

## Report on round table of Bio Base NWE with IWG bioeconomy (29<sup>th</sup> of September 2015)

### Present

*Tom Creten (EWI), Marc Meeus (AO), Yleni De Neve (LNE), Eva Van Buggenhout (LV), Inge Arents (IWT), Ann Braekevelt (OVAM), Ludo Diels (VITO), Dries Desloover (ANB), Willy Verbeke (ANB), Giovanni Pauwels (VDAB), Klaas Van Cauwenbergh (Mow), Saar Van Hauwermeiren (LNE),*

*Dirk Carrez (Cleverconsult), Brecht Vanlerberghe (BBEPP), Lieve Hoflack (BBEPP), Sofie Dobbelaere (GBEV), Stefan Ruyters (GBEV)*

### Agenda

Presentation Bio Base NWE project (Stefan Ruyters)

Presentation 'Hurdles SME encounter in the bio-based economy in North West Europe' (Dirk Carrez)

Presentation and discussion of three recommendations and actions for Flanders (Stefan Ruyters, all)

### Annexes

Full report 'Hurdles SME encounter in the bio-based economy in North West Europe'

Round Table preparation document Recommendations for Flanders

Presentation Round table with IWG bioeconomy

CINBIOS roadmap KET Industrial biotechnology

FIT brochure 'Flanders and the bioeconomy'

### Discussion points

#### Action 1 Cluster organisation representing the bio-based economy

Tom Creten (EWI) asks how this cluster organization should look like and how it relates to already existing initiatives in Flanders. A real cluster, a virtual cluster, a collaboration among other clusters? How to cover the multisectoral character of the biobased economy? Inge Arents (IWT) and Ann Braekevelt (OVAM) think that all aspects (technological and non-technological) involved in the bio-based economy should be covered by this cluster organization (biomass production, logistics, policy, waste, ...). The complexity of the biobased economy might be a hurdle, say IWG members, ending up in an organization which is too big to manage. Too much stakeholders have to be involved to cover the bio-based economy. Brecht Vanlerberghe (BBEPP) stresses that the emerging and multisectoral character and the fact that a transition has to be achieved calls for coordination and support. IWT and OVAM stress the importance of ad hoc projects, specific projects that include all necessary stakeholders. Inge Arents argues that biobased projects are evaluated along other project proposals

and are granted when deemed excellent. She also reminds on potential funding sources that are not properly used. Ann Braekevelt argues that a focus should be made for the coming 5 years to avoid fragmentation. Sofie Dobbelaere (GBEV) reminds the IWG on the 4 value chains that have been proposed in the CINBIOS roadmap for industrial biotechnology and the biobased economy and that have large potential for Flanders. Flanders should focus on the execution of these value chains. It is unclear however how this could be achieved or implemented in current funding schemes. Ludo Diels (VITO) regrets that some projects do not have any follow up. He refers to the coupon scheme to support development phase projects as in the Bio Base NWE project, which implies structural measures rather than ad hoc projects.

**Conclusion:** *there is a need for a light umbrella organization (e.g. cluster) focusing on the bio-based economy in general, collaborating with existing structures (covering individual sectors, e.g. food, agriculture, chemistry, industrial biotechnology, ...) where possible, and stimulating networking between the sectors. It should be a single point of contact. Focus of the bio-based economy should be based on the 4 value chains defined by the CINBIOS roadmap.*

After this discussion, Bio Base NWE partners, however, also point at the lack of visibility in Flanders. This was already noticed before (EWI study 2012), as mentioned by Dirk Carrez (Cleverconsult). Ludo Diels also pinpoints that branding of the bio-based economy in Flanders is important. Dirk Carrez compares with neighboring countries and gives examples of interregional collaborations (UK-Norway, France-Wallonia, France-The Netherlands, France-Germany). GBEV collaborates with other regions in the framework of projects (H2020 and Interreg) and within Big-C. Stefan Ruyters (GBEV) notices that a lot of projects with Flemish partners are going on in the bio-based economy. Also, the Flemish government financially supports such projects (eg Interreg). This would also be an important aspect of the cluster organization: creating visibility in EU, stimulate interregional collaboration, attracting investments. It is not a matter of a lack of funding, or funding schemes, but a lack of a common umbrella to show that Flanders is big in the bio-based economy.

**Conclusion:** *this umbrella organization should put a focus on creating visibility within EU, promoting Flemish expertise, stimulating international collaboration, and attracting possible investments. Collaboration with FIT is essential. Initiatives in neighboring regions could be analyzed as possible benchmarks (best practices).*

Eva Van Buggenhout (LV) asks what sector federations and other actors are waiting for to collaborate in the bioeconomy and to think about how a cluster could be created. She states that the Flemish government could then be open for concrete proposals to look into. The government can facilitate, but cannot do everything on their own. It's important to come up with bottom-up initiatives. Brecht Vanlerberghe (BBEPP) stresses that some innovations will not grow bottom up or don't find a place at existing structures due to its emerging and multisectoral character (e.g. logistics for the bio-based economy), especially in the bio-based economy. A transition cannot be achieved bottom up only. It is unclear how the new cluster policy fits with the request.

## **Action 2 Specific support for Development and Innovation**

The Operational Programme Flanders 2014-2020 makes reference to the desirability to broaden (also non technological aspects) and to prolong support within innovation projects to increase chances for successful market penetration, as instruments "proeftuinen" or "testing grounds" are suggested.

The IWG confirms the interest in such instruments but IWT & AO affirm that actually there is no such instrument and no new calls scheduled, not in 2015, nor in 2016. Should be put on the agenda.



### **Action 3 Attention for bio-based in green public procurement**

Tom Creten stated that Flanders is going for 100% sustainable public procurement, and 3% innovative procurement. He stresses themes such as biobased procurement, circular procurement, etc. would fit well to achieve those objectives. Any programmes should also be in line with EU policy. Dirk Carrez mentions that he, as requested by EWI, and OVAM are taking part in an EU expert group on green public procurement, see also

[http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/biotechnology/bio-based-products/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/biotechnology/bio-based-products/index_en.htm)