar from Romania spoke about a long-standing joint project between Weleda AG and other partners on the controlled collection of wild arnica in Romania. One common factor that emerged from the presentations was that phytopharmaceutical value creation is characterised by long-term cooperation. Another shared issue involves all parties actively working to improve social conditions in the countries where the raw materials come from.



The event was jointly organised by BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH and Interreg DTP DanuBioValNet with the support of the Rottenburg University of Applied Forest Sciences, and aimed to bring together stakeholders in the phytopharmaceutical sector in the Danube region. Participants gained a broad overview of the industry in an information event that covered topics ranging from cultivating medicinal plants to developing new phytopharmaceuticals. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss their thoughts on how the phytopharmaceutical sector is likely to develop in the Danube region. Producing medicines from medicinal plants has a long tradition in Baden-Württemberg. Many of these companies have been operating in the region for decades and they are the reason that much of the European added value in the phytopharmaceutical sector is generated in Germany's southwest.



Based on the knowledge gained in the morning sessions, the participants had ample time in the afternoon to engage in intensive discussions on how science and industry in the Danube region can improve their networking opportunities in the future. "The Phytopharma Day is the starting point for more intensive cooperation between all countries in the Danube region with the aim of establishing a holistic approach to the phytopharmaceutical and natural cosmetics sectors as part of a bioeconomy," said Prof. Dr. Kindervater in his concluding talk.

Source: BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH

SCAR – Standing Committee on Agricultural Research: SWG Sustainable Bio-resources for a growing bioeconomy

The Strategic Working Group “**Sustainable Bio-Resources for a Growing bioeconomy**” (SWG SBGB) is a thematic working group under the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR). The SCAR was established in 1974 by a Regulation of the Council of the European Union and has a mandate **to advise** the European Commission and the Member States **on the coordination of agricultural research in Europe**.

The Strategic Working Group on Bio-resources discusses **how renewable bio-resources can be sustainably produced for the bioeconomy**. It is not only the issue of producing more renewable biological resources from fewer inputs, but also about logistical questions, the biomass potential of different European regions, how much biomass is available and how much of it can be used. Moreover, it deals with the question how farmers can profit from the bioeconomy and what are the connections with other sectors.

On 7 June, there was organized 2nd meeting of SWG SBGB in Helsinki with aim **to find a synergy between the bioeconomy strategy and the circular economy**. Since the concept of bioeconomy interacts between the production and the use of biobased resources, it is interconnected with numerous areas. Within given meeting, the representative of **PROUNION**, the project partner of DanuBioValNet, promoted the goals and activities of the project, whereby the **synergies between SWG SBGB and DanuBioValNet** were promoted too.



Nowadays, the issue of bioeconomy is frequently discussed, whereby it connects not only different sectors, but also leads to interactions among different countries. The **members** of SWG “Sustainable Bio-Resources for a Growing Bioeconomy” are from following countries:

Austria*	Latvia
Belgium	Netherlands
Denmark	Norway
Estonia	Poland
Finland	Romania*
France	Slovakia*
Germany*	Spain
Hungary*	Sweden
Italy	Turkey
Ireland	United Kingdom

However, from the **Danube region**, there are only few countries participating in the given Strategic Working Group. During the 2nd meeting of SWG SBGB, Mr. Daniel Ács, the representative of PROUNION, discussed about the encouragement of project partners from countries that are not participating in SWG “Sustainable Bio-Resources for a Growing Bioeconomy” either to become a member or to disseminate the information to relevant stakeholders or organisation within their countries.

Source: Prounion, Slovakia

General information about the Standing Committee on Agricultural Research:
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/scar/index.cfm?pg=home>

Recommended Events 2018 for DanuBioValNet:

The European Biopolymer Summit - 14-15 February 2018 - Dusseldorf, Germany

<http://app.streamsend.com/private/k2g7j7b27s/pCM/V6G-9FUw/browse/29437467>

Bioeconomy's Key Enabling Technologies Conference - 6-8 March 2018 - Strasbourg, France

<https://bioket.b2match.io/>

5th World Elastomer Summit - 7-8 March 2018 - Dusseldorf, Germany

<http://www.wplgroup.com/aci/event/elastomers-conference/>

3rd annual ACI's European Food & Beverage Plastic Packaging Summit - 14-15 March 2018 - Amsterdam, Netherland

<http://app.streamsend.com/private/k2g7j7b27s/pCM/V6G-9FUw/browse/29598465>

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