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## Press Release

To be released immediately

20 October 2021

# **BIOCIRCULARCITIES to explore the circular economy potential of unexploited bio-based waste streams**

**Building on the potential of bio-based waste to accelerate the transition to circular bioeconomy, a new EU-funded project has been launched to analyse economically and environmentally efficient models for biowaste management in a bid to unlock innovative and comprehensive bioeconomy solutions.**

*Brussels, Belgium* – Although bioeconomy and circular economy overlap to a degree, there is still much potential to make bioeconomy strategies more circular. Bioeconomy, which aims at promoting sustainable production of natural resources from biomass rather than fossil and mineral-based resources, has the potential to boost the transition to a green and sustainable society. But several obstacles still must be addressed. One of the key elements to boost circular bioeconomy strategies is biowaste. There is not only a need to increase cooperation between the different stakeholders of the biowaste chain but also to implement a better management of biowaste at local level and provide a regulatory framework fitted to the challenges. By identifying biowaste streams with high potential as resources, preventing losses, improving collection, and focusing on quality, it will be possible to make local bioeconomy strategies more circular.

Since the beginning of the month, a new BBI JU-funded project<sup>1</sup> will help to understand the limits and opportunities of unexploited biowaste streams. For two years, BIOCIRCULARCITIES will explore the development of economically and environmentally efficient models for biowaste management to foster the transition to a circular bioeconomy. Eight partners from six countries will work together and roll-out pilot studies in three urban and rural contexts: Barcelona (Spain), Naples (Italy) and Pazardzhik (Bulgaria). Each pilot will focus on one specific value-chain and explore possibilities to make it more circular.

**“Biocircularcities will contribute to the main challenges established by the EU legislation on bio-waste management and circular economy. We expect to provide significant contributions in the areas of innovative waste collection and treatment, and in the obtention of high-value bioproducts.”**

**Rosaria Chifari, project coordinator<sup>1</sup> at Fundació ENT, lead partner of BIORCIRCULARCITIES**

<sup>1</sup> The [Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking \(BBI JU\)](#) is a €3.7 billion Public-Private Partnership between the European Union and the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC). Until today, BBI JU has funded 142 bio-based innovation projects involving 1,055 beneficiaries from 39 EU Member States and Associated Countries.

The BIOCIRCULARCITIES partners will identify existing best practices for circular use of bioresources across Europe and analyse case studies in which bio-waste is underexploited. Lessons learnt from these practices and insights into circular bioeconomy regulations and policy instruments will enable partners to map barriers and opportunities that will in turn feed guidelines and policy recommendations supporting the implementation of “biocircularcities” in Europe.

“Biowaste, and food waste in particular, is a topic of utmost importance for ACR+. Results from the first cohort of the “More Circularity, Less Carbon” campaign highlight the significant impact of food losses and waste regarding climate change. Within BIOCIRCULARCITIES, ACR+ will help the pilot territories to involve local stakeholders with living labs, so that they can both benefit from the project’s outcomes, but also provide their input on the activities. Besides, ACR+ plans to engage its members through peer-reviews workshops and capacity building sessions to enable them to bring their own perspectives and experiences to the project, and learn from the consortium.”

Jean-Benoît Bel, programme manager at ACR+

The collaboration of all stakeholders of the biowaste chain is essential to develop innovative and efficient solutions to circular biowaste management. Thus, BIOCIRCULARCITIES will follow a multi-actor participatory approach. It will engage the 4 segments of the “quadruple helix” (industry, science, civil society, and policy) in local living labs to build the collaborative knowledge needed to map the different perspectives about legal and market limits and potentials for developing circular bioeconomy.

Partners met online for the first time on 14-15 October to discuss the project’s first steps. These include establishing a state of the art of biowaste chains in the three pilots and studying the current EU, national and regional legal framework on circular bioeconomy.

For more information, please consult [www.bbi.europa.eu/projects/biocircularcities](http://www.bbi.europa.eu/projects/biocircularcities)

If you would like to follow this project, subscribe to its mailing list [here](#).

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Bio-based Industries Consortium

BIOCIRCULARCITIES has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon research and innovation program H2020-BBI-JTI-2020 under Grant Agreement No 101023516

*The Association of Cities and Regions for sustainable Resource management (ACR+) is an international network of cities and regions sharing the aim of promoting sustainable resource management and accelerating the transition towards a circular economy on their territories and beyond. The network, gathering around 90 members, is open to other key players in the field of material resource management such as NGOs, academic institutions, consultancies or private organisations. Members’ needs and priorities define the network’s activities, which include facilitating the exchange of experiences between members, sharing technical and policy information and livening up the network. To strengthen the knowledge and capacities of the network and push for innovation in the field of material resource management, ACR+ is also involved in several projects at European level and in the Mediterranean region, in cooperation with its members.*

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