



Periodic Webinar No. 2

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D3.11
WP 3

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Bioeconomy Awareness and Discourse Project H2020-BBI-PPP-2015-2-1

Technical References

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Project Coordinator	Erik Lohse Fachagentur Nachwachsende Rohstoffe E.Lohse@fnr.de
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¹ PU = Public

PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)

RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)

CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

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Publishable Summary

This deliverable reports about the second of a series of networking webinars that will be held 6-monthly in the frame of the BioCannDo project with the purpose of exchanging information and ideas on communicating about the bioeconomy to the general public.

This second webinar covered on the one hand selected results of a German project assessing public perception of bioplastics and on the other hand general key messages on the bioeconomy being drafted by the BioCannDo project.

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1 Introduction

The Bioeconomy Awareness and Discourse Project (BioCannDo) aims to increase awareness of bio-based products – products partly or wholly made of biomass - among the general public. The project will develop and distribute communication and educational materials about the bioeconomy and bio-based products: articles, videos, information sheets and other items for a general audience. BioCannDo facilitates access to trustworthy resources through the website: www.AllThings.Bio. The goal is to develop clear, scientifically sound messages about bio-based products that can be easily understood by European citizens. The project aims to increase acceptance of bio-based products and engages EU citizens in the new bioeconomy.

In WP3 a network of “projects” (which includes projects, initiatives, organisations, networks, communities, clusters, platforms, etc.) engaged in the communication to a broader public will be set up. Relevant “projects” will be identified and classified according to their level of involvement in the BioCannDo network. Every six months a webinar will be organised with the engaged network partners, communication experts, and other interested stakeholders. In the webinars information and ideas of relevant partners or content will be presented and exchanged.

This report documents the **second** in this series of webinars.

2 Webinar implementation

The webinar was held on Thursday 19 October 2017. It included two official presentations, each followed by a Q&A session (all are attached in the Annex). 29 external persons registered and 23 persons attended. Not counting the BioCannDo team members there were 18 external participants. The number of participants was similar, but the actual set of participants quite different, to those participating in the first Communication Network webinar, held in March 2017.

In the first presentation Julia-Maria Blesin (Hochschule Hannover) and Florian Klein (Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf) informed about the BiNa project. BiNa is a national research project that investigates how German consumers perceive bio-based plastics and what should be taken into account when communicating and presenting these products. This was investigated using a variety of instruments, including a public survey via online-access-panel, website analysis, focus groups, expert groups, expert interviews and experiments.

Julia-Maria Blesin reported *inter alia* about:

- Public perception: (a) Low awareness (b) Media is the No. 1 source.
- Low level of knowledge, but high expectations, that will most likely be disappointed.
- Wording: the term „*Bioplastics*“ leads to misunderstandings, especially regarding sustainability/environmental benefits.
- Wording: Plastics labelled „*biodegradable*“ are assumed to be compostable. Compostability is associated with disposal in the bio-waste bin or home compost.

Florian Klein reported *inter alia* about:

- Confusion/comprehensibility of the terms “*bioplastics*” and “*biodegradable*”
- Preference for separate application of the terms “*biodegradable*” and “*bio-based*”
- Usage of the chemical term of the material (yes vs. no)
- Wish of standardization of terms
- Preference for “*Plastics made from renewable resources*” instead of “*Bio-based plastics*”
- 12% of respondents ever consciously made a purchase decision for a product made of bioplastics
- Respondents that did primarily bought disposable bioplastic products

Next, attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and/or give other feedback. More than 15 questions were raised, dealing with a wide range of issues, including survey arrangements, terminology, comparing fossil and bio-based plastics, the relevance of labelling, different roles/channels in communication, targeting of specific groups (including children and pupils), etc.. Several comments were also made. Most questions could be answered during the webinar, but due to time limitations a few questions had to be answered afterwards.

In the second presentation project coordinator Erik Lohse (FNR) informed about the process applied in BioCannDo to develop general and specific key messages, and presented **draft** general key messages, which currently read as follows:

1. Any product you can make from oil you can theoretically make from **biomass**.
2. Bio-based products can help to **protect our climate** by reducing CO₂ emissions.
3. A lot of bio-based **products are available** on the market already.
4. Bio-based products can provide **new and better functionalities**. Bio-based construction materials can provide a healthy and comfortable home, bio-based food packaging material can ensure a longer shelf-life and bio-based cleaning products can be more environmentally friendly.
5. The bioeconomy **contributes to a circular economy**, which helps us to move away from a linear economy of “take, make and dispose”.
6. A sustainable bioeconomy can permanently **secure global raw material supply without threatening food security, nature or biodiversity**.
7. The bioeconomy **can create jobs** in underdeveloped areas.

Also after this presentation the opportunity was given to ask questions, make comments and/or give other feedback. A dozen or so questions were raised, the majority dealing with the development, testing and publication of the draft key messages. All but one of the questions were answered during the webinar, and a single one was answered afterwards.

The presentations given and a comprehensive overview of questions received and answers given (excluding simple questions for clarification) are presented in the Annexes. As this is a public deliverable it was decided (a) to anonymize the questions and (b) to not include the webinar participant list.

We very much appreciate the feedback received and this will be carefully considered in the implementation of BioCannDo.

3 Annexes

Attached is the Integrated presentation 2nd Communication Network Webinar, combining

- a. Moderator's Introduction – John Vos (BTG)
- b. BiNa: Perceptions and challenges – bioplastics at their turning point to consumer communications. Julia-Maria Blesin (HS Hannover) & Florian Klein (HS Weihenstephan-Triesdorf)
- c. BioCannDo Key Messages Bioeconomy – Erik Lohse (FNR)

Below an overview is presented of the Questions & Answers sessions that followed the two key presentations.

Questions & answers after/regarding the BiNa presentation

Question	Answer (Verbal)
Were the respondents of your market survey part of a consumer panel and therefore paid for their participation?	We had different surveys. One was the big online survey. It is well-known I guess that the participants of surveys get incentives for their participation, but still it is representative.
Have you made any suggestions for 'better words' (more explanatory) to describe bio-based plastics? At least in Germany? If yes, have you checked these with customers?	(FK) Yes, we did that in my colleague's survey. It showed that a different term, " <i>plastics made of renewable resources</i> ", had a better understanding of consumers, and was easier adopted, in terms of association. (JMB) From a corporate communication perspective I would definitely recommend to specify, to not only say " <i>bioplastics</i> ", due to the problems we just laid out, but to be more specific. To talk about " <i>plastics made from renewable resources</i> ". The best would maybe be to specify the raw material basis, like " <i>plastics made from corn</i> " or something like that. And of course you need also to have all the other important information, like what is the percentage of the corn, or starch, basis ... and maybe it there is some different raw material within this bio-based plastic you communicate about this should be laid out as well.
Just a comment that it is very good that you did a representative survey to show the real state of knowledge instead of only surveying interested niches!	Thank you. This big representative survey we did was actually the first one that was conducted, even within Europe. Before we started the survey we studied literature and so on, and we could not find any representative research. There had been other focus groups, and other qualitative research models regarding the perception of bio-based plastics. This (= <i>BiNa results</i>) is really a good starting point for more research, but also for developing communication strategies.

<p>You have showed interesting results. What will be the follow-up to the presented work?</p>	<p>The BiNa project will end in March 2018. By then we will publish a book. It will cover our most important research findings. There will also be paper containing recommendations how to communicate about bioplastics, available through the website (URL: http://ifbb.wp.hs-hannover.de/bina/). You can always check the BiNa website for ongoing research and publications. We will publish a working paper pretty soon (next month) on our survey findings and results.</p>
<p>Did the online survey involve only German participants or was it also available in other European countries?</p>	<p>No, it was just for German (-speaking) participants, aged 16 and older. It was part of a national research project. The objective was to find out how Germans perceive bioplastics.</p>
<p>Have you, based on your study, any suggestion to explain this complex stuff to Children? As a NGO we work on education project on primary schools.</p>	<p>(FK) A few months ago I had to explain our project to children. I think it is a good idea to bring complex things to people. But still it IS a complex thing. You can't just lake out all the complexities, the term issue. I am not sure whether that would be enough to solve it. (JMB) I did a couple of expert interviews, with NGO's, other civil actors, also political actors. This one political actor I talked to she was also talking about education and how bioplastics should happen there. She actually resumed that it is not very likely that kids in school will learn about bioplastics, just because of bioplastics, but it should be integrated in relevant context. It should be more on the education agenda how to dispose different products and how to recycle them, how to use them, about circular economy, and within this context bioplastics should be a part of course. But currently we are not working on strategies, or on materials for schools, how to communicate about bioplastics. I think children or younger students are definitely a target group.</p>
<p>Which media channels would be most promising to spread information?</p>	<p>This depends on who is speaking, who is spreading the message. If you are a NGO, you have your target group. If you are a company selling a bio-based product you want to reach different people maybe. We are going to look into if we can identify media types, like different types that need to be addressed though media. We are not there yet, this is something we look into. What we can say is that TV is still a very important medium that reaches a lot of people so this could be a way. But really it depends on what is your target group, and what are they looking for. Are they looking more for information or more for entertainment? This decides which media you are going to choose</p>
<p>We did a representative survey in 5 European countries. With the similar results as you presented. Thus consumer consider the concept of "bio" not meaningful. See www.open-bio.eu</p>	<p>(Editor's info) Open-Bio = Opening bio-based markets via standards, labelling and procurement (FP7 project). WUR led research assessing social acceptance factors. Three target groups were investigated: consumers (through qualitative focus groups), the business community and public procurement officials (through separate two-stage Delphi surveys)</p>

How are you engaging with the media, considering that they seem to be an important multiplier?	The BiNa project is not talking to the media. We are researching the perceptions and what is going into public discourse right now. And we are trying to develop strategies but on a very broad level. We are not communicating or advising from a certain perspective. We are no pro-bioplastic or con-bioplastic. We are just analysing the status quo, in the end to try to give some advice what's not to recommend and what is recommendable, and then whoever is communicating about bioplastics can use our research results/findings to develop their own strategies. We do not doing any media relations right now.
Are BBPs in Germany labelled as such? Is it clear for the customers to 'recognise' them from the packaging?	(Post-webinar info) (JMB) There is no duty to declare yet. There are standards (and certifications/labels) to base product claims on. See e.g. http://www.european-bioplastics.org/bioplastics/standards/labels/ . But I would not recommend using these labels for communication towards consumers. There are stakeholders who find the seedling misleading for consumers. Consumer-relevant labels might be Fair Trade for the raw materials. And there are discussions within the industry on what conditions bioplastics might be able to become certified under the eco- label.
Did you ask people during the survey whether a proper labelling could help them?	(Post-webinar info) (FK) Not in this survey, but a former colleague of mine did. She found out that labelling could help consumers in their decision behaviour.
Did the panel see a role for retail (supermarkets) to communicate about bioplastics?	(Post-webinar info) (JMB) Within the public survey, retail was not explicitly mentioned. We asked participants whose statements/information about bioplastics they would trust the most though. Answer options included <i>inter alia</i> environmental organisations, scientists, companies who work with bioplastics, as well as companies in general. These would include retail. As I've learned from interviewing bioplastics stakeholders, retail is assigned a very important role when it comes to communicating about bioplastics to the public/consumers. But in fear of being accused of greenwashing, retailers also might be very critical regarding the products they list.
Did you make any 'comparisons' between BBPs and 'traditional' plastics in a form of 'brochures' / 'give aways' / explanatory material to be used during interaction with citizens? Such material would clarify the difference of the 2 types	(Post-webinar info) (FK) Yes, we asked survey participants whether they would prefer bioplastic products over conventional plastic products and also in other research (experiments and focus groups) we made comparisons. Of course, depending on the experimental design / the main questions of the focus groups / the background of the participants, we also informed the participants about the differences of bioplastics and conventional plastics. Still I would like to clarify that we are socio-economic scientists and our aim is to find out how consumers decide and if possible why they did so. We are not aiming to convince someone to use more bioplastics. So we are not lobbying, it is all about the decision-behaviour of consumers. (JMB) I like to mention that we're not marketing bioplastics. BiNa is a publicly funded research project,

	so while we might test specific measures to be able to give strategic advice we're not actively promoting bioplastics.
A similar survey was carried out under the BIOWAYS project focusing on all BB products. I think we should share our findings and present our recommendations	(Editor's info) A recent presentation on BIOWAYS findings on public perception of bio-based products is available at URL: https://www.b2match.eu/system/ib2017/files/06_BIOWAYS_IFI_B_public_perception.pdf?1508415079
How and where can I get more info on the educational activities of BioCannDo and whether BioCannDo targeted specific groups (i.e. general public, kids, teenagers, university students. ..)	(Editor's info:) What we did so far is a mapping of educational materials and actors in four countries (Germany, Finland, Netherlands and Belgium). You can download our mapping report here: http://www.allthings.bio/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/BioCannDo_2017-07-03_D6.1_final.pdf We conducted a mapping from primary school up to university programs. We organized a first webinar to present mapping results. You can find the recording here: http://www.allthings.bio/events/webinar-educational-community-practice-bioeconomy/ . We are aiming at establishing an educational Community of Practice to exchange ideas, materials and good practices and we will develop missing educational materials.

Questions & answers after/regarding the BioCannDo presentation

Key message #6 (about global raw material supply) is not correct if we don't address consumption pattern - we can't increase our consumption and say that we have secure sustainable supply...	That's a point that can always be discussed as well. I am referring to different studies that showed that in general it is possibly to supply the bioeconomy with the needed raw materials. But still, of course personal consumption and use of raw materials and products is always an issue. Like, thinking of the littering issue, we cannot solve it with bioplastics only of course, it is about how much plastics are we consuming
Key message #2 (about emission reduction) should not be used, there is no scientific evidence that you can make this overall message - this depends massive on the raw material used....	I know that in the end it always depends on a life-cycle assessment. We took this from the JRC Science for Policy Report - Bioeconomy report 2016 from the European Commission. It addresses the bioeconomy across all the different sectors and different aspects. This report stated that in general there are lower impacts in terms of climate change factors, but of course there are other negative impacts, thinking for example of eutrophication.

Key message #5 raises more a question (How?) then it gives information about or a clear message about bioeconomy.	OK so the idea would be to make more clear HOW it contributes. I explained about the supply with the needed raw materials but maybe that's a good point to make it more clear and obvious and to include it into the message itself WHAT is the contribution of the bioeconomy to the circular economy. I will consider this feedback. Thanks
How do you want to make sure that sustainability becomes a pre-requirement for bioeconomy	How I want to make sure? That's a good question! I mean of course this depends on a lot of factors. First of all it is a policy task. That's why we are referring for example to the certification schemes. That's a very good example of how it could work. How we could ensure a sustainable bioeconomy. This would probably be a good way to do it.
Where can we find the factsheets mentioned?	You cannot find them yet. They will become our results when we have gone through all mentioned development steps I mentioned in the beginning. As soon as we have them we will share the factsheets with you. It is still work in progress.
Observation: the frequent use of the word "can" doesn't make the messages stronger. It is scientifically correct but not a strong message	Exactly! That's the point, Just looking at Key Message #2; the one we discussed before. This is why I said CAN help. There is no automatism to do it. I know it is really a challenge formulating these messages. Of course it is stronger. There is always kind of a dilemma, on the one hand being specific and having strong messages and on the other hand communicating scientifically correct without claiming any wrong statements. I definitely see this point. So far I have not found a really good solution how we could avoid the word "can". I'd be really happy to discuss this and if you have any ideas or suggestions on this, really, please let me know.
What are your timescales for the factsheets?	We will release them step-by-step. The first set of specific key messages we are currently developing cover household cleaning products. We are pretty far with them. We will have a first focus group in beginning of November. I guess beginning of 2018 we will publish the first factsheet on cleaning products. The other two ones, on construction products and on food packaging material, will follow later in 2018.
Do you have plans to revise these messages after a period of time? As the general public become more educated on the bio-based products...	It is always good to have this feedback loop and of course as long as the project is running this is something we should consider. But I am not sure that in the 3 year project period we will have such a fundamental change in the education level of the general public. But if we learn and get feedback that some messages work very well, or not at all, it will be up to us to change and adapt the messages. Definitely.
We can share the short documents developed under BIOWAYS. We will be in contact.	BIOWAYS (URL: www.bioways.eu/) is some sort of sister project of BioCannDo. They are funded under the same call from the Bio-based Industries, but they have a totally different set of activities, and they are nicely complementary.

Did you also address messages that did address business-to-business stakeholders?	No we did not. The paper, the factsheets and the messages really address first of all projects, initiatives, producers that communicate to the general audience. That is really the target of the BioCannDo project: communicating to a broad public
Comment: the opposite of the messages might also be true	(Editor's note): the comment was noted
Who should send the message to the public: government, NGO, companies or all together in a campaign?	(Post-webinar info): We are offering these messages to everyone who is interested in communicating about bioeconomy and bio-based products. This includes government, NGOs, companies other (research and communication) projects and initiatives. The key messages can be used as basis of their own communication. Of course we as BioCannDo project will use these messages for our own communication activities on our info portal www.allthings.bio as well.
Thank you for the very good presentations. Such webinars are valuable to share ideas and learn from each other.	(Editor's note): Thank you!
Thank you. The webinar was well organised	(Editor's note): Thank you!



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BioCannDo

BIOECONOMY AWARENESS AND DISCOURSE PROJECT
www.AllThings.Bio

Project overview

2nd Communication Network Webinar, 19 October 2017

This project has received funding from the Bio Based Industries Joint Undertaking under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 720732.



About this Webinar

- Our webinar will be recorded
- You are in listen-only mode but please send us question through the question box



- We will answer your questions after each presentation.
- Participants who registered today will be invited to future activities unless you tell us otherwise.

Webinar outline

1. Public perception of bio-based plastics and communication challenges: the BiNa project - Julia-Maria Blesin, Hochschule Hannover and Florian Klein, Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf.
2. Answering questions and remarks
3. Key communication messages on bioeconomy – Erik Lohse, FNR
4. Answering questions and remarks

Perceptions and challenges – bioplastics at their turning point to consumer communications

Julia-Maria Blesin (HS Hannover) & Florian Klein (HS Weihenstephan-Triesdorf)

BiNa „Communications“

19.10.2017

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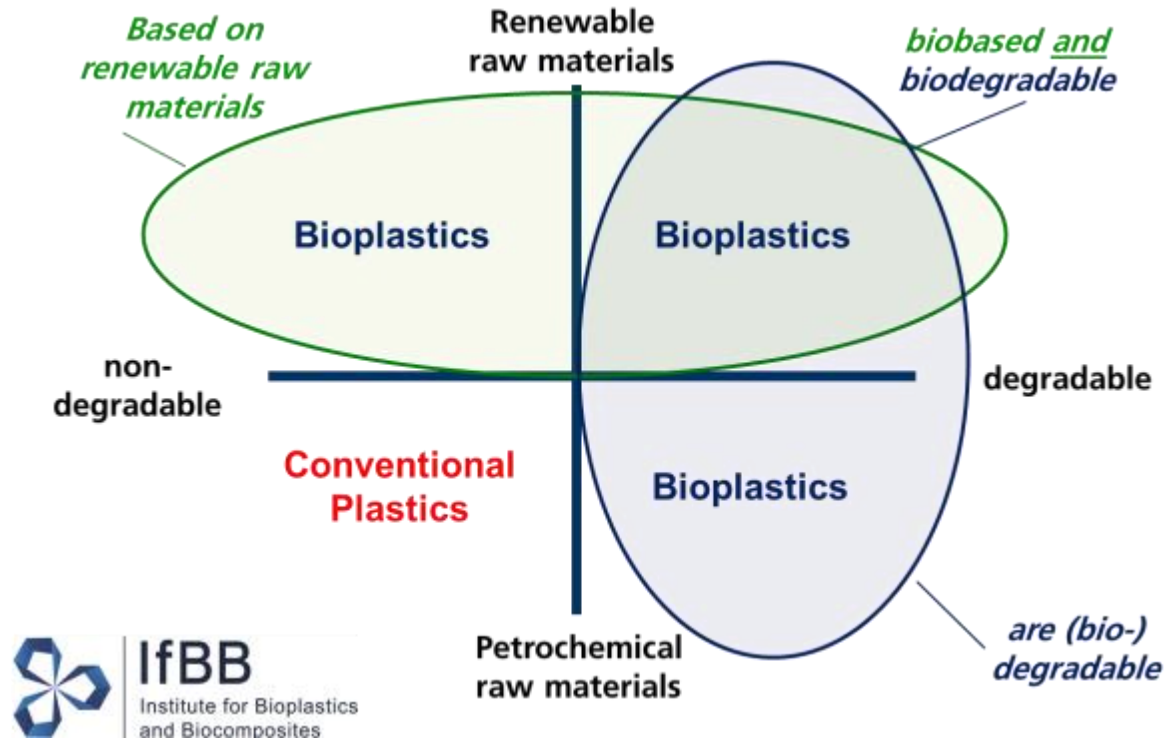
BiNa: Perceptions and challenges – bioplastics at their turning point to consumer communications. A presentation by Blesin, J.-M. & Klein, F. at 2. Webinar Communication Network on Bio-Based Products. 19.10.2017.

Introducing: BiNa Project



Political framework	
Sustainability	
Ecology	Socio-economy
Communications	
Public perception & communication TU Dortmund/Hochschule Hannover <i>Prof. Dr. Wiebke Möhring</i> <i>M.A. Julia-Maria Blesin</i>	Information & consumer Hochschule Weihenstephan-Triesdorf <i>Prof. Dr. Klaus Menrad</i> <i>Dr. Agnes Emberger Klein</i> <i>Florian Klein</i>
Perceptions of bioplastics among the German public and economic, political and society actors	Consumers perception and product-experience regarding bioplastic products, means of communication, strategies
public survey via online-access-panel (n=1.673)	
focus groups (n=24)	expert group (n=8)
website analysis (n=31)	focus groups (n=14)
expert interviews (n=20)	experiment (n=276)

Introducing: Bioplastics

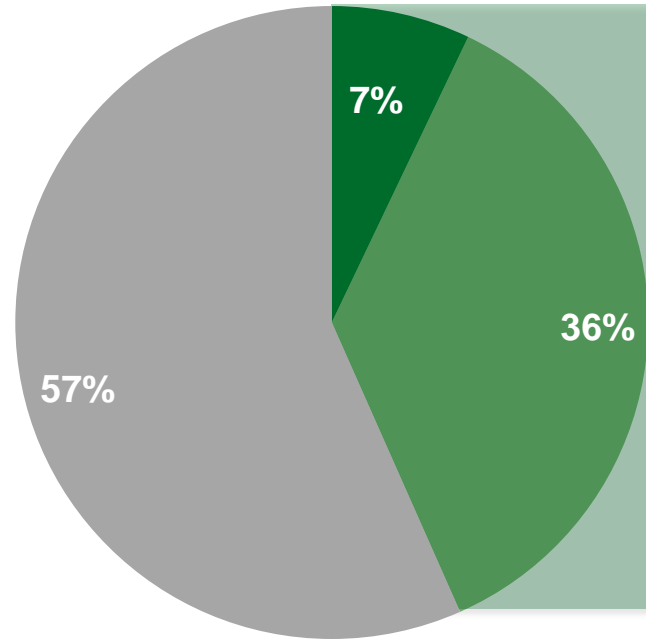


FINDINGS & CHALLENGES

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF BIOPLASTICS

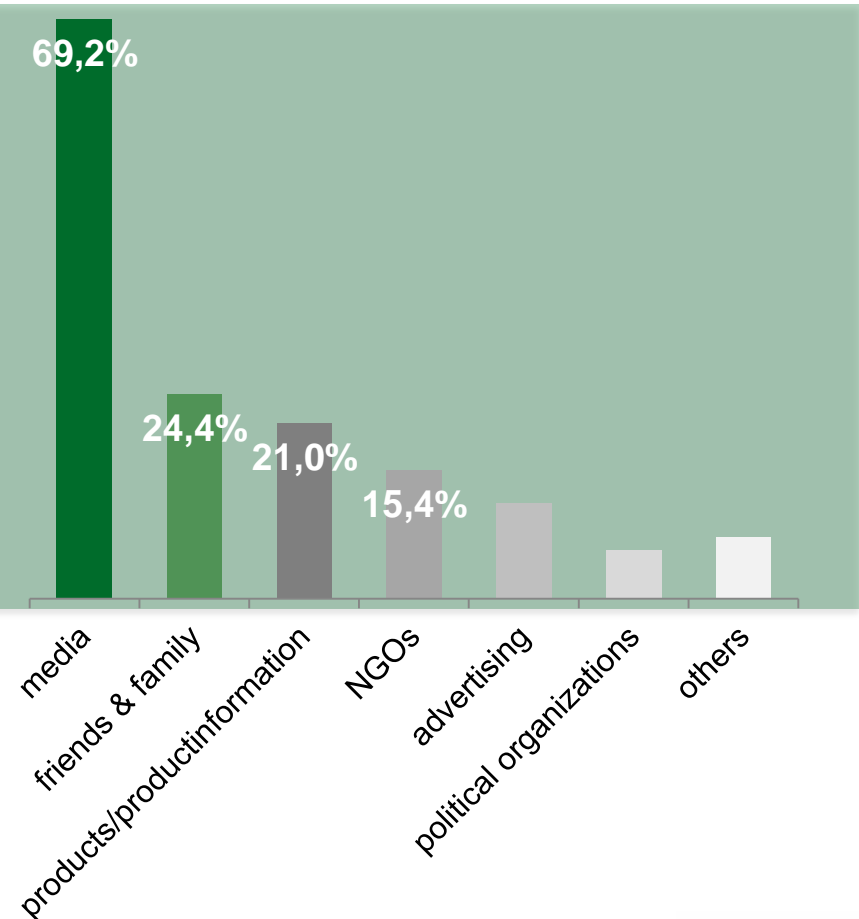
Public perception: Low awareness, media No. 1 source.

„Did you ever hear of bioplastics before?“
(n=1.673)



- Yes, I have heard of bioplastics, and I know exactly what they are.
- Yes, I have heard of them before.
- No, I have never heard of them.

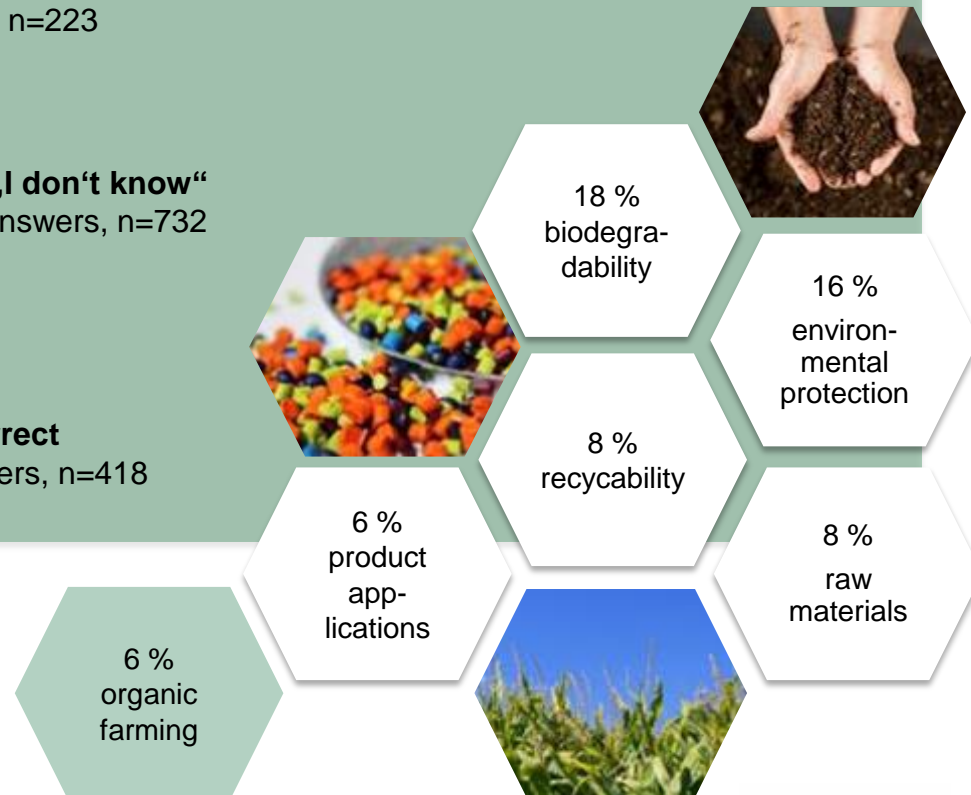
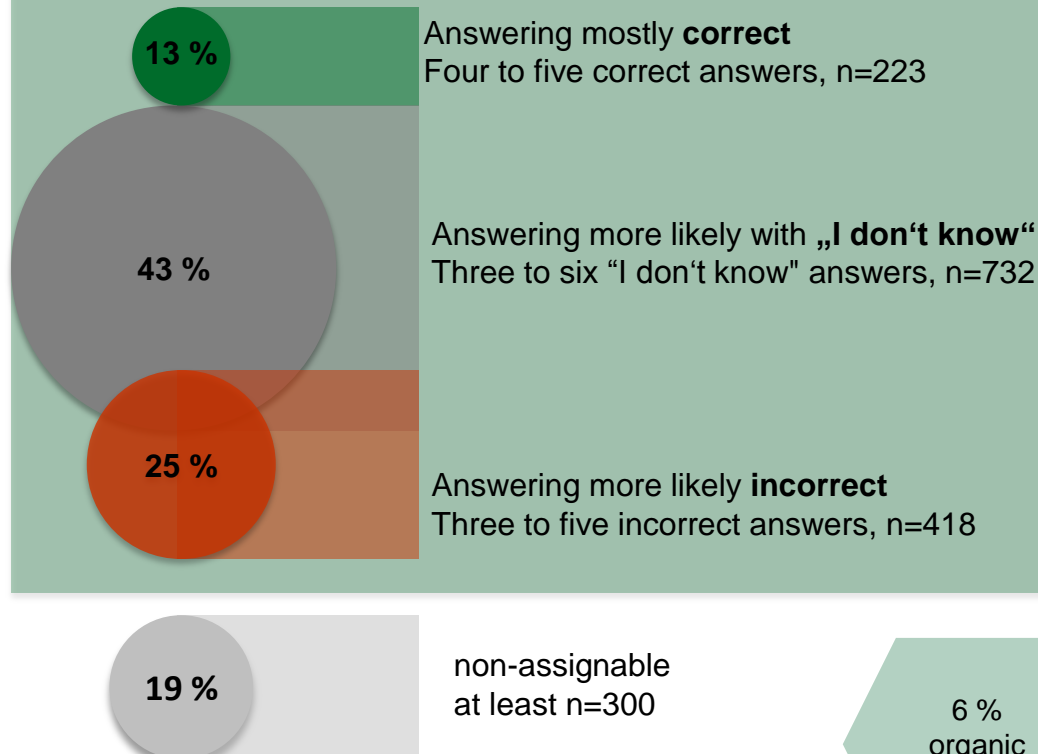
„Where did you hear of bioplastics before?“
multiple choice; n=725



Low level of knowledge, but high expectations.

„Please rate the following statements about bioplastics as wrong or right. In case you are not sure, we kindly ask you to not guess, but choose the „I don't know“ option.“ (n=1.673)

„What comes into your mind first, when you hear „bioplastics? Name up to three associations.“ (n=3.499)



What to keep in mind when developing messages about biobased products – the example of bioplastics



WORDING

- „Bioplastics“ lead to misunderstandings and high expectations – especially regarding sustainability/environmental benefits. Expectations will most likely be disappointed.
- Plastics labelled with „biodegradable“ are assumed to be compostable. Compostability is associated with disposal in the bio-waste bin or home compost. Expectations will most likely be disappointed.

Note: Choose your wording based on target group perceptions.

CHANNEL

- Media are the number one information source regarding bioplastics. Within the media discourse different actors present different perspectives of bioplastics. The perspectives that win sovereignty of interpretation enforce either positive or negative evaluation of bioplastics.

Note: Take a stand within media discourse to communicate messages to the broader public.

FINDINGS & CHALLENGES

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE & PERCEPTION OF BIOPLASTIC PRODUCTS

PERCEPTION

Usage of terms in communication I



Confusion/ comprehensibility of terms

*“...for example **biodegradable**, to me that sounds like I could throw it into the **home-compost**, but I think that is **not meant** here.” (female, age ≈ 25)*

*“...moreover I find this term kind of confusing. Also that is what I heard consistently. **“Bio” and plastics, it actually doesn’t fit together.**” (female, age > 50)*

Preference for separate application of the terms „**biologisch abbaubar**“ (biodegradable) and „**biobasiert**“ (bio-based)

*“I would also prefer a separation of the two terms in the context of a description, because otherwise it is always **unclear whether bioplastics** are made from renewable resources or whether they are compostable.” (female, age ≈ 25)*

Usage of the chemical term of the material (+/-)

“...it is very important to let the consumer know what bioplastics are. I mean the chemical contents need to be in the consumers’ memory. For example, these days anybody knows what Styrofoam is.” (male, age ≈ 25)

“I think it would be much more intuitive to consumers, when you could read that it is biodegradable instead of that it is made of PLA.” (female, age ≈ 25)

Wish of standardization of terms

“Another thing is that also the terms should be standardized somehow... .” (female, age > 50)

Which term would you choose to name plastics made from plant material?

- “Bio-based plastics” 14,2 %
- “Plastics made from renewable resources” 85,8 %

n = 1.191

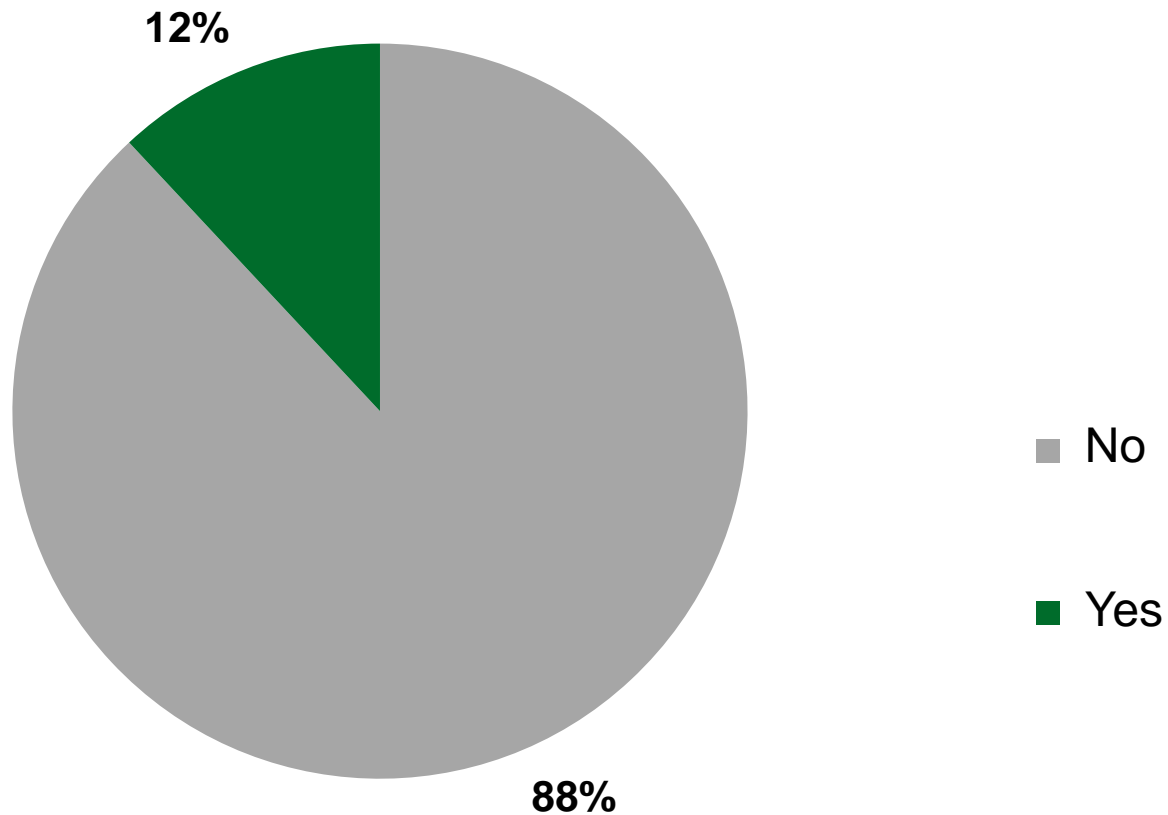
Source: S. Rumm (2014)

EXPERIENCE

Bioplastic products I



Have you ever consciously made a purchase decision for a product made of bioplastics?



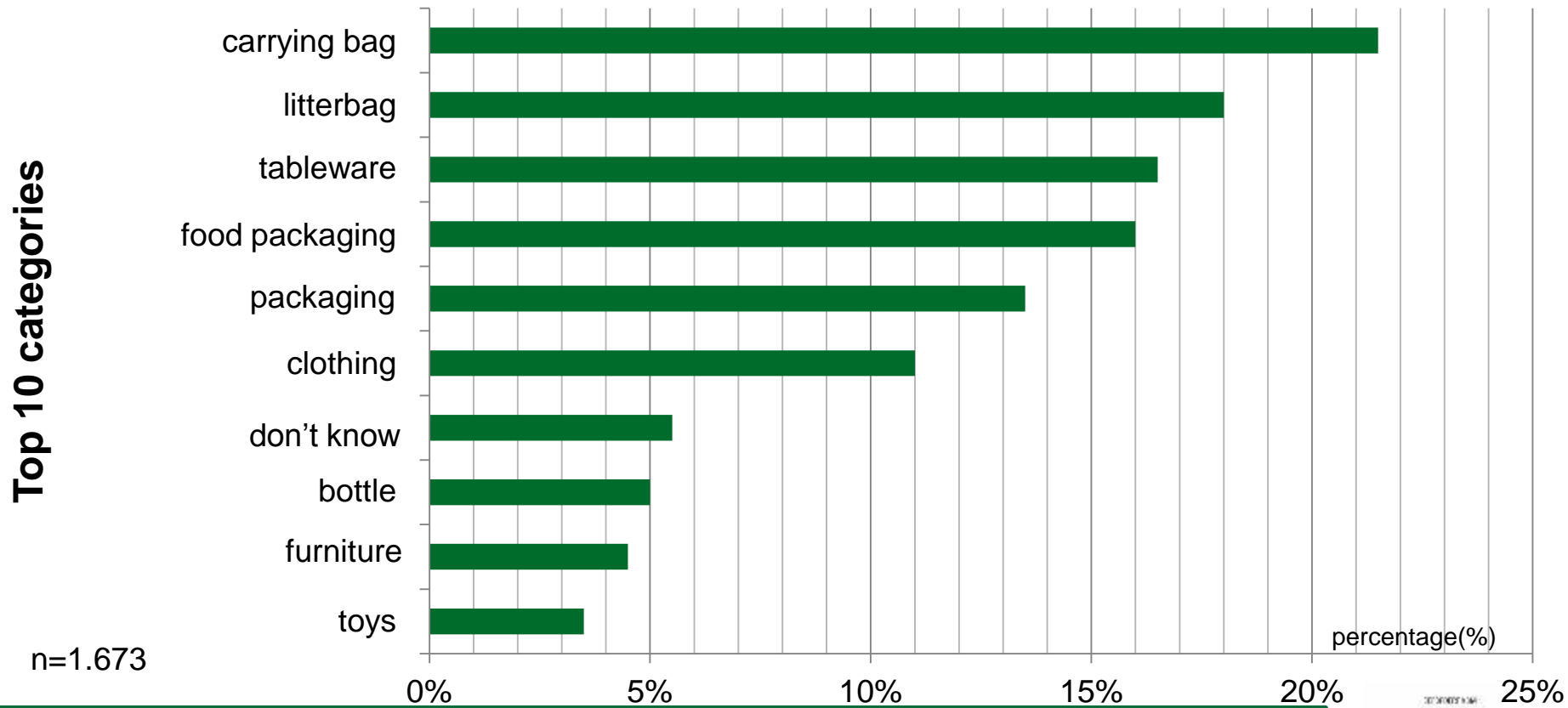
n=1.673

EXPERIENCE

Bioplastic products II



What kind of bioplastic products have you ever reached a consciously purchase decision for?



Get in touch...



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BioCannDo

Key Messages Bioeconomy

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Outline

1. Approach and objective of Key Message development
2. Key Messages on bioeconomy in general
3. Questions/ Comments

1. Approach

- BioCannDo aims to increase awareness of bio-based products
- Develop multi-stakeholder proven **key messages** for communicating functionality and sustainability aspects of bio-based products with the broader public
- Clear, scientifically sound messages that can be easily understood by a general audience
- Key Messages
 - General messages on the bioeconomy
 - Key Messages on three product groups (household cleaning products, food packaging, construction)

Key Messages bio-based products

General Key Messages bioeconomy



1. Approach

- Key Message: one or two easy to understand sentences. Additionally some insights/background information will be provided
- Lead question: What is the benefit of a bio-based product? Why should consumers care about bioeconomy?
- Challenge: Distilling key issues of an abstract and broad concept such as “bioeconomy”

2. Key Messages Bioeconomy

1. Any product you can make from oil you can theoretically make from **biomass**.
2. Bio-based products can help to **protect our climate** by reducing CO₂ emissions.
3. A lot of bio-based **products are available** on the market already.
4. Bio-based products can provide **new and better functionalities**. Bio-based construction materials can provide a healthy and comfortable home, bio-based food packaging material can ensure a longer shelf-life and bio-based cleaning products can be more environmentally friendly.
5. The bioeconomy **contributes to a circular economy**, which helps us to move away from a linear economy of “take, make and dispose”.
6. A sustainable bioeconomy can permanently **secure global raw material supply without threatening food security, nature or biodiversity**.
7. The bioeconomy **can create jobs** in underdeveloped areas.

3. Questions/ comments

- Time for your questions and comments
 - Did we identify the relevant issues or is anything missing?
 - Are all messages scientifically sound?
- We will share draft messages with participants after webinar – written feedback is also very welcome until 3 November

Thank you!

- Recording will be made available for download (you will receive a notification)
- Report can be downloaded soon from the www.AllThings.Bio web portal