



The **Bio**CannDo experience: Let's talk about bio-based products

10 Insights on communicating the bioeconomy

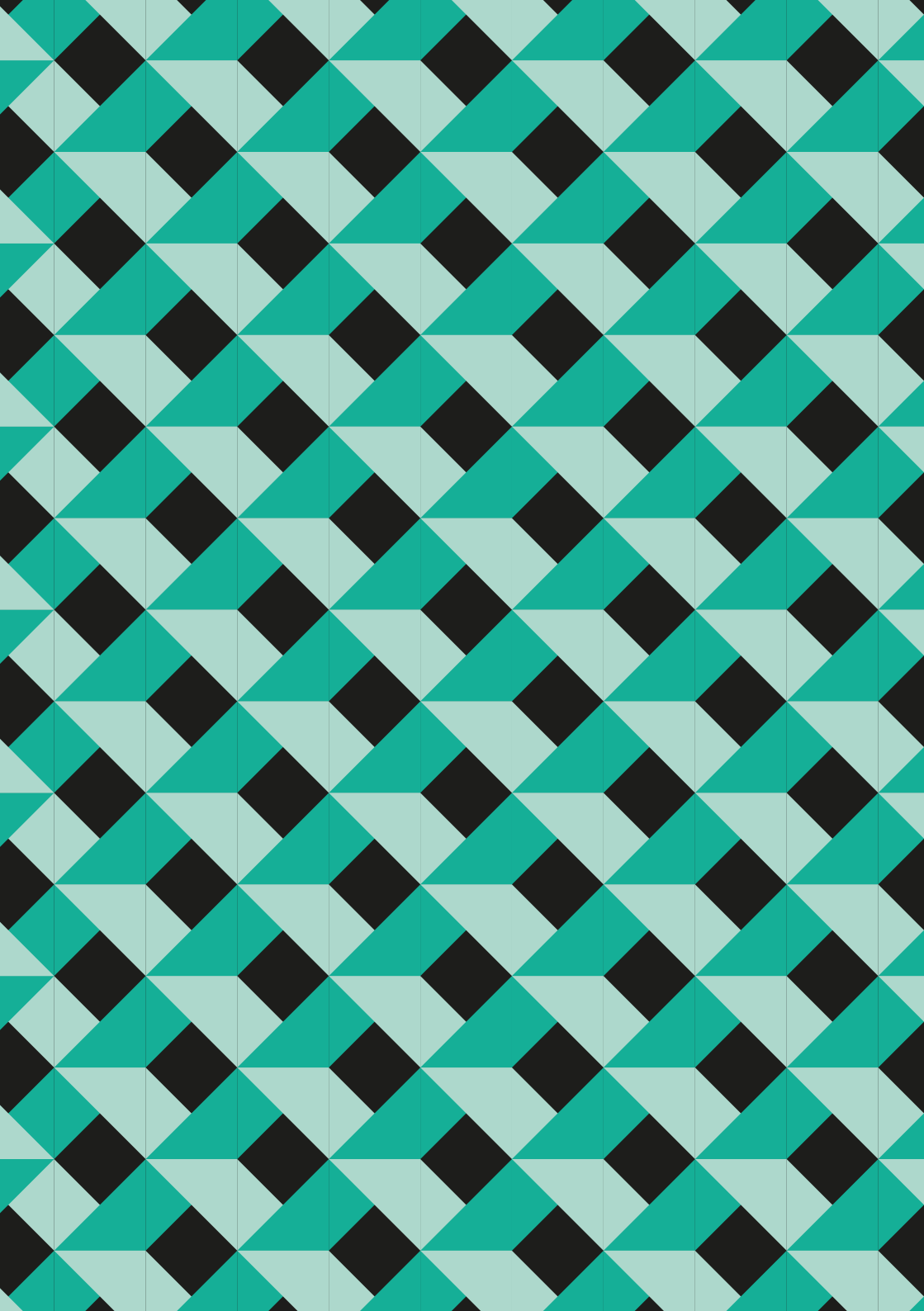


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Chapter 1

Communicating the bioeconomy

What we have learned from BioCannDo

For many people, it is still unclear what the bioeconomy is and what it means to their lives. There is still a strong need to explain to the public why they should care about renewable resources and consider bio-based products as an alternative to conventional products. To take on such a challenge, bioeconomy players need to find the best way to reach out to consumers. What does a successful communication strategy look like? Are there any positive examples to learn from? How does one's message become credible?

How does one get experts on board?

Most communication projects and initiatives usually ask themselves these questions when planning their own dissemination. If you are one of them and you are looking for ideas for setting up or fine-tuning your communication strategy, this publication could be a good starting point. Of course, BioCannDo has not found the philosopher's stone and we cannot provide a magic formula. Prerequisites, means and objectives of initiatives across Europe are too different

for a one-size-fits-all model. However, we believe that we have gained some experience worth sharing with other communicators in the bio-based community.

What makes BioCannDo unique is its focus on consumer communication: we developed our consumer website www.AllThings.Bio, which provides a broad range of communication materials, formats and resources. We also engaged with other communication projects to share good practices. We brought together experts and consumers in workshops and focus groups to develop our key messages. Last but not least, we mapped educational materials and developed new

ones to help teachers have easy access to teaching aids on the bioeconomy.

From this host of activities, the project team collected the ten insights presented in this booklet. More in-depth recommendations will be made available on www.AllThings.Bio when the project ends. We hope they will trigger new ideas and offer food for thought for future projects and initiatives as they encounter the challenge of communicating the bioeconomy.

We believe that sharing is caring. Let's share new ideas and insights to communicate the bioeconomy in a way that will leave a mark!

Enjoy the reading.

Chapter 2

Insights

Re-gain consumers' trust with transparent communication

More and more consumers are asking for environmentally friendly and sustainable products; it's no surprise that "green" advertising claims are gradually increasing. While conventional products are established and accepted by consumers, innovative bio-based products have to be explained and justified.

The problem is that communicating about "green" products still raises suspicion and is sometimes even dismissed as greenwashing.

Unclear terms, one-sided messages or misleading statements about the environmental impact cause confusion or distrust among consumers, and ultimately damage the reputation of bio-based products. The research carried out in the BioCannDo project has shown us that producers and retailers of bio-based products struggle to find a balanced communication style. On the one hand, communication should be comprehensive and scientifically correct. On the other hand, claims should still be relevant and easy to understand for a lay audience.

This disparity tells us that we need to focus on the consumers' perspective when we communicate about bio-based products. At this point, we should seek to understand basic consumer needs: Why would consumers care about bio-based products? What kind of information is relevant for their daily lives?

In BioCannDo we opted for a plain language and communication style emphasising the personal benefits for consumers. **We stressed the importance of giving unbiased information. While we present the advantages bio-based products can offer, we have also addressed openly their less positive aspects, which will still need to be improved in the future.**

In short, we decided to be transparent.

Factsheets and other resources have been made available for those looking for more in-depth knowledge.

Meeting all these demands is not always easy, but we are convinced that this is key to reliable communication about bio-based products.



Questions to guide your thinking

- How would you explain to your neighbour why they should buy a bio-based product?
- Why would consumers want to use compostable, bio-based products?

Insight #1

Bio-based itself is not a selling point

Explaining the uses, performance and benefits of bio-based products creates awareness and acceptance among consumers.

When we communicate about bio-based products, it seems obvious at first to emphasise the fact that they are bio-based products, but it turns out that consumers are looking for additional benefits.

Within the BioCannDo project, we took a closer look at three bio-based product groups (household cleaning products, insulating materials and food packaging) and developed key messages to convey. In workshops and discussions with experts and consumers, it became clear that use and performance are criteria for (not) buying a bio-based product. **We established that we cannot simply assume that people know what to expect from these products. Rather, bio-based products are in need of explanation. Their uses and positive impact are not always sensible, visible, touchable or easy to understand.**

Consumers ask themselves: Does a particular bio-based product work as well as the conventional products I know? Detergents must clean as well as conventional products and ideally be healthier for the user. Bio-based insulation materials are expected to provide the same thermal insulation, durability and safety. In the case of food packaging, consumers have clear expectations regarding environmentally friendly disposal.

This does not mean that environmental issues or questions about the raw material base are not important, but they constitute one consideration among others. Their importance may also vary between different product groups. However, the fact alone that a product is made from plant or animal based raw materials is not a decisive argument for most consumers.



Practical tips

- Focus the communication on the uses and benefits of bio-based products;
- Look for personal or environmental benefits of bio-based products such as better for your skin, better for indoor climate, low toxicity, easier to dispose of;
- Don't give the impression you want to sell the "bio-based" cause at all costs if you want to avoid resistance from consumers.

Beware of the communication clash

Biodegradable, compostable, recyclable - Theory-based promises don't yet fully deliver in practice



Many consumer questions we encountered during the BioCannDo project related to the disposal of bio-based plastics. However, the communication around this topic challenged us a lot.

On the one hand, many terms are not fully understood, or may have more than one meaning. **On the other hand, and more importantly, we observed that the communication from manufacturers on biodegradability and composting sometimes does not correspond to the local disposal reality. Conflicting statements between manufacturers and waste management companies lead to a “communication clash”.**

This applies, for example, to the use of compostable plastic bags for organic waste. Many composting plants in Germany reject any type of plastic bag, even compostable ones, in organic waste streams as their processing poses technical challenges. They even campaign actively against households throwing compostable plastics into organic waste bins, by sponsoring information campaigns like #wirfuerbio that are seen as very trustworthy by citizens. Thus, local and regional disposal companies strongly influence the image and use of compostable and bio-based products. A comparable direct access to the target group is hardly possible for players at the European level.

A second example of contradictory communication concerns everyday life goods like office materials or plastic toys. These may be labelled as biodegradable or compostable, which may be true for the bio-based material itself. Usually this is neither a sensible nor a realistic disposal route. Such claims can be misleading and raise unrealistic expectations among consumers.

The result of the communication clash is consumer disappointment and a negative image of bio-based products and this is not sufficiently taken into account in communication.



Practical tips

- Consumers appreciate clear and helpful guidance on the disposal of bio-based products. Focus on available disposal routes. Be specific and avoid any misleading claims;
- Don't state that a product is biodegradable if no corresponding waste management infrastructure is in place or without explaining the specific conditions under which biodegrading takes place;
- Engage with local waste management companies and municipalities to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of biodegradable plastics in current waste streams. This can also help to establish a strategic partnership with important multipliers.

The BioCannDo dilemma: finding the right form and angle

Media professionals are constantly looking for new formats to connect with the public. But the recipe for success is yet to be discovered: established formats are very popular but leave a déjà vu feeling. Innovative web communication stands out but it struggles to reach out to large audiences.

When looking for facts and information, only a minority of readers want innovation: the vast majority of them prefer sticking to the formats they are familiar with.

Our editorial team is well aware of this trade-off, as our project engages both with laymen and professional stakeholders on broad themes like the bioeconomy and bio-based materials. Hence, **when we developed our editorial strategy, we had to be selective about which communication formats and channels to use to generate impact... while making the most of the available resources.**

We developed a bouquet of communication content around categories of bio-based products that naturally resonate with consumers: Catering, Clothing, Construction, Gardening, Home and Transport. The same content could be re-packaged and presented in different forms (i.e. journalistic article, Q&A, video clip, quiz) according to the channels to be used and their audience.

This has allowed our AllThings.Bio portal to become a brand with its own editorial identity. Here we provide a repository of communication materials about bio-based products which will leave a legacy beyond the BioCannDo project.



Questions to guide your thinking

- What are the communication models you refer to? Will you ever be able to become as popular as they are?
- What matters to you the most? Do you want to differentiate your project from other communication initiatives, or do you want your message to get across to as many people as possible?
- Do you want other media to take up and republish your resources? Are you familiar with the format requirements dictated by such media?
- How wide is your target audience? Are you aiming at the general public or experts?

Insight #3

The trade-off between uniqueness and outreach

Finding your own voice and personality has a cost, as it can set you apart from traditional communication platforms.

When we started BioCannDo, our team often discussed, “How should we communicate?” and, “What would be the best way to turn scientific technical topics into resources able to attract anyone’s attention?”

We first looked at the formats used by most reputed popular science dissemination channels.

A common trait was that they all seem to propose a mix of traditional formats (like journalistic articles, interviews and posts) together with innovative content, like interactive graphic animations, science quizzes, and other multimedia eye-catching online resources. We decided that we should follow a similar approach for our AllThings.Bio portal, and produce innovative items like storytelling resources, quizzes, “facts or myths” formats alongside more traditional ones. **Whichever works well on our website contributes to making our project known and helps us differentiate from other scientific communication initiatives. Our uniqueness has made us extremely proud of our work, but paradoxically, has partly become our Achilles’ heel.**

Innovative formats tend to live in isolation on AllThings.Bio as the external platforms and websites we rely on to support our external media distribution cannot take them up. This is probably a combination of editorial choice and technical grounds, as interactive formats or quizzes are not standard posts and cannot be embedded easily on all websites. Unlike other established dissemination channels, our resource is young, started from scratch. It would require more time and effort for us to make ourselves known to the general public and to become more autonomous. Had we had more of a standard approach, our initiative would have been unnoticed. But could our message possibly have had a wider outreach?



Practical tips

- Don’t be scared of innovation as long as you have external resources and contacts that support you every step of the way and attract new and fresh audiences to your media channel;
- Be pragmatic and identify from the very beginning the media channels you will use to distribute your work. Pay attention to their formats: chances are that these will reject or fail to redistribute your resources if they are incompatible with their requirements.

Not all formats suit all channels

The selection of media content is often dictated by the distribution and advertising budget.



Our first challenge as a project was to establish which topics we could cover with our editorial and video production. Also, these should be told with a good angle and a catchy communication format to engage with the public at large.

We thus planned carefully for our video production as we wanted our videos to become a distinctive part of our media presence.

No video would have been able to fit all the media channels used by the project, because different media require video formats strictly adhering to their own rules. Therefore, we took a pragmatic approach and decided to concentrate on the only channel where we could realistically generate significant outreach: Facebook.

First of all, it is well adapted for the BioCannDo audience. Moreover, our project had

a small advertising budget which, once invested on Facebook, made the difference and significantly boosted online views. Had we spent the same sum on any other medium, impact would have been negligible.

The decision to concentrate on Facebook dictated the choice of the format. We decided to produce short live action clips, supported by animations: a format Facebook followers are familiar with.

A short advertising campaign boosted online viewing and quadrupled the number of views. This allowed us to engage with people who would otherwise have never been reached by BioCannDo.



Practical tips

- If possible, set aside some money to boost distribution: even a small advertising budget invested on the right channel can make a difference in terms of outreach;
- No video format works well on all the media: before deciding the format, establish first which channel you will use for distribution and stick to its requirements.

Dispel consumers' doubts

Establishing a virtual dialogue with your readers will help you engage with the public compellingly.



There is still little awareness of bio-based products and there are too many misconceptions around the topic. BioCannDo intends to show people that “a bio-based alternative” is available and can be used in our everyday lives.

To tackle people's scepticism, we had to relay our message in a clear, honest yet non-patronizing tone of voice. Therefore, in our editorial team we decided from the start that we would produce a series of informative posts to be published on the AllThings.Bio portal. These would then be turned into catchy messages for Twitter and Facebook to reach the increasing number of citizens who inform themselves solely using social media. A similar approach would then be replicated in the video production.

We started by analysing existing media resources which, like AllThings.Bio, relay

scientific information to citizens. A format very popular nowadays follows a “question & answer” (Q&A) model. We decided to adopt it: **we put ourselves in the “consumers’ shoes” and produced a series of “Q&A” posts which answer the most common questions and doubts which an average bystander in the street may ask about bio-based products and materials.**

“Q&A” posts have been well received by the AllThings.Bio readers and have had a good replication on social media. We believe that this approach is popular because readers can find the answers they are looking for in our posts. Moreover, these answers resonate well with consumers who see that their concerns are shared by others.

Ultimately, the message relayed by our project through our “question & answer” approach is that when it comes to bio-based products, all questions are legitimate: it is up to manufacturers and communicators to reassure citizens by addressing their concerns in a convincing way.



Practical tips

- Never trivialise readers' doubts: the underlying message in your communication should be that it is fair to have questions and concerns;
- Keep the conversation practical and down to earth, as people's most basic concerns are usually those which may prevent them from considering the bio-based option;
- Keep your answers factual and put technical references in a side note: this will make you more credible to the readers and prove that your statements are scientifically sound.

Engage with consumers, experts and projects

We can achieve more together. As true as this saying may be, it is sometimes difficult to put into practice. In BioCannDo we wanted to create synergies with other communication projects and initiatives, experts and consumers - not to reinvent the wheel, but to learn from each other's good practices and join forces.

But how does one do that when people are spread across Europe and the project's budget is limited?

In the BioCannDo team, we asked ourselves the following questions: What do we want to achieve with our network? What do others expect from us? What kind of input do we need from consumers and experts and how can we get them involved in our project?

We opted for a mix of actions. We offered projects different levels of cooperation, with a combination of online and offline activities.

This mix of measures helped us ensure that we do not communicate in isolation but as a community as we held regular exchanges with other bioeconomy communicators. We were able to involve consumers and experts in the development of our messages to create joint approaches on how to communicate about the bioeconomy. Sharing experience and knowledge has certainly helped us increase the project's impact and sustainability.



Questions to guide your thinking

- Which stakeholders groups are really affected by decisions related to bio-based products?
- What would motivate them to participate in a conversation with your project? How much time would they invest in engaging with your initiative?
- How can you expect them to contribute?
- Which advertising channel could you use to reach your target audience most effectively?

Insight #6

Engagement is a two-way street

Connecting with consumers and stakeholders is the first step to ensuring that the content you produce will rise above the noise.

BioCannDo is about designing communication strategies, and doing so together with target audiences. We therefore engaged with two stakeholder groups – professional product experts and consumers – in formats such as workshops, focus groups, surveys, webinars and interviews. Before reaching out to these groups, we thought of ways to motivate them in joining the conversation and we wondered how ready they would be to invest time and knowledge.

Creating the right incentives is crucial when involving consumers. As it is unlikely that they have a particular interest in the bioeconomy research, it takes a lot of effort to spark an engaging conversation. Is it clear to them why you want their feedback? Are you making it easy and rewarding for them to contribute? We found that a small financial or material incentive, as a token of our appreciation, was essential to motivate people.

Engagement is a conversation though. Once you allow consumers to share their stories and opinions, chances are they will want to get further involved. Therefore, even when resources are limited for real-life engagement with consumers, the potential for multiplication and awareness-raising is substantial.

When engaging with experts and professionals, you will likely encounter a different challenge: ensuring representativeness, so that you can confidently translate specific insights into broader findings. When working with relatively small groups of experts, it is important to avoid biases and collect a variety of relevant perspectives. In this regard, you need a sound methodology and process to map and identify stakeholder groups. In comparison to the engagement of citizens, experts usually have a (professional) interest in the subject area and require fewer incentives to participate. However, it is equally important to consider if what you are asking is relevant and easy to respond to, and if participants can feel rewarded for the time they invest (e.g. information sharing, networking opportunities, etc.).



Practical tips

- Choose the engagement format that fits your objective and audience;
- Consider offering incentives to stakeholders. These can be financial, but also opportunities for networking and information-sharing.

Insight #7

United we stand

Offering different levels of engagement in a network can help increase your outreach and impact

Raising awareness about the bioeconomy has been high on the political agenda for over a decade. So it was hardly surprising that at the proposal stage of BioCannDo we came across dozens of projects communicating and educating on aspects of the bioeconomy. Our funds would not be sufficient to bring so many projects physically together. So we opted for an alternative approach – a virtual map showcasing highlights of the projects combined with a series of periodic webinars where the project representatives could meet online.

When implementing BioCannDo we dug deeper into pre-identified and potentially relevant initiatives. On the internet we found even more. We held dozens of interviews with enthusiastic project representatives, but we learned that only a handful of projects actually communicate bioeconomy issues to the broader public. Why so?

On closer inspection, many initiatives sought to raise awareness among specific audiences and target groups, but had no intention of communicating to the broader public. In some cases communication was just a duty. Some projects had already been completed whilst others had yet to start and/or produce significant results.

This was both a challenge and an opportunity. **As part of the project, we therefore distinguished between a “core community” of highly relevant projects and a “broader community” of somewhat relevant initiatives.**

Dealing with a small “core community” brought advantages. It allowed us to meet online more often and also in person. It helped us intensify collaboration. It resulted in some joint events and other awareness-raising activities, thereby boosting our potential impact.

We promoted our “broader community” through a gradually expanding online map. We also invited initiatives to participate in our webinars. Lastly, we informed them about the new European Bioeconomy Network, an alliance of EU-funded projects dealing with bioeconomy promotion, communication and support.



Practical tips

- Identify key players leading a network. The value and contribution of a devoted network “champion” and other active ambassadors can hardly be overestimated;
- To help keep your network alive and the collaboration worthwhile, find and pursue a shared objective, a red-hot topic or a common challenge;
- Meeting network members offline helps to strengthen the feeling of belonging to a group. Make an effort to meet in person. Organise your own gathering if there is no recognised international event that group members could attend.

Insight #8

Invest in visibility through advertising

To engage the public in research or raise their awareness, it is important to get their attention

Today’s multimedia landscape is not only competitive, but also distracting. Every day there is information overload. For all engagement activities within the BioCannDo project, we therefore had to be creative in finding ways to reach out to our audiences and to generate visibility from our activities. **Whereas experts and professionals can be reached via sectoral networks or professional connections, the outreach to consumers and citizens requires publicity. Investing in advertising and outreach is the lifeline of any citizen participation activity.** In BioCannDo we used both digital and offline channels.

Offline advertising (e.g. flyers, posters, newspapers) worked well in small geographical areas, within neighbourhoods, for example. In contrast, the online advertising via social media generated a considerably higher reach in larger geographical areas and among a more diverse group of consumers.

Online advertising on social media, and in particular on Facebook, was used to enhance the visibility of our series of web clips. This allowed our project to be known beyond the bioeconomy’s “inner circle”.



Practical tips

- Reserve sufficient budget for effective advertising: even small amounts can make a big difference, as they generate a lot visibility on social media such as Facebook.

Bringing the concept of bioeconomy to life

The concept of the bioeconomy is still very abstract, which makes communicating about it a challenge. In BioCannDo, we wanted to address this by enriching our networking and educational activities with practical and engaging examples of how to communicate the bioeconomy. Less theory, more actual practice – that was our guiding principle.

But different audiences, like professional communicators, teachers and students require different approaches.

Firstly, we used webinars for sharing good practices. The BioCannDo webinars were specifically designed to attract communicators and educational stakeholders. By inviting representatives of other projects to join as speakers, we helped increase their outreach in the professional community, while broadening our range of examples on communication and education initiatives from across Europe.

Secondly, we also mapped educational resources in Europe, identified gaps and developed new teaching materials to explain the bioeconomy with a hands-on approach. Our teaching units with hands-on experiments for students have proven to be extremely successful at various events.

Ultimately, teaming up with key target groups and getting them involved in the BioCannDo communication and education activities has helped to increase our outreach and impact as a project.



Questions to guide your thinking

- Is there an engaging or interactive way to present the fundamental concepts of the bioeconomy? Can students and kids manipulate, make experiments or just play with the materials you are presenting?
- What have you got to offer your webinar participants?

Insight #9

Let them get their hands dirty

Experiments and practical exercises are the best way to help young students familiarise themselves with bio-based materials and get passionate about them.

To identify key educational stakeholders and select online teaching materials, we mapped educational initiatives launched in the Netherlands, Germany, Finland and Belgium: countries which are considered among the frontrunners in bio-based education. In particular, we collected primary, secondary, vocational and university educational materials related to the bioeconomy. We also monitored educational programmes about the same topic.

There are plenty of educational materials about the bioeconomy designed for university and vocational levels. Sadly, teaching resources for primary school kids are scarce: the few lesson sets developed for the youngsters are limited to sustainability and renewable energy.

Unsurprisingly, teachers in elementary and secondary schools struggle to get their classes interested in the bio-based economy.

We thought that BioCannDo could help reverse this trend by giving teachers practical examples of how they could introduce young people to the concept. We presented our “bioplastic street” at a major international exhibition in Rome: an experimental set-up with practical activities where pupils produce bio-based plastic from natural raw materials.

It was a great success! 450 people visited our stand and they proudly made their 100% bio-based plastic. Teachers can replicate the experiment in the classrooms.



Practical tips

- Rather than producing from scratch your own lesson sets, check first what's available online;
- Use your professional network to help you find the lesson sets and resources you are looking for.

Make the most of your webinars

Knowing the expectations and interests of your audience is fundamental to creating impact



We organised two series of webinars to inform our project communities and to help share knowledge. In one series we shared information and ideas on communicating about the bioeconomy to the general public. In the second, we asked people involved in developing/ teaching bio-based (online) educational materials or programmes to share their thoughts on gaps in bioeconomy education in Europe.

Webinars offer clear advantages if you want to inform people about your project activities. They cost less and save time for participants. However interaction is limited. So the question was to find out how to reach a relevant number of interested participants in our networks? We chose to combine internal and external presentations in the webinars, to help interlink projects. This led to an increasing number of regular participants. The

added value for participants – and the main challenge for us – was to identify external presentations which could present meaningful insights to the audience. We therefore organised our webinars as if we were organising physical events such as a workshop or conference. Internal and external speakers were carefully selected and briefed about our expectations towards the scope and content of their contribution. Their draft presentations were pre-checked for thematic relevance.

The practice has shown that mixing internal and external speakers works well. We had the chance to inform attendees about our project results while at the same time external speakers contributed with different topics and/or viewpoints. They can also help draw in a larger audience. Examples of external presentations included results from completed projects, successful event formats or new networks and initiatives.



Practical tips

- Schedule the webinar at or around (coffee/lunch) break time. If possible plan the webinar within days of a large relevant event that you will attend (extra promotion opportunity). Limit the webinar to one hour;
- Arrange for a webinar moderator who can help guide discussions. And ideally arrange for a note taker as well.



Chapter 3

Key facts about BioCannDo

3

CASE STUDIES

that explore the different communication scenarios on bio-based cleaning products, insulation materials and food packaging.
As part of these case studies we organised:

9

CONSUMER FOCUS GROUPS

in 4 European countries with a total of 60 participants;

3

WORKSHOPS AND INTERVIEWS

with more than 30 experts;

3

FACE TO FACE SURVEYS

with 420 consumers in total.

50+

BIOECONOMY PLAYERS

featured on our bioeconomy map.

8

WEBINARS

attended by 150 participants in total.

8

VIDEO CLIPS

that showcase the following: bio-based cleaning products, t-shirts, mugs, lipstick, soap, toys, plates and straws (with over 100,000 video plays on social media).

40+

ORIGINAL JOURNALISTIC PIECES

with more than 160,000 online views, more than 178,000 impressions on social media and more than 1,000 take-ups on external sources.

300+

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

featured on our database, including more than 200 study and university programmes in the bioeconomy.

4

STORY-TELLING KITS

on the bioeconomy: “The AllThings.Bio Slidesow”, “Bio-based household cleaning products”, “Bio-based insulation materials” and “Bio-based food packaging”.

4

FACT-SHEETS

on key messages about the bioeconomy, bio-based household cleaning products, insulation materials and food packaging.

5

POPULAR SCIENCE QUIZZES

about the bioeconomy.



Chapter 4

Interview with Erik Lohse

“The bioeconomy is an opportunity for our economy in general. We are now transitioning from an economy dependent on fossil and petroleum-based products towards one that relies on feedstock made from biomass, a renewable resource that can regenerate in a short timeframe. More than ever, people need to understand that there are not too many alternatives if we

want to sustain the fossil resources in the ground and save our climate”.

In BioCannDo we are committed to raising awareness of bio-based products among consumers. Erik Lohse from FNR is the project coordinator; he answers a few questions about the BioCannDo experience of probing the still complicated relationship between consumers and the bioeconomy.

What are the main challenges faced by those who communicate about the bioeconomy to consumers?

Consumers are not yet familiar with many terms related to the bioeconomy; it is often even unclear what “bio-based” means and this can quickly lead to misunderstandings or misconceptions. In addition, like any new product, bio-based items are under some pressure to justify themselves. Consumers want to know why they should or would want to switch to a bio-based product when the conventional one they have used up to now works well. For communicators the challenge is to inform the public about bio-based products and their properties without raising wrong expectations.

How aware are citizens about bio-based products?

Our impression is that although there is a small group of enthusiasts, bio-based products are still a closed book for many consumers. When people have a certain need, they look for a suitable product that is able to satisfy them; regardless of whether it is bio-based. On the other hand, we see another group of people who regularly use bio-based products, yet they are not fully aware about it: cleaning products are a good example. These two groups of consumers from both ends of the spectrum clearly show the knowledge gap about bio-based products.

Did you get to measure the consumers' perception of bio-based products?

Yes, we did. We conducted several focus groups in various European coun-

tries. We talked to consumers about their expectations towards cleaning products, insulation materials and food packaging and discussed the concepts behind our key messages with them. This enabled us to incorporate consumers' views directly into our own work.

What is the most common misconception you noticed?

There are far too many people who think that bio-based plastics are also biodegradable or compostable, which is not always the case. This is probably due to unclear terms and misplaced expectations. In fact, many bio-based plastics such as Bio-PET, used for drinking bottles, are as durable as conventional ones.

Why is there a need for a project like BioCannDo?

We cannot simply expect consumers to know what bio-based products are or what they offer. Therefore, we strongly need simple, direct and reliable consumer communication that will raise their awareness. We need people who will be able to explain the bioeconomy in a way that our neighbours can understand.

What makes BioCannDo different from similar projects?

In BioCannDo we crafted all of our communication activities based on a consumer's perspective. I think that with our website, AllThings.Bio, we were able to establish a unique communication portal for consumers in the field of bioeconomy.

Project description

The Bioeconomy Awareness and Discourse Project (BioCannDo)

BioCannDo is a Communication and Support Action (CSA) funded by the Bio Based Industries Joint Undertaking under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

BioCannDo runs from October 2016 to September 2019 and aims to increase the awareness and acceptance of bio-based products and to communicate their benefits to citizens. BioCannDo focuses on bio-based end products in six areas: catering, clothing, construction, gardening, home and transport.

Development of key messages

BioCannDo contributes to making the fundamentals of the bioeconomy understood by stakeholders outside the sector by producing communication and media materials from scientific and technical resources. The project has developed key communication messages about the bioeconomy with a focus on selected bio-based products: household cleaning products, insulation and food packaging materials. These key messages have been jointly developed with expert stakeholders and have been fine-tuned and tested in expert workshops and consumer focus groups.

AllThings.Bio

The project website www.AllThings.Bio provides original and existing communi-

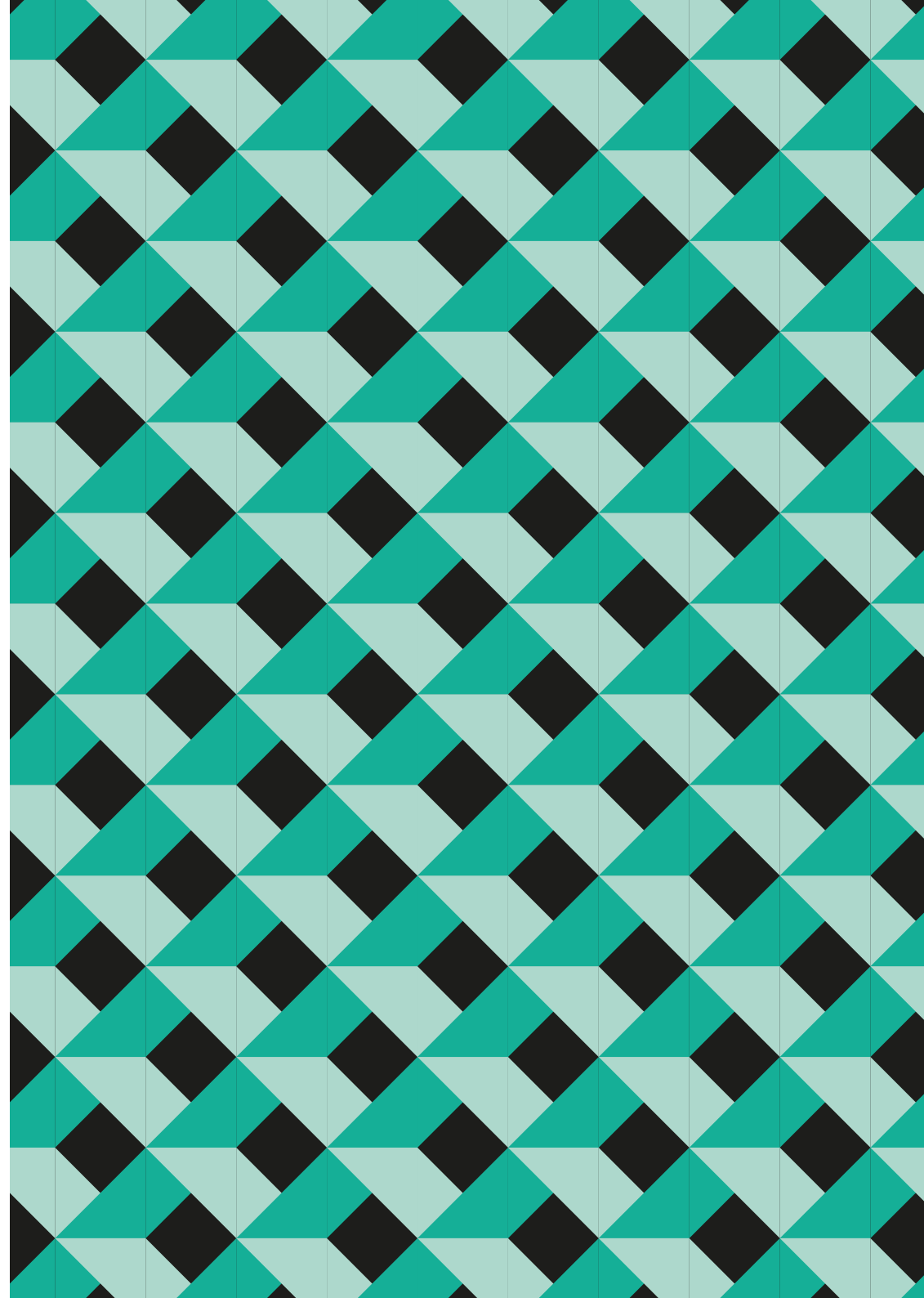
cation and educational materials about the bioeconomy and bio-based products for the general public. It is a touch point between the project and consumers looking for information and resources.

The BioCannDo communication network

BioCannDo brings together a network of stakeholders who are involved in bioeconomy (research) projects and are communicating actively about the benefits of the bioeconomy to the general public. This network is a place for sharing good practices, stories and communication formats. Network partners are listed on the AllThings.Bio bioeconomy map. BioCannDo hosts a series of biannual webinars for network partners.

The BioCannDo educational Community of Practice

BioCannDo engages with other educational players in a Community of Practice. Educational materials and teachers from primary schools up to university programmes in four countries (Germany, Finland, the Netherlands and Belgium) have been initially mapped. New educational materials have been subsequently developed. In addition, BioCannDo has launched a competition for European students to develop new lesson sets and educational resources.



BioCannDo

Bioeconomy Awareness and Discourse Project

www.AllThings.bio

The partners



fnr.de



btgworld.com



prospex.com



coebbbe.nl



youris.com



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