COMMUNICATION GUIDE – HOW TO PROMOTE BIO-BASED PRODUCTS

Roadmap for the Chemical Industry in Europe towards a Bioeconomy

Engagement Guide
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.  

**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 intend 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. 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.

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4 www.roaddobio.eu/factsheet_key_messages
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.

Involves 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.

Resources


CommBeBiz Webinar on Message Mapping: https://youtu.be/fTxNQlSB7Uo

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Tools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• On the product / label</td>
<td>• Storylines focusing on bio-based products’ advantages</td>
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<td>• Marketing campaigns</td>
<td>• Schools: make use of specific bioeconomy teaching materials, promote the bioeconomy as a career option</td>
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<td>• Social media, company website</td>
<td>• Editorial press and tv coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School targeted initiatives</td>
<td>• BioWays factsheets on different bio-based products: <a href="http://www.bioways.eu/bio-learn/factsheets/">http://www.bioways.eu/bio-learn/factsheets/</a></td>
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Resources


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?

Resources


Consortium:

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