

ROAD TO BIO

COMMUNICATION GUIDE – HOW TO PROMOTE BIO-BASED PRODUCTS

Roadmap for the Chemical Industry in Europe towards a Bioeconomy
Engagement Guide



The RoadToBio: Developing a roadmap for the chemical industry towards a bioeconomy

Bio-based feedstocks in the chemical industry

The European chemical industry is committed to increase the share of bio-based feedstocks in their production processes. Bio-based products offer the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable economy and to reduce the dependency on fossil resources. The aspiration of the Bio-based Industries Consortium is to achieve a bio-based feedstock share of 25% of the total volume of organic raw materials by 2030.

Roadmap

The RoadToBio project developed a roadmap for the chemical industry, recommending actions to achieve the 25% goal. Together with a broad range of stakeholders the project team:

- Assessed the current state and opportunities for growth of bio-based feedstocks for over 500 chemicals and multiple value chains
- Identified regulatory and societal barriers for increased bio-based feedstock supply and bio-based chemical & material demand
- Formulated actions to overcome the barriers and make use of the opportunities

Roadmap elements

The roadmap consists of three elements:

- *Action plan*: summarises actions for implementing the roadmap
- *Engagement guide*: provides communication tools to promote bio-based chemicals and easy-to-read information on the roadmap
- *Strategy document*: provides in-depth background information integrating all RoadToBio research activities

This factsheet is part of the engagement guide.

Background

RoadToBio research on public perception and communication

In RoadToBio, we investigated public perception of bio-based products to identify societal barriers to market uptake. A combination of literature review and expert interviews yielded insights into consumer perceptions based on which we have made recommendations on how these barriers could be tackled. Many of these are communication-related recommendations.

Insights from European communication projects

We also reviewed findings from other European projects focused on

communication about bio-based products and the bioeconomy. We studied their key publications and conducted short interviews with project representatives, asking about their experiences and recommendations.

Target groups

The most important recommendations and references for further reading are presented in this factsheet, clustered in three target groups:

1. Business-to-business
2. Business-to-consumers
3. Business-to-civil society.

For each target group, communication channels and tools are recommended ^{1,2,3}.

Target group	European projects
Business-to-business	CommBeBiz STAR4BBI
Business-to-consumers	CommFABnet BioCannDo BIOWAYS BIOFOREVER
Business-to-civil society	InnProBio BioSTEP BIOVOICES

¹ Annex 1 in the final report of the Commission Expert Group on bio-based Products (2017)

² Dawkins, J (2004). Corporate responsibility: The communication challenge. Journal of Communication Management 9(2): 108-119

³ Messow, E; Welling, B; Zamostny, A (2018) Webinar 5, Chemie3-Webinarreihe "Nachhaltigkeit in der Unternehmenspraxis", www.chemiehoch3.de

⁴ www.roadtobio.eu/factsheet_key_messages

Key messages

Key messages are the essence of what you want to communicate. They function as bite-sized statements that articulate what you do, why you do it, how you are different, and what value you or your products bring to your stakeholders. Key messages provide the takeaway headline of the issue that is intended to be communicated.

Key messages as communication tool

Key messages can be a valuable communication tool. They should be tailored to fit your story and the targeted audience. RoadToBio produced a factsheet providing general key messages that are relevant for the chemical industry ⁴. The recommendations presented in this factsheet can help you to shape your communications and customise your key messages.

Example: key message

A lot of products on the market are already made from chemicals based on renewable biomass resources.

The chemical industry already offers a broad variety of products made from renewable resources. Some examples include: compostable plastic bags, personal care products, natural detergents, plant-based drinking bottles, planting pots for your garden or automotive parts.

Even though these products are made from biomass, they can look, feel and perform the same as conventional, fossil-based products or even better.



Communicating business-to-business

Recommendations

Be aware that "bio-based" is not on the radar of many manufacturers.

Companies are often unaware of bioeconomy terminology and characteristics of bio-based products.

Tune your communication approach to the status of the market. Businesses are preparing for increased demand for sustainable products. When communicating business-to-business, adapt your message to the status of bio-based products in different sectors.

Plan your communication about bio-based products strategically. Any communication planning should start with the questions who, where, when, why and what do you want to achieve.

Communicate in understandable and business-relevant language. Customise your messages and use language that is understood by the target audience.

Involve relevant people that tell their personal stories, for example researchers, start-ups or associations. Look for stories that are interesting and appealing and make use of tangible products that can be explained in simple terms and used to open up the dialogue.



Channel

- Specialised media (sectorial and business)
- Promotional materials
- Existing business networks
- Participation in fairs, exhibitions and conferences

Tools

- Storylines using business cases, best practices and success stories
- Provide accessible information on market trends and policies
- Provide economic, statistical and business data

Resources

Environmental Communication Guide: http://docs.european-bioplastics.org/publications/EUBP_Environmental_communications_guide.pdf

BeBizBlueprint, Guide to maximise researcher impact through communication: <https://ebn.eu/sharedResources/projects/CommBeBiz/180223%20CBB%20Blueprint.pdf>

CommBeBiz Webinar on Message Mapping: <https://youtu.be/FTxNQISB7Uo>

JRC market study factsheets on market analysis of current and potential bio-based chemicals: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/insights-european-market-bio-based-chemicals>



Communicating business-to-consumers

Recommendations

Provide simple and reliable access to key information. Informational cues such as labels, logos and infographics can help present technical concepts and the benefits in a clear, understandable and attractive way.

Be very clear about product characteristics and environmental performance. Consumers often have an inaccurate picture of bio-based products and may have unrealistically high expectations. These can lead to disappointments, negative consumption experiences and fewer repurchases. The use of misleading statements must be avoided.

Consider your audience when using the term "bio-based". Most consumers find the term confusing and abstract. For a general audience, terms such as "renewable resources" or "plant-derived" are easier to understand.

Combine new and established communication formats and channels. Explore new forms of communication and edutainment. For example games, art galleries, 60 second science videos, social media or contests. Exhibitions are also an effective tool to catch public interest. Be aware of the trade-off between uniqueness and outreach. Not all formats fit with all channels.

Bio-based itself is not a selling point. Consumers do not necessarily care if a product is bio-based or not. Communication should rather highlight personal benefits, added value (like improved performance or environmental benefits) and other positive impacts.



Channel

- On the product / label
- Marketing campaigns
- Social media, company website
- Editorial press and tv coverage
- School targeted initiatives

Tools

- Storylines focussing on bio-based products' advantages
- Schools: make use of specific bio-economy teaching materials, promote the bioeconomy as a career option

Resources

CommFabNet final brochure "Building the bioeconomy: creating impact through communication": <https://cordis.europa.eu/docs/results/289/289699/final1-commfabnet-final-publication.pdf>

BioCannDo insights: <http://www.allthings.bio/insights-from-biocannodo/>

BioWays factsheets on different bio-based products: <http://www.bioways.eu/bio-learn/factsheets/>

BIOFOREVER Insights into consumers' mindset towards bio-based products: <https://bioforever.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01/Consumers%20mindset%20towards%20bio-based%20products.pdf>

Communicating business-to-civil society

Recommendations

Engage policy stakeholders and tailor participatory activities to the national or regional context. Show policy stakeholders the added value of participation and ensure policy relevance of events such as workshops or conferences.

Keep information for policy makers simple and factual. Use understandable language and customise your messages. Translate bioeconomy research information needs into understandable and policy relevant language.

Use strong and targeted mobilisation efforts to enable successful engagement with NGOs and CSOs. For example, invite parties directly and offer compensation of expenses.

Communicate about the added value of bio-based products, other than the changed resource base. Both NGOs and policy makers agree that bio-based products should have additional benefits, other than using biomass as feedstock.

Point out to policy makers how they can use communications for their own objectives: how can this research or product lead to practical benefits for citizens in daily live?



Specific target group	Channel	Tools
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Press release• Company website• Annual reports and sustainability reports• Dialogue sessions• Stakeholder consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide data and evidence on advantages of bio-based products• Use indicators, benchmarks, targets and trends as well as case studies• Include external voices and stakeholder criticism
Public authorities and legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Press and news services• Company website• Official communications and reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storylines using case histories, best practices and networking opportunities• Provide economic data and statistics
Investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official communications and reports• Annual Reports and investor information• One-on-one meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify risks and opportunities• Highlight relevance of efforts to increase bio-based share to the business strategy and the bottom line

Resources

Commission expert group for bio-based products – General document on awareness raising on bio-based products: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/16163/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>

InnProBio factsheets about the bioeconomy and bio-based products: <http://innprobio.innovation-procurement.org/bio-based-products-services/factsheets/>

BioSTEP Recommendations – Engaging stakeholders and citizens in the bioeconomy: http://www.bio-step.eu/fileadmin/BioSTEP/Bio_documents/BioSTEP_Research_Recommendations_final.pdf

BioVoices Report on identification of quadruple-helix stakeholders' interests and motivations: <https://www.biovoices.eu/results/public-results>



www.roadtobio.eu

Consortium:



This project has received funding from the Bio Based Industries Joint Undertaking under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 745623.

