



## Document Title

# Local Innovation Action Plan (Project Region: **Bulgaria**)

## Document Type

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## **1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- BBCWFI – Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry
- BFC – Bulgarian Furniture Cluster
- FBI – Forest Based Industries
- FORESDA - Forest-based cross-sectoral value chains fostering innovation and competitiveness in the Danube region
- LIAP – Project Output 3.2 Local Innovation Action Plan
- PP – Pilot project
- PPs – Project Partners
- RIS – Regional Innovation System
- SMEs - Small and Medium Entreprises
- TS – Transnational Strategy (Project Output 3.1 Transnational Strategy on Cross-sectoral Level)
- WG – Working group
- WP – Work package
- UF – University of Forestry

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To act for innovation is in first instance the responsibility of citizens, of industry, and of national, regional and local authorities.

The contents and main ideas of this document are to present the identified needs for development of the Bulgarian Regional Innovation System related to the FBI through the present Local Innovation Action Plan (O.3.2). The identified needs are according to the priority areas of the Transnational Strategy (O.3.1) which deals with improving the framework conditions for forest-based cross-sectoral value chains under FORESDA project.

The document presents all priority needs for improving the innovation and cross-sectoral environment in Bulgaria and describes short-term goals, objectives and decisions that are established in the Bulgarian Local Innovation Action Plan. Herewith, actions to be conducted in the framework of the project are described and justified.

Bulgarian LIAP has been developed based on the previous FORESDA WP3 activities – workshops, regional mapping of RIS, Transnational strategy. The outputs of the LIAP will be integrated in the other FORESDA activities within the other WPs.



### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The following LIAP for improved technology transfer and innovation processes in SMEs of the forest-based sector is defined specifically for the project region Bulgaria, as one of the main outputs of the FORESDA project ([Interreg Danube Transnational Programme](#)). All LIAPs should be developed in coherence with the set Transnational Strategy, which aims to improve the framework conditions for forest-based cross-sectoral value chains and describes how the project will address identified needs with respect to the regional innovation systems (RIS), and with a focus on cross-sectoral aspects. The LIAPs on the other hand, should specify the concrete implementation – activities, timeline, responsibilities, and measurable objectives – of the Transnational Strategy elaborated at the project level in each region. Accordingly, a validation workshop has been organized in each region, and the participants - relevant stakeholders from FBI and RIS environment - had the opportunity to discuss and contribute to the proposed actions and measures. Their comments and suggestions are integrated in the document and therefore the LIAP reflects the real market needs on the local level.

#### ***4. PROJECT REGION/COUNTRY CONTEXT***

The business environment in Bulgaria is favourable in the view of the very good quality of the transportation, communications infrastructure, cost of doing business, low taxation and low cost of labour.

The woodworking and furniture industries in Bulgaria are sectors with strategical importance. They are among the traditional industrial sectors in Bulgaria, which have a good raw material base and built infrastructure. Businesses lead to improved economic and social development in the less industrialized areas of the country.

The creation of innovative products is of key importance for enhancing the competitiveness of the Bulgarian furniture and wood processing industry and its entry into new markets. The development of the furniture industry and the production of high quality furniture in accordance with the requirements of the European standardization is a major task of the Bulgarian woodworking and furniture industry, aiming to satisfy the needs of a local market and to increase the export of furniture.

It is recommended to develop a specific strategy with financial collateral that will set clear priorities for the development of the types of production, R&D and innovation activities, cross-sectoral cooperation, and to guarantee the opportunities for the trained personnel in the country. With regard to sectoral policy, serious action is needed to promote export activities, to promote timber at all levels, to lead an adequate forestry and economic policy in support of businesses.

## **5. FOCUS, OBJECTIVES AND IMPACTS**

The most essential needs in Bulgaria related to FBI, RIS and cross-sectoral activities were identified as follows:

### **1. Improving the cooperation between business, education & scientific communities.**

The issue is one of the most important prerequisites for the development of RIS. There is an alarming trend for a shortage of highly skilled personnel in the industries and in the same time, it is observed that there are not sufficient knowledge on new technologies in FBI. At the national level, it must be continued to review courses and teaching methods, above all for their ability to stimulate creativity and a spirit of entrepreneurship from the earliest age.

**Planned action 1:** Make a survey and analysis for internships needs.

*Foreseen activities:* A specific questionnaire will be developed and disseminated to the FBI companies. The results will be summarized and analyzed. The analysis will be given to the UF and professional schools with the purpose of matching the needs of businesses and students.

**Planned action 2:** Business lectors and new technology demonstrations in professional schools and University of Forestry.

*Foreseen activities:* Qualified business experts from innovative companies will be invited as lectors in UF and professional schools to teach and demonstrate innovations and new technologies.

**Planned action 3:** Competition for smart ideas of young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018.

*Foreseen activities:* A working group will be set up to develop specific conditions for participation. Invitations will be sent to schools and UF. An expert jury from the business sectors will be formed. The winners will receive prestigious awards.

## **2. Improving the government policies and funding schemes for RIS.**

Unfortunately, the FBI sector activities are quite poor in getting funding from the governmental programmes. The cross-sectoral activities have to be advertised and promoted especially with those sectors that give priority for funding. The government does not have policies for taxation of the innovative companies and lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies is necessary.

**Planned action 1:** Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities, attended by 200 FBI companies, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, University, Professional schools, syndicates, national chambers of commerce and industry. .

**Foreseen activities:** Make a presentation of good practices in furniture innovations, cross-sectoral collaboration and re-manufacturing with accent to their importance for the development of the sector.

**Planned action 2:** Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies.

**Foreseen activities:** Organizing meetings and correspondence with government authorised institutions for advocacy for tax deduction and start-up companies.

## **3. Branding and design protection.**

**Planned action 1:** Organizing a seminar for branding and design protection.

**Foreseen activities:** To set up a working group for organizing the event, determining the specific issues for discussions, send invitations, publishing and dissemination.



## **5.1. IDENTIFICATION OF ALL PRIORITY NEEDS**

### **1. Image & Lobbying**

- The cross-sectoral activities have to be advertised and promoted especially with those sectors that give priority for funding.
- Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and also for start-up companies.
- Propagating good practices of innovation, cross-sectoral activities and re-manufacturing demonstrating the innovation advantages and possibilities of FBI sector.

### **2. Policy & Legislative Support**

- There is a need of specific policies and strategies for certified laboratories, investment in design activities and state funding for technology transfer offices.
- Knowledge regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with focus to the innovations and branding is to be spread. The patent system in Bulgaria is not so popular in FBI and it is needed to be promoted through the companies.
- Initiate the development of a branding strategy.
- To set up policies within FBI sector to promote the advantages of cross-sectoral activities.

### **3. Funding & Business Environment**

- Cross-sectoral activities have to be advertised and promoted especially with those sectors that give priority for funding.
- Access of capital from banks in low interest for cross-sectoral projects.
- Encourage the access of risk capital from venture capital and business angels.

### **4. Education & Human Resources**

- Improve the connection between the education system and business needs.
- The material base of the schools and the university is to be modernized.

- Strong promotion of the FBI professions from the young people with an accent on cross-sectoral and innovation activities.
- Instruments and measures to stimulate creativity and a spirit of enterprise/entrepreneurship from the earliest age.
- To set up concrete measures and actions to keep the skilled human resources in the region.

## **5.2. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FORESDA**

According to the priority areas of Transnational Strategy under the FORESDA project in the following section are described a short terms decisions for the actual needs of the region of Bulgaria in the FBI sector. The created LIAP is result oriented and focused to be achievable in the framework of the project period. The implemented actions will help the development of the regional innovation system.

The *strategic goals* of the Bulgarian LIAP are to:

- Improve the connection between education, science and business;
- Improve the FBI sectors' image at the national and international levels with focus on cross-sectoral potential;
- To simplify business start-up and innovation support;
- To intensify knowledge regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with focus on innovations and branding;
- To promote the FBI professions in front of the young people in accent of cross-sectoral and innovation activities.

According to the priority areas of the Transnational strategy (O.3.1), *the objectives* that the Bulgarian LIAP plans *to achieve* are as follows:

### **1. Image & Lobbying**

- To promote the importance of cross-sectoral activities and projects in FBI among businesses, policy-makers, universities, professional schools and citizens;
- Collect and disseminate best practices on innovation, cross-sectoral activities and re-manufacturing demonstrating the innovation advantages and possibilities of FBI sector;
- Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and also for start-up companies.

### **2. Policy & Legislative Support**

- To intensify knowledge regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with focus on innovations and branding. The patent system in Bulgaria is not very popular in FBI sectors and it is necessary to be promote patents among the companies.

### **3. Funding & Business Environment**

- Advertise and promote cross-sectoral activities in FBI, especially with those sectors that give priority for funding from policy makers and financial institutions.

### **4. Education & Human Resources**

- Match the needs of business, science and education system.

- Stimulate creativity and a spirit of enterprise/entrepreneurship of the young people.

- Promotion of the FBI professions from the young people with focus on cross-sectoral and innovation activities.

### 5.3. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED IMPACTS

The present section describes the respective expected impacts of the actions and objectives of the Bulgarian Local Innovation Action Plan related to the needs described in 5.2.

OBJECTIVES	EXPECTED IMPACTS
Improve the connection between education, science and business	Match the needs of business and students. Raise awareness in universities and professional schools community to new technologies, innovations, cross-sectoral and re-manufacturing opportunities.
Improve the FBI sectors' image on the national and international level with the accent on cross-sectoral potential.	Policy makers to give more importance to FBI and FBI cross-sectoral activities. Raise awareness of the FBI cross-sectoral possibilities and advantages. Attract more employees in the FBI sector.
To simplify business start-up and innovation support	Ease of business regulations, tax policy, competition policy and technology policies. Raise the entrepreneurship soul in the FBI sector.
Intensify the knowledge regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with focus on innovations and branding	Raise awareness in SMEs about the patent and industrial property rights. Patents are a key tool to encourage investment in innovation and encourage its dissemination.
Promote the FBI professions in front of the young people focusing on cross-sectoral and innovation activities	Increase the interest in FBI professions from the young people. Stimulate creativity and a spirit of enterprise/entrepreneurship and innovations from young people.

### 5.4. LINKS WITH OTHER FORESDA OUTCOMES

The Bulgarian LIAP (O.3.2) has been developed based on the previous FORESDA WP3 activities – workshops, regional mapping of RIS, Transnational Strategy (O.3.1).

In WP4, it will be shown the Bulgarian Pilot Project which is focused on the implementation of new production processes allowing the re-manufacturing of used timber and including it in new wooden products creating an eco-friendly transformable wooden bike, that will follow the growth of the children between the ages of 2-6 years old. The Bulgarian pilot will be promoted as example of best practice of re-manufacturing and cross-sectoral activities.

The identified needs in the Bulgarian LIAP will be linked with WP5 activities of the FORESDA project with regard to the Collaborative Networks with different target participants to create a new value-chain of innovation and cross-sectoral activities.

The outputs of the LIAP will be integrated also in WP6 which objective is to foster innovation skills in the innovation support structures in the FBI with mutual learning and mentoring activities by delivering customized learning interactions to meet the identified needs.

## **6. ACTIONS AND SCHEDULE**

The following section describes the planned actions which will help to achieve the objectives and results of the previously identified needs.

### **Priority area 1: Image & Lobbying**

#### *Planned activities:*

1. Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities. A presentation of good practices about innovation in the furniture sector, cross-sectoral collaboration and re-manufacturing with focus on their importance for the development of the sector will be made in front of 200 FBI companies, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, University, professional schools, syndicates, national chambers of commerce and industry.
2. Internet campaign for propagating good practices for innovation and cross sectoral activities. Propagating good practices of innovation, cross-sectoral activities and re-manufacturing demonstrating the innovation advantages and possibilities of FBI sector.

### **Priority area 2: Policy & Legislative Support**

#### *Planned activities:*

1. Seminar for branding and design protection. The objective is to intensify the knowledge regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with focus on innovation and branding.

### **Priority area 3: Funding & Business Environment**

#### *Planned activities:*

1. Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies.: Organizing meetings and intensifying correspondence with government authorised institutions for advocacy for tax deduction and start-up companies.

### **Priority area 4: Education & Human Resources**

*Planned activities:*

1. Make a survey and analysis for internships needs.
2. Business lectors and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University of Forestry
3. Competition on smart ideas of young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018.

Please use the following table to show the timeline:

<b>ACTIONS &amp; SCHEDULE → Timeline</b> ↓ <b>Action Description</b>	<b>Project Period 3 (1-6/2018)</b>		<b>Project Period 4 (7-12/2018)</b>		<b>Project Period 5 (1-6/2018)</b>	
	<b>1-3</b>	<b>4-6</b>	<b>7-9</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>1-3</b>	<b>4-6</b>
Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities						
Survey and analysis for internships						
Business lectors and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University Of Forestry						
Competition on smart ideas of young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018						
Internet campaign for propagating good practice of innovation and cross sectoral activities						
Seminar for branding and design protection						
Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies						



## **7. KEY IMPLEMENTATION STEPS**

**Action 1:** Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities.

1. Preparation: create presentations, send invitations. /October 2017/
2. Dissemination: on-line and off-line dissemination /October 2017/
3. Realization: 17. November 2017
4. Capitalization: Dissemination of conclusions and recommendations.

**Action 2:** Survey and analysis for internships

1. Preparation: Develop of specific questionnaire and disseminate it to the FBI companies. /January 2018 /
2. Dissemination: on-line and off-line dissemination /January 2018/
3. Realization: Collecting and analysis of the results. /February 2018/
4. Capitalization: Conclusions and recommendations. Development of further activities. /February 2018/

**Action 3:** Business lectures and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University Of Forestry.

1. Preparation: Invitation to business experts. Coordination with professional schools and UF. Preparation of schedule to be included in the study programmes. /January 2018/
2. Dissemination: off-line dissemination /January 2018/
3. Realization: February 2018
4. Capitalization: Conclusions and recommendations. Development of further activities. February 2018.

**Action 4:** Competition on smart ideas from young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018.

1. Preparation: Set up a working group to develop specific conditions for participation and tasks for compete. To set up an expert jury from the business. Book an exhibition area at the event. Buying materials and purchasing awards. February – March 2018.
2. Dissemination: Send invitation to schools and UF. Disseminate information about the event to all exhibitors and visitors. The event will be promoted in all newsletters of the exhibition and different on-line media, specialized magazines and newspapers. March – April 2018
3. Realization: The winners will receive prestigious awards. April 2018
4. Capitalization: Conclusions and recommendations. Development of further activities. May – June 2018.

**Action 5:** Internet campaign for propagating good practices on innovation and cross sectoral activities.

1. Preparation: Collecting good practices. Creating materials. Set up campaign logo. Set up communication tools. Define the on-line media and social networks where the campaign will be published. Define the on-line target groups. January – March 2018
2. Dissemination: on-line. April 2018 – June 2019
3. Realization: April 2018 – June 2019
4. Capitalization: Conclusions and recommendations. June 2019

**Action 6:** Seminar for branding and design protection.

1. Preparation: determining the specific issues and lecturers, sent invitations, creating materials, presentations and agenda. Meetings and coordination with Bulgarian Patent Office. July – August 2018.
2. Dissemination: On-line. September 2018
3. Realization: October 2018.
4. Capitalization: Conclusions and recommendations. October – November 2018.

**Action 7:** Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies

1. Preparation: creating correspondence, collecting best practices to be shown on the meetings, creating justification and motivation report with expected impacts. January – March 2018
2. Dissemination: online and off-line dissemination. January – March 2018
3. Realization: January 2018 – June 2019
4. Capitalization: Development of further activities. June 2019

## **8. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The main responsible organization for the implementation of the LIAP is the Bulgarian Furniture Cluster as project partner of the FORESDA project. Its team will be involved in the organization and coordination of all activities and as well in the dissemination at national and European levels.

The other organizations that will be involved in the implementation of the activities are:

- Bulgarian Branch Chamber of Woodworking and Furniture Industry as the main branch organization with 350 FBI members. They have the biggest expertise in FBI in Bulgaria and will be involved in the organization of all LIAP actions.
- University of Forestry and professional schools will be responsible partners for the implementation of the activities related to education. Policy makers and authorised government institutions have to be involved in the policy activities.
- Bulgarian Patent office will be involved for the implementation of the branding seminar.

## **9. TARGET GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS**

**Action 1:** Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities.

Target groups: FBI companies, government representatives, UF, professional schools.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI.

**Action 2:** Survey and analysis for internships.

Target groups: FBI companies, UF, students.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI

**Action 3:** Business lectures and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University Of Forestry.

Target groups: students, pupils, teachers.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI, UF, professional schools, FBI companies and business experts /lectors.

**Action 4:** Competition on smart ideas from young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018.

Target groups: young people, students, pupils.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI, UF, professional schools, FBI companies, FBI experts, Inter Expo Center, Professional media.

**Action 5:** Internet campaign for propagating good practice of innovation and cross sectoral activities.

Target groups: FBI companies, students, pupils, citizens.

Stakeholders: FBI companies, professional media.

**Action 6:** Seminar for branding and design protection.

Target groups: FBI companies, designers, interior studios.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI, Bulgarian Patent Office.



**Action 7:** Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies

Target groups: Start-up companies, companies with innovation and cross-sectoral activities.

Stakeholders: BBCWFI, policy makers and authorized government institutions.

## 10. RESOURCES AND BUDGET

This section describes the needs and resources for executing and conducting the Bulgarian LIAP, as follows:

- Human resources from BFC and stakeholders from the working group to conduct the activities and for expertise in the different actions - organization of the events, analysis, communication and dissemination, IT activities, advocacy.
- Facilities will be need for the organization of the seminar and the competition (location/venue, catering, technical facilities).
- Financial resources will be needed for the:
  - development of the internet campaign;
  - organization of the competition on smart ideas;
  - organization of the seminar for branding and design protection.

**The estimated budget needed to perform the activities is 5,000 Euro.**

**Action 1:** Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities. This action will be done together with BFC and BBCWFI with their *own resources*.

**Action 2:** Survey and analysis for internships. This action will be done together with BFC and BBCWFI with their *own resources*.

**Action 3:** Business lectors and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University Of Forestry. This action will be conducted by BFC, BBCWFI, UF, professional schools and business with their *own resources*.

**Action 4:** Competition on smart ideas from young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technomebel 2018: *1,500 Euro*.

**Action 5:** Internet campaign for propagating good practices on innovation and cross sectoral activities. *2,000 Euro*.

**Action 6:** Seminar for branding and design protection. *1,500 Euro*.

**Action 7:** Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies. Own resources.

## **11. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES**

BFC and the stakeholders will communicate and exchange information about the implementation and achieved results of the Local Action Plan. To raise the awareness on the LIAP activities, information will be disseminated on BFC and stakeholders websites, social media channels, newsletters of BFC and BBCWFI, presentations on external events.

BFC will disseminate information through its members' and partnership networks at national, European and international levels publishing information on their websites, social media channels, sending newsletters, and making presentations on external events.

BBCWFI as a main stakeholder will disseminate information through its members network (350 companies), publishing information on their websites, publishing information in their newsletters (sent to 4000 addresses) and publishing information in specialized magazines.

Other involved stakeholders will publish information on their websites and social media channels.





## 12. RISK ANALYSIS

Describe the possible risks and group them according the following types:

DESCRIPTION OF POSSIBLE RISK	PROBABILITY OF OCCURRENCE	IMPACT	REMEDIAL ACTIONS
1. possible risk is to not meet understanding from the government institutions regarding the tax deduction.	0,2	0,6	Creating a motivation report with justification and expected impact together with best practices in other countries.

## 13. APPENDIX I: LIAP BULGARIA - TABLE OVERVIEW

LOCAL ACTION PLAN DETAILS	TIMELINE						OBJECTIVES	TARGET GROUPS	ESTIMATED BUDGET (EUR)
	PP 3 (1-6/18)		PP 4 (7-12/18)		PP 5 (1-6/18)				
	01-03	04-06	07-09	10-12	01-03	04-06			
<b>1. Presentation at the Annual Branch Conference on cross-sectoral collaboration and remanufacturing possibilities</b>							Presentation of good practices in furniture innovations, cross-sectoral collaboration and re-manufacturing	200 Bulgarian FBI companies, government institutions - Minister of Economy, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry	own resources
Preparation	1-15 Oct. 2017								
Dissemination	15 Oct. - 15 Nov. 2017								
Realization	17 Nov. 2017								
Capitalization									
<b>2. Survey and analysis for internships</b>							Match the needs of business and students	FBI business and students	own resources
Preparation	X								
Dissemination	X								
Realization	X								
Capitalization	X								
<b>3. Business sectors and new technology demonstrations in the professional schools and University Of Forestry</b>							Improve the connection between the education system and business needs. A strong promotion of the FBI professions and new technologies in front of the young people.	Students and teachers	own resources
Preparation	X								
Dissemination	X								
Realization	X								
Capitalization									
<b>4. Competition for smart ideas of young people during the exhibitions World of Furniture and Technobel 2018</b>							Increasing the interest of young people in the profession and innovative thinking	young people and business	1500,00 Euro
Preparation	X								
Dissemination	X								
Realization		X							
Capitalization		X							
<b>5. Internet campaign for propagating good practice of innovation and cross sectoral activities.</b>							Propagating good practice of innovation and cross sectoral activities demonstrating the innovation advantages and possibilities of FBI sector.	Business, science, government, citizens/customers	2000,00 Euro
Preparation	X								
Dissemination		X	X	X	X	X			
Realization			X	X	X	X			
Capitalization							X		
<b>6. Seminar for branding and design protection</b>							Increase the knowledges regarding the legal protection of the industrial property rights with accent to the innovations and branding.	FBI business	1500,00 Euro
Preparation			X						
Dissemination			X						
Realization				X					
Capitalization				X					
<b>7. Lobbying for tax deduction for innovations and start-up companies.</b>							Starting a communication with related authorities to realize the idea	Government and business	own resources
Preparation	X								
Dissemination	X								
Realization	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Capitalization					X	X			