

THE 2ND RTO INNOVATION SUMMIT

Industrial technologies for the future

The Biobased Side of Circular Economy

Session Summary

18 November 2020

The bioeconomy is the production, utilization and conservation of renewable resources to provide sustainable solutions for all economic sectors and enable a transformation to a sustainable economy. It affects our daily life - what we eat and what our everyday objects, like clothes and packages, are made of. The bioeconomy and circular economy both address sustainability and seek to optimize product design, material flows and resource efficiency.

The goal of Green Deal to move towards a resource-efficient and carbon neutral EU by 2050 requires us to replace carbon intensive materials like plastics, concrete and steel. The only alternatives that we have are renewable biobased solutions, and this puts the bioeconomy in the heart of the Green Deal. The bioeconomy is also central to achieve the climate objectives of the Paris Agreement.

In this session it was illustrated how Bioeconomy can contribute to a Circular Economy. It was shown how RTOs can contribute to this challenge by collaboration with industry, in particular with SMEs, on novel innovations that will help the transition towards a sustainable future. Examples were given in the areas of textiles, packaging, and upcycling of unused biomass into e.g. products for the food and feed industry. It was discussed that a strong support from the EU is needed not only for the funding for research and investments, but also a policy landscape that promotes the future market for sustainable, bio-based products.

It was thus concluded that the RTOs have a crucial role in translating new scientific discoveries into new business opportunities and that common strategies, policies, regulations and support are needed for a fair competition with uncircular material and products for Europe to cease the business opportunities and catalyze its transition into a circular economy.