

Press release

nova-Institut GmbH (www.nova-institute.eu)

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Making the most of sustainable biomass – certification schemes and labels developed in new EU research projects

nova-Institut GmbH announces its participation in two new HORIZON Europe projects – STAR4BBS and BIORECER – which both focus on the development of innovative certification schemes and labels for bio-based feedstock.

Following a successful kick-off meeting in Berlin in September 2022, the new HORIZON Europe research project STAR4BBS sets out to improve sustainability certification schemes (SCS) and labels to support the transition towards a sustainable bio-based economy. Besides identifying suitable indicators, the project focusses on developing a novel biomass monitoring system. The latter supports the assessment of the effectiveness and robustness of established international and EU SCS and B2B labels and their associated traceability systems applicable to biological feedstock, bio-based materials and products.

The knowledge generated will provide the basis for the urgently needed harmonisation of schemes, and increase the transparency of global and EU trade flows.

Shedding light on the biomass label landscape through novel monitoring systems

With industry actors striving to achieve sustainability goals, the bio-based economy is becoming an increasingly important pillar for the transition towards a renewable carbon and zero-pollution economy. To fully realise its potential, guidance is needed to help industry and other actors along the value chain choose best possible solutions for their sustainability goals. This is particularly important in light of an increasing number of international and national regulations, initiatives and agreements related to sustainable biomass and bio-based materials and products that intensify pressure.

In this context, SCS and labels can provide valuable guidance. However, over the past decade an unprecedented landscape of different certification schemes and labels has emerged. While the proliferation of schemes and labels is generally viewed as positive, it has led to an excessive competition between different schemes. This has created confusion for potential users along the value chain, and has increased green washing potential, raising questions about the effectiveness and robustness of current certification schemes. Indicators and the innovative monitoring system developed in STAR4BBS will address these issues and provide evidence and recommendations to encourage the implementation of effective and robust SCS and labels by multiple different stakeholders.

Testing nova's Biomass Utilisation Factor (BUF) in the BIORECER project

In the course of the following years, nova-experts participate in further EU-projects focussing on certification schemes, e.g. the HORIZON Europe project BIORECER. The project aims at assessing the best possible environmental performance and traceability of biological feedstocks used in the bio-based industry. BIORECER will evaluate the impact of current and established certification schemes on consumers and bio-based industry stakeholders. Furthermore, the project will examine the acceptance of novel value chains from biological feedstocks, including residual feedstock and waste.

The project will further test the suitability of Biomass Utilisation Factor (BUF), developed by nova-Institute in several European research project and finally published in July 2022. This novel indicator enables to capture the circularity of biomass under consideration of both the cascading use principle and the efficiency of the biomass utilisation. The concept is used to calculate how often and how efficient a material is kept in use, starting with the initial biomass input in the first product stage to its use in potential further product stages. BIORECER will validate the effectiveness of BUF and other indicators within four bio-based value chains: pruning from trees, waste from fruit and olive processing, by-products from cereal crops and by-products from fodder and industrial crops.

Find the full publication on the Biomass-Utilisation Factor and other nova publications at <https://renewable-carbon.eu/publications/>.

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