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Olga Boyarintseva and Dr. Dominik Patzelt

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For further information about the DanuBioValNet project, you will find a short description in this document. To learn more and to download additional resources please refer to the project website <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danubiovalnet>. The information is provided without assuming any legal responsibility for correctness or completeness. The data presented in the report are based on the information given by the project partners.

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List of abbreviations

BSO	Business Support Organization
DTP	Danube Transnational Programme
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

DanuBioValNet project

The DanuBioValNet project is a cross-clustering partnership for boosting eco-innovation by developing a joint bio-based value-added network for the Danube Region. DanuBioValNet stands for development of a joint bio-based industry cluster policy strategy, clusters connecting enterprises transnationally, new bio-based value chains in the Danube Region and eco-innovations for supporting regional development.

The DanuBioValNet project, launched in 2017 through a cross-regional partnership involving 17 partners from 10 Danube regions, will enhance transformation from a fossil-based economy towards an economy using renewable resources by creating bio-based value-added networks. The project will connect Danube actors in a bio-based industry to minimize greenhouse gases and to optimize biomass resource utilization. These measures are intended to improve the sustainability and regional development through diversification of the local economy while positively affecting the workforce. The focus on emerging transnational cooperation of clusters should serve to foster the bio-economy and eco-innovations and should lead to a strengthening of the regional economies.

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. However, due to a missing holistic transnational approach, the Danube actors in the current bio-based industry still operate disconnected and cannot properly benefit from their potential. Therefore, the aim of this project is to develop new methods, strategies and tools to connect enterprises transnationally. Clusters represent groups of industries that are closely linked by common products, markets, technologies and interests. They are chosen to organize and carry forward the needed industry cooperation for the creation of new value chains. Properly performing clusters can help to upgrade industrial practices, generate new knowledge and contribute to regional policy-making.

The partners of the DanuBioValNet agreed that phytopharma, eco-construction and bio-plastic/advanced packing (bio-based packaging) have a high potential for improvement of their respective value chains, and hemp is considered as a raw material suitable for all the three value chains. Project efforts are designed to allow partners to connect SMEs, farmers, universities, and research institutes within a value-added DanuBioValNet network. The partners intend to develop and implement a long-term, industry-driven roadmap for such collaboration along the entire value chain based on cluster partnerships for these processes. Focusing on the selected high potential sectors, and harnessing the nature of regional clusters within wider cross-regional selected value chains, DanuBioValNet will implement pilot actions, involving SMEs, universities, research institutions, policymakers, and civil society among others. The pilot actions serve as the prerequisite for creating a blueprint for cross-regional cooperation

Workshop „Tourism meets Bioeconomy“

The workshop „Tourism meets Bioeconomy“ was a cooperation event and organized by the coordinators of Priority Area 8 Competitiveness of Enterprises of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing of Baden-Württemberg, Germany, and Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Croatia) and the lead partner of the project DanuBioValNet of the Danube Transnational Programme (BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg GmbH, Germany).

The event took place at the Rosslyn Central Park Hotel in Sofia, Bulgaria, on the 18th of October 2018. It coincided with the 7th Annual Forum of the EUSDR that was focused on tourism development as a precondition to economic growth and territorial cohesion. Since one of promises of bioeconomy is the empowerment of regions and thus regional economic and social development in line with job creation, the goal of the workshop was to identify potentials of touristic sector in connection with bioeconomy in the Danube region.

The most crucial issues mentioned during the event are related to promotion of bio-based products made of local natural resources and their application in the touristic sector, general improvement of the whole touristic infrastructure, as well as raising awareness of the public with regard to bioeconomy (what it implies) in order to encourage people to shift from the traditional consumer behavior to a more sustainable one and therefore to support the concept of sustainable tourism.

Background

Bioeconomy aims at the transition of the economy from fossil resources towards renewable ones. To implement such transition and to interlink various business sectors, new business models and value networks need to be established. The basis for bioeconomy is the sustainable production of renewable raw materials, and the bioeconomical thinking, in its turn, can help protect the beauty of regions and, besides sustaining the nature, add value in tourism. If properly connected, a lot of opportunities lay within tourism, regional development and bioeconomy. Clusters as representatives of many enterprises could play a key role in fostering innovative partnerships between the touristic sector and bioeconomy for the creation of new value chains, because they are sustainable partners and guarantee the upgradeability in the dimension industry, sciences and politics.

Participants

The workshop attracted 40 participants of different target groups from 13 countries (Table 1), which reflects the relevance of the proposed topic for discussion on ministerial, business cluster and academic levels and, therefore, the need and importance of connecting respective stakeholders with this regard.

Country	Projects target group				Other		Total per country
	Regional public authority	BSO	SMEs	Higher education & research	NGO	Media	
Albania				4			4
Austria		2					2
Belgium	1						1
Bulgaria		3	2	1	2		8
Croatia	2						2
Czech Rep.		1					1
Germany	5	5		1	1		12
Hungary	4						4
Italy						1	1
Romania				2			2
Serbia				1			1
Slovakia		1					1
Turkey		1					1
Total per group	12	13	2	9	3	1	40

Table 1: Participants of the workshop “Tourism meets Bioeconomy”

Agenda

The workshop was divided into two different sessions. The first session served as an introduction into the EUSDR, the DTP and the ideas related to the integration of tourism and bioeconomy.

At the beginning, Dr. Judit Schrick-Szenczi (Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing of Baden-Württemberg) greeted the audience on behalf of the Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness of Enterprises” of the EUSDR. Then Marius-Valentin Niculae, project officer of the Joint Secretariat of the DTP, Hungary, presented the 3rd DTP call for the joint projects in the Danube region. Afterwards, the participants got insights related to the idea how to connect bioeconomy and sustainable tourism for the regional value creation in the Danube region, presented by Dr. Dominik Patzelt (BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg) and served as the first impulse for the further discussion. This followed by the talk of Raina Popova (World Wide Fund for Nature in Bulgaria), who shared with the audience, among others, the concept of nature routes as well as the Danube guides, namely how local entrepreneurs could benefit from natural heritage sites in a way that protects natural resources (project LENA of the DTP).

The next part of the first workshop session consisted of the best practice examples:

- John Murray (Ligna Group, Bulgaria) talked about applications of furniture made of renewable materials in the touristic sector, e.g. hotels;
- Vedat Kunt (VEGO Consulting & Training, Turkey) presented an inclusive and sustainable collaboration platform for the agriculture, food and touristic sectors;
- Zorica Maric (Innovation Center of Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, Serbia) introduced the online platform Phy2TRACE, which is aimed at building a transparent and reliable phytopharma value chain.

Furthermore, exchange of the expertise between the DTP Priority Areas was enabled during the workshop. In addition to Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness of Enterprises”, the respective talks were given by the coordinators of Priority Area 2 “Sustainable Energy” and Priority Area 6 “Biodiversity &

Landscapes”, Pál SÁgvári (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary) and Dr. Florian Ballnus (Bavarian State Ministry for the Environment and Health) accordingly.

The objective of the second workshop session was to generate ideas how to bring together tourism and bioeconomy, which could be eventually translated in new projects. To tackle this, the following three topics were selected:

- Ways to “bioeconomize” touristic sector. Integration of bioeconomy outcomes (e.g. bio-based products) in traditional/classic tourism - forms and ways;
- Ways to „bioeconomize“ tourists. How to raise awareness about bioeconomy and inspire to travel respectively;
- Making use of nature. Challenges and benefits for biodiversity and landscapes from the integration of bioeconomy and tourism.

The participants were divided in three groups with one of the mentioned topics, which had to be elaborated within 1 hour. Instruments used were brainstorming by using card collection, discussion, visualization, summarizing, and presentation on the plenary to the whole audience.

Group work

Group 1

Topic: Ways to “**bioeconomize**” **touristic sector**. Integration of bioeconomy outcomes (e.g. bio-based products) in traditional/classic tourism - forms and ways

Moderator: Dr. Judit Schrick-Szenczi, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing of Baden-Württemberg



Group 1 suggested a range of diverse ideas to be considered for making the touristic sector more sustainable:

Initiatives	Activities / measures
Involvement of digital technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of digital local supply chains between farmers, transportation providers and restaurants • Online platform for booking accommodation by people willing to travel in a sustainable and environment friendly way (analogue of Airbnb)
Supporting hotels, which share the concept of sustainable tourism, by authorities	Providing them with incentives
Promoting local products	Supporting regional traditions in the touristic sector, e.g. usage of traditional wooden furniture in modern hotels
In general, improvement of touristic infrastructure	Improvement of transportation and accommodation facilities
Educational tours	Excursions in the Danube region, especially with the focus on protected forests, for instance in the Balkan countries
Fostering the connection between the touristic sector and educational / research institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the touristic sector with the latest research results on, for example, using of alternative renewable resources – again, such as wood - instead of fossil ones • Training for SMEs on how to include and apply bio-based products, e.g. phytocosmetics

Table 2: Findings to the topic “Ways to “bioeconomize” touristic sector. Integration of bioeconomy outcomes (e.g. bio-based products) in traditional/classic tourism - forms and ways”

Group 2

Topic: Ways to „bioeconomize“ tourists. How to raise awareness about bioeconomy and inspire to travel respectively?

Moderator: Johanna Specker, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Housing of Baden-Württemberg



According to the discussion in Group 2, a lot of different initiatives could help tourists behave in a more sustainable way:

Initiatives	Activities / measures	Who should promote the initiatives
Change consumer behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting products (food, clothes, buildings) made of local natural resources Promoting regional traditions by launching new or involving already existing associations of farmers, hotels, etc. Incentives for producers who use local resources, not imported ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local associations of farmers and hotels Associations of touristic sector stakeholders Policy makers
Umbrella brands	Creation of umbrella brands to be placed in nature and national parks	Regional agencies
Travelling sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using public transport instead of private cars General improvement of public transportation 	Local NGOs
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing usage of plastics Utilization of compost Soil protection and sustainable land use Reasonable prices for bio-based products and the balanced ratio cost/benefit 	In the Danube region these issues could be covered by the DTP, for example, in projects within Priority Area 6 "Biodiversity & Landscapes"

Table 3: Findings to the topic "Ways to „bioeconomize“ tourists. How to raise awareness about bioeconomy and inspire to travel respectively?"

Group 3

Topic: Making use of nature. Challenges and benefits for **biodiversity and landscapes** from the integration of bioeconomy and tourism

Moderator: Olga Boyarintseva, BIOPRO Baden-Württemberg, lead partner of project DanuBioValNet



Group 3 came up with several ideas related to challenges and benefits for biodiversity and landscapes and combined them together in three overarching topics:

Initiatives	Activities / measures	Who should promote the initiatives
Developing the overall concept of eco-tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using eco-friendly transportation and travelling by public transport instead of private cars Supporting initiatives of tours that “promote” local landscapes and farming Supporting production of organic products Use of local resources for production instead of imported ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authorities and / or communities and representatives of the touristic sector The public should also be willing to shift to an environment friendly way of travelling, consumption of organic products, etc.
Sustainable exploring of nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling approaches to usage of resources Introduction of incentives for companies that are interested in production of energy out of bio-waste 	Policy makers
Raising awareness	Educating people with regard to bioeconomy and concept of eco-tourism in particular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Educational institutions - from schools to universities Policy makers

Table 4: Findings to the topic “Making use of nature. Challenges and benefits for biodiversity and landscapes from the integration of bioeconomy and tourism”

Summary

Results of the group work revealed a lot of overlapping in the ideas of the three working groups, which proved the existence of common directions on the way of interlinking tourism and bioeconomy as well as possible benefits from it.

Firstly, it is important to develop the overall concept of eco-tourism and to improve the whole touristic infrastructure. The authorities should financially support industry actors (providers of accommodation, transportation, etc.) who share the concept of sustainable tourism. There should be introduced incentives for producers who use local resources instead of imported ones and therefore add a value to the regional value chains. In order to “bioeconomize” the sector, raising awareness among people with regard to bioeconomy plays a crucial role. This implies spreading information and educating the public, so as people are motivated to change the traditional consumer behavior. For example, willingness to travel by public transport instead of private cars, or buying, if possible, regional products made of local natural materials (food, clothes, buildings) are the basics for shifting to the sustainable behavior.

The Danube countries have a huge range of natural resources and beautiful landscapes and therefore high potential to develop sustainable tourism that reflects the idea of bioeconomy. To do so, tourism should be considered in a holistic approach, which brings together the best of regions, their people, nature and products.