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Supporting Research Impact in the Bioeconomy: The CommBeBiz BeBizBlueprint



Key external stakeholders:

Researchers, EC, Funders, Academia & Research Institutes, Industry, Communicators, Innovation Intermediaries.

Practical implications for stakeholders:

The BeBizBlueprint is a report providing top-line messages directed at the sectors, organisations and agencies that make up the 'Ecosystem' that surrounds and supports the Bioeconomy research community.

- The CBB project assessed the needs, behaviours and motivations of the Bioeconomy researcher throughout their journey to innovation.
- The aim of the BeBizBlueprint is to provide validated experiences to fuel and support discussion, with and between the organisations that make up the 'Ecosystem', to improve the capability and capacity of the research community to move more swiftly to innovation.
- 20 key messages, based on the experiences and insights of delivering the CommBeBiz (CBB) pilot project and its activities with researchers, have been developed to stimulate reflection and discussion amongst key stakeholders to better support the researcher to achieve impact and innovation.
- In addition, this document contains summaries of the communications, training, networking and support activities delivered by the CBB Consortium, including feedback and overall observations.

Main results:

The aim and ambition of the BeBizBlueprint is to provide content that encourages reflection by the organisations that make up the research community's 'Ecosystem' on how they may better support researchers on their journey to innovation. Based on CommBeBiz's experience, partners believe that a rethink is essential on how research cohorts can be provided with, not only the skills development and consistent support required for effective outreach and communications, but also how and on what basis they will be rewarded for such activity. Without this rethink, it is doubtful that researchers will consistently deliver the full potential of their funded research in terms of commercial, societal, policy or scientific innovation. The Bioeconomy is an idea, ambition and challenge that requires passionate ambassadors to drive this innovation across all stakeholders. Researchers can fulfil this role if they are given the tools, opportunity and motivation to do so. Researchers themselves must also play a part in this rethink, embracing the need for continual development of their outreach skills and seeking out opportunities to engage with industry, policy-makers, mainstream media, social media and society.

Opportunity / Benefit:

The BeBizBlueprint can be accessed on: <https://commbebiz.eu/>

Collaborating Institutions:

Minerva (United Kingdom), PRACSIS (Belgium), and EBN Innovation Network (Belgium)

Teagasc project team: Dr. Maeve Henchion (PI)
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1. Project background:

CommBeBiz (CBB) was a three-year (2015-18) H2020 Communications & Support Action (CSA) project that championed and supported over 270 Bioeconomy projects and their individual researchers to communicate their ideas, work and results to their targeted stakeholders. The CBB Consortium consisted of four communications, research and innovation expert groups from across Europe which have worked together to explore, develop and deliver workable solutions to motivating and inspiring the researcher.

2. Questions addressed by the project:

The aim of CommBeBiz was to drive efficient innovation and exploitation of European bioeconomy research for environmental good and/or for commercial and societal benefits.

3. The main activities:

CBB has brought KBBE FP7, Horizon 2020 and other EC Bioeconomy funded research programmes together with knowledge transfer, social innovation, policy development and communication experts, SMEs and entrepreneurs. The CBB project has engaged with projects with a focus on social innovation, public good and policy as well as those driving innovations with commercial potential. This is particularly apt for the Bioeconomy sector where it is vital to understand and help drive perception, engagement and behaviour change in society and among individual consumers, as well as engaging with targeted policy and commercial stakeholders. The CBB project was designed as a 'Pilot Project' to record the experience and effectiveness of all its actions and activities, primarily from members, participants' and partners' viewpoints, but also from the perspectives of other practitioners and external agencies. Activities included resource provision, networking opportunities, bursaries, skills training, competitions, and communications and outreach support.

4. Main results:

The development of complementary skills of researchers is essential if the EU is to achieve the innovation goals of the Bioeconomy. As the European research agenda becomes increasingly focused on problem-oriented research and research-based innovation, CBB has observed an increase in the number of initiatives specifically targeted at supporting researchers to become communicators, innovators and entrepreneurs. However, for these initiatives to be effective, it is vital to understand the perspectives and motivations of the individual researchers who are the recipients of these supports as their enthusiasm, co-operation and engagement is a key factor in determining the overall success of these initiatives. All CBB activities were measured for their effectiveness. The experiences and feedback gained from each of these activities, through a survey or by qualitative feedback, have been analysed and scrutinised to establish how CBB can not only inspire the researcher to take part, but also provide them with the most efficient and effective networking and training opportunities. These reflections and learnings from the project's experiences are documented in the *BeBizBlueprint*. The *BeBizBlueprint* lists 20 key messages targeted at different stakeholders and aims to inform future strategies and projects as to which activities, from CBB's perspectives, have the potential to be most effective to support researchers and to drive outreach and innovation.

5. Opportunity/Benefit:

- The *BeBizBlueprint* document itself is being shared with the Bioeconomy research community, the European Commission, industry, national funders, academia and the media. Specific meetings are being held in different countries.
- The *BeBizBlueprint*, together with all the resources and reports generated by the project, are available on the project's website www.commbebiz.eu.
- The CommBeBiz Consortium welcomes discussion and further insights from all stakeholders regarding the content of this document. To contact the consortium, email commbebiz@minervacomms.net.

6. Dissemination:

- Henchion, M & Regan, Á. (2017). Exploring researchers' deliberations on the role of altmetrics in science: preliminary findings from an online qualitative study. Oral Presentation at the 11th International European Forum on System Dynamics and Innovation in Food Networks.
- Regan, Á. (2017, January). Supporting Knowledge Transfer and Innovation in the Bioeconomy in Europe. SUSFOOD2 ERA-NET Kickoff Meeting: ERA-Net Cofund on SUSTainable FOOD production and consumption. Rome, Italy.
- Regan, Á. (2017, February). A qualitative study of social media use by food researchers in Ireland and the UK. Twilight Communications Workshop at Bioeconomy Impact 2017: The Journey to Innovation. London, United Kingdom.
- Regan, Á. (2017, February). Introduction to the CommBeBiz Project. Meat co-products Workshop – ReValueProtein Project. Dublin, Ireland.
- Regan, Á. & Henchion, M. (2017). Social media: can it connect science and society? TRResearch, Issue 12(1). [Online magazine]. Available online at: <https://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2017/tresearch-spring-2017.php>. ISSN 1649-8917.
- Regan, Á. (2016, April). What does the bioeconomy mean to you? CommBeBiz Media Satellite Workshop at the Bioeconomy Stakeholders Conference. Utrecht, The Netherlands.
- Regan, Á and Henchion, M. (2016, August). Science Communication via Social Media: To Tweet or not to Tweet? Paper presented at the 18th World Congress of Food Science & Technology. Dublin, Ireland.
- Regan, Á. & Henchion, M. (2016). Communicating the bioeconomy through images. TRResearch, Issue 11(1). [Online magazine]. Available online at: <https://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2016/tresearch-spring-2016.php>. ISSN 1649-8917. ISSN 1649-8917.
- Regan, Á. (2015). Supporting effective knowledge transfer. Irish Food Magazine, Issue 5. [Online magazine]. Available online at: <http://www.irishfoodmagazine.com/editions/2015>.

7. Compiled by: Dr. Áine Regan and Dr Maeve Henchion