



# CEE2ACT

**Empowering the Central and  
Eastern European Countries to Develop  
Bioeconomy Strategies and Action Plans**

**Report on the establishment of the National Bioeconomy Hub  
and the First Workshop in Serbia**

25<sup>th</sup> October 2023



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## Introduction

This report comprehensively overviews the establishment of the National Bioeconomy Hub and first workshop held on October 6, 2023, focusing on building trust and understanding among stakeholders to develop the Serbian bioeconomy strategy. It summarizes information about the objective, participants and key outcomes of the workshop, serving as a record and reference for all stakeholders involved.

The series of workshops and the bottom-up participatory approach of the CEE2ACT project are designed to empower 10 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and beyond to develop Circular Bioeconomy Roadmaps, Strategies and Action Plans through knowledge transfer and adoption of innovative management models of developed bioeconomy countries, taking into account the relevant economic, social and environmental aspects of each country individually. Also, the goal is to create a diverse coalition of engaged and motivated actors, who will initiate changes in their countries. Through a series of national workshops, it is planned to establish ten National Bioeconomy Hubs or to cooperate with existing national initiatives. Therefore, 3 workshops will be organized within each CEE2ACT target country, one for each year of the project. The workshops are interconnected and build on each other, focusing on specific areas.

The establishment of the National Bioeconomy Hub and the first CEE2ACT workshop "Building trust and understanding between stakeholders for the development of bioeconomy strategies" was held on October 6, 2023, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. in Hall 2 of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia.

## Workshop aims

The workshop aimed to foster collaboration, trust, and understanding among stakeholders, the driving forces behind shaping Serbia's bioeconomy future. The objectives were twofold: to establish a shared vision for the national bioeconomy, uniting different players in relevant sectors, and to create broad support for bioeconomy goals and activities, with a shared commitment to local engagement and idea exchange.

## Workshop participants

The workshop brought together a diverse group of 29 participants. Twenty-one stakeholders from 20 different institutions were present, including decision-makers in the creation and implementation of policies, public administrators, actors in the primary sector of the economy, the waste sector and the bio-based industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, public enterprises, suppliers of raw materials, scientific research and educational institutions and organizations for environmental protection. It should be noted that there were no representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations. The workshop was attended by representatives of:

- Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of the Republic of Serbia - Forest Directorate

- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia - Center for Circular Economy
- Chamber of Commerce of Serbia - Association for Plant production and food industry
- Chamber of Commerce of Serbia - Association for Forestry, Wood Processing, Furniture and Paper Industry
- Public Enterprise "National Park Fruška Gora"
- Public Enterprise "National Park Kopaonik"
- Public Enterprise "National Park Tara"
- Public Enterprise "Srbijašume"
- Faculty of Forestry, University of Belgrade
- Institute for the Application of Science in Agriculture
- Institute for Plant Protection and Environment
- WWF Adria
- Regional Agency for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises Alma Mons doo
- Guarantee Fund of AP Vojvodina
- Cirekon doo
- Eko Bio Invest doo
- Foresting doo
- Mercator-S doo.

## **Workshop agenda, key content and discussions**

### **Registration and Welcome Coffee (09:30-10:00)**

The event commenced with a registration and a warm welcome over coffee, setting the stage for collaborative discussions.

### **Welcome and Introduction (10:00-10:10)**

Director Dr. Ljubinko Rakonjac, Principal Research Fellow and Dr. Nevena Čule, Senior Research Associate at the Department of Environmental Protection, Institute of Forestry extended a warm welcome and provided an introduction to the workshop.

### **Session CEE2ACT in focus (10:10-10:20)**

Dr. Nevena Čule, Senior Research Associate at the Department of Environmental Protection, Institute of Forestry gave an overview presentation of the CEE2ACT project, outlined the process and understanding of knowledge transfer within the project and showed the results of interviews conducted with stakeholders regarding the initial priorities of knowledge transfer in Serbia.



**Session Bioeconomy in focus (10:20-10:50)**

Dr. Ilija Đorđević, Research Associate at the Department of Spatial regulation, GIS and Forest Policy, Institute of Forestry and Prof. Dr. Jelena Nedeljković of Chair of Bioeconomy, Policy, and Governance in Forestry and Nature Conservation, Faculty of Forestry, University of Belgrade presented definitions of bioeconomy, scientific consensus, perspectives, and status of bioeconomy in Serbia.

**Session National Bioeconomy Hub in focus (10:50-11:00)**

Dr Ljiljana Brašanac-Bosanac, Senior Research Associate at the Department of Environmental Protection, Institute of Forestry introduced the participants to the basic information, purpose and goals of the National Bioeconomy Hub, the importance of engaging stakeholders and the conclusions after the first meetings with stakeholders.

**Session Stakeholders in focus (11:00-11:40)**

Aleksandra Vučinić, Head of the Department for Circular Economy and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia, Ivana Putnik, Senior Advisor at Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia - Center for circular economy, Milica Vračević, CEO of Regional agency for the development of small and medium size enterprises Alma Mons d.o.o., Novi Sad and Milan Veselinov, founder and CEO of CirEkon doo held presentations about their experiences and roles in the circular bioeconomy.

**Coffee Break (11:40-12:00)**

A short break provided an opportunity for participants to network and recharge.

**Session Contributing countries in focus (12:00-12:40)**

Elisabeth Schmies of Universität für Bodenkultur (BOKU), Austria, Kalle Aro of Luonnonvarakeskus (LUKE), Finland, Felix Schumacher of Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) gGmbH, Germany, Paula de la Sen of Fundación Circe centro de investigación de recursos z consumos energéticos (CIRCE), Spain and Dr. Hilke Bos-Brouwers of Stichting Wageningen Research, Institute Wageningen Food & Biobased Research (WUR) shared, through pre-recorded presentations, best practices from CEE2ACT contributing partners and showed the path they took from writing, adopting, and all the way to implementing bioeconomy strategies and action plans.

**Session Building trust through collaboration (12:40-13:10)**

An interactive session encouraged discussion, developing new ideas and knowledge sharing among all participants, fostering collaborative relationships. Participants were divided into groups with the task of answering the question about priority measures in the introduction of bioeconomy in Serbia in the forestry and agriculture sectors. All participants had the opportunity to discuss both the forestry sector and the agriculture sector.



### **Q&A, CEE2ACT next steps & wrap up (13:10-13:15)**

The Institute of Forestry team facilitated a Q&A session, discussed next steps in the CEE2ACT project, and wrapped up the formal portion of the workshop.

### **Networking Lunch (13:15-14:15)**

The workshop concluded with a networking lunch, where participants had the opportunity to extend their conversations about the National Bioeconomy Hub, exchange ideas, and build further relationships.

The video of the workshop and three interviews with stakeholders were recorded.

### **Workshop outcomes**

The workshop achieved significant results in relation to its objectives. First, it managed to bring together 29 participants from different sectors, including decision-makers in the creation and implementation of policies, public administrators, actors in the primary sector of the economy, the waste sector and the bio-based industry, small and medium-sized enterprises, public enterprises, suppliers of raw materials, scientific research and educational institutions and organizations for environmental protection which contributed to a diverse and inclusive dialogue.

Second, the workshop enabled the exchange of experiences and the creation of a network of cooperation between different actors in the field of bioeconomy. This contributed to a better understanding and connection of relevant stakeholders.

Also, the workshop laid the foundations for further activities, including the development of a national framework for the bioeconomy, which is a key step towards the development of the bioeconomy strategy in Serbia.

Finally, the workshop provided insight into the best practices of other countries and international projects, which will serve as a valuable resource for the further development of the bioeconomy in Serbia.

The remarkable level of engagement and enthusiasm displayed by the participants should be highlighted. Their active involvement, constructive discussions, and valuable suggestions truly stood out and surpassed initial expectations.

Overall, the workshop achieved its goals and contributed to strengthening the capacity and understanding of key actors in the field of bioeconomy in Serbia.

### **Challenges and Issues**

Unforeseen circumstances arose as a few stakeholders fell ill at the last moment and were unable to arrange replacements to participate in the workshop. Consequently, we had one less presentation than originally scheduled in the agenda. Additionally, it is worth noting that there were no representatives from non-governmental organizations or civil society groups in attendance.



The most significant challenge moving forward is to expand Hub's reach and inclusivity. This entails actively engaging and involving non-governmental organizations and civil society groups and other bioeconomy sectors to ensure a holistic approach to bioeconomy development in Serbia. Additionally, fostering continued commitment and collaboration among diverse stakeholders while maintaining their enthusiasm will be crucial for the Hub's success.

## Acknowledgments

We extend our gratitude to all the participants of the workshop. Your presence, active engagement, and dedication was key in ensuring the success of this significant initiative.

A special note of appreciation goes to those participants who delivered presentations during the workshop. Your expertise, the valuable exchange of experiences, and the information you shared greatly enriched our discussions and deepened our understanding of the bioeconomy.

Our profound thanks are also extended to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia for generously providing the venue for the workshop. Your support played an crucial role in making this event a reality.

Lastly, we would be remiss not to acknowledge all the other individuals and organizations that contributed to the workshop's success, including those who provided technical support, facilitated logistics, and offered administrative assistance.

To each and every one of you, thank you!

## Conclusion

The first CEE2ACT workshop of the National Bioeconomy Hub was successful in achieving its goal of building cooperation, trust, and understanding among stakeholders in Serbia.

This initiative provided a platform for key players in the bioeconomy to come together, exchange information, and discuss common goals and challenges. In addition to serving as an event for knowledge exchange, the workshop also provided a deeper understanding of bioeconomy itself, as well as the importance of its development in Serbia.

The participants had the opportunity to learn about the CEE2ACT project and how it can contribute to the sustainable development of the bioeconomy in Serbia. The workshop also gave the participants insights into best practices from other countries and allowed them to think about future initiatives and projects in the field of bioeconomy. The discussions and exchange of ideas at the workshop strengthened their willingness to collaborate on a sustainable future for the bioeconomy.

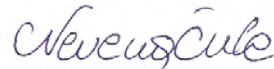
The workshop was not only a response to current challenges but also laid the foundation for future actions and further development of the national bioeconomy strategy. We expect that the results of this workshop will be reflected in future projects, collaborations, and initiatives in the field of bioeconomy in Serbia.



In short, the first workshop was successful in gathering key actors, exchanging knowledge and laying the foundations for the future development of the bioeconomy in Serbia.

On behalf of the CEE2ACT project team from the Institute of Forestry comprising: Dr. Ljubinko Rakonjac, Principal Research Fellow, Dr. Aleksandar Lučić, Senior Research Associate, Dr. Ljiljana Brašanac-Bosanac, Senior Research Associate, Dr. Goran Češljar, Senior Research Associate and Dr. Ilija Đorđević, Research Associate

Head of the Institute of Forestry team for the  
implementation of the CEE2ACT project



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Dr. Nevena Čule, Senior Research Associate