



MULTITRACES

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TRAINING IN CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SMART VALORISATION OF THE RURAL AREA FOR NEW BUSINESS MODELS

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CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The notion of circular economy proposes to change the current paradigm of the current linear economic model, based on production and consumption. A full understanding of the notion of circular economy involves changing attitudes and behaviour in order to reach the zero waste threshold. Education for a circular economy can be provided and the universities involved in this project assume their mission, trying to train specialists in the field for the development of rural areas.

RURAL AREA



www.presaonestilor.com



www.refugiomarnes.com



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Rural areas from Bacău, Piemonte, Alicante and Drama

The European territory is vast, diverse and largely urbanized. About 51% of the EU's land area is placed in rural areas (Eurostat, 2017), which are considered to be areas outside the cities. Rural areas are usually characterized by small settlements and low population density (agricultural areas, rural landscapes, mountains, lakes and forests). Europe's rural areas have an invaluable natural, cultural, social, architectural and productive heritage.

Although each territory has its specific characteristics, which should be carefully evaluated before implementing circular and sustainable projects, the main activities commonly found in most European rural areas are agricultural production, cattle breeding and forestry. There are also a lot of other activities, such as beekeeping and wine production but also commercial services such as catering, tourism and sale of typical handcraft products, in the case of agrotourism.

Many EU farms are small and farming is predominant a family business.

The study carried out before the start of the project indicated the incipient development of the circular economy in all partner countries. The documentation activities carried out at the regional level (regional statistics, regional / local development strategies, discussions with regional authorities) has revealed a similar situation.

During last decades, rural economy has significantly grown. The development of agricultural and forestry holdings, local food processing units and small industrial units, has been generating a lot of by-products with real reuse potential. The lack of measures for the implementation of the circular economy in regional policy is caused by the lack of information in the field and professionals who could identify the potential of the region.

Therefore, one of the objectives of the MULTITRACES project is focused on the study of rural areas in Bacău County, Piedmont, Alicante and Drama regions in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, in Romania, respectively Italy, Spain and Greece.

Through the partnership between universities such as "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacau, Polytechnic University of Turin, University of Alicante and International Hellenic University, have been developed four studies on the current situation of these regions in their national context. The aim was to highlight rural activities and their economic potential, to find resources for sustainable development, achievements and prospects in the circular economy, as well as to pay attention to the need for professionals in this field.

INTERVIEWING LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

A second objective aims to interview local factors regarding the need for specialists in the field of circular economy in rural areas, by applying a questionnaire with items relevant to this approach. The analysis of the results outlines the idea that some aspects of the circular economy are already known, but this field needs specialised people in order to benefit from the principles that contribute to save resources, increase employment and create new services. Local authorities are interested in improving the infrastructure and employment of the population by diversifying economic activities. In order to improve the socio-economic situation, initiatives and events are needed, and this would eventually lead to major legislative changes that would encourage the principles of the circular economy.

A latent potential is represented by young people who could come up with a new vision on the development of rural areas.

In order to respond to this need, the partner universities are considering, at this moment, two directions of action:

- * development of course modules for training specialists in the field of circular economy;
 - * creating a network of collaborators at local level to promote the principles of the circular economy and to represent examples of good practices in this field at the same time .
- The expansion of the circular economy in the rural areas would contribute in the long run to the development of these areas under analysis.

AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

In Bacău County, approximately 55% of the population lives in rural areas. The main economic activities are agriculture and animal husbandry.

Serban Grup is a representative company for Bacău County. It represents a family of companies with Romanian capital, with an integrated structure that operates in the following fields: agriculture (cereals, oilseeds and legumes), bakery, pastry-confectionery, public catering (Băcăniile Șerban), distribution and transport, poultry farming. The activity of the group of companies values the principles of the circular economy by using the by-products from one sector of activity as raw material for another sector. Moreover, the company's activity is based on the use of local resources: the irrigable potential of the Siret River and the five accumulation lakes with an average area of 1500 ha and 7m depth for each and the green energy produced by hydro resources on the riverbed.



Their own laboratory of research and development of biodiversity, continuously analyses the soil microbiology and its influence on commercial agriculture.

The company aims to exploit biologically active soils. The recovery of poultry manure obtained from the group's farms allows the replacement of chemical fertilisers.

The natural fertiliser obtained is extremely fertile and has important benefits for crops, especially vegetables. In poultry farming, special attention is paid to environmental conservation, food security and sustainable development.

The farm benefits from a unified production system, the food being produced in the combined feed production plant, with a granulation and crushing capacity of up to 7 tons / hour, 70% of the feed recipe being cereals produced within the group.

<http://multitraces.ub.ro>,

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