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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to establish, develop and facilitate an innovative environment among the SMEs and R&D entities, the PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster organized several support activities such as exhibitions, expert meetings from different industrial sectors, B2B matchmaking events, working group meetings and conferences.

The PRO WOOD Cluster in collaboration with Transylvania University of Braşov elaborated the implementation strategy of cascading concept for wood manufacturing in regional FBI. In order to implement the cascading concept among the SMEs from FBI, PRO WOOD Cluster organized several dissemination events for cluster members. One of the major event was the EXPOWOOD exhibiton and conference, where the cluster is co-organizer every year. Under this event, FORESDA workshops have also been organized, with participation of the members of the working group, consultants, representatives of the academic and research sector, companies. Study site visits were also organized at the Holzindustrie Schweighofer's factory in Reci. The aim of the visits was to give a tangible example for SME's how to implement the cascading concept in wood processes.

The PRO WOOD Cluster presented the cascading concept of wood manufacturing in different national and international events with the aim to encourage the innovative thinking among the SMEs in FBI sector. For instance, Northern-Transylvanian Cluster consortium organized for the 4th time the Transylvanian Clusters Conference between the 17th and 18th of May 2018, in Cluj Napoca. Within the panel entitled 'Challenging Industries, Trans-continental approach', next to other important representatives of the FBI sector, Rezső Kádár, project manager, presented the FORESDA project with particular focus on the cluster's pilot programme, discussing with the other panelists about the cascading use of wood. The PRO WOOD participated in May 2018, at the Policy Dialogue Event & 11th Forum for Innovation organized by the Made in Danube project consortium in Bucharest, where Andrea Sulyok-Pál presented FORESDA and the cascading use of wood pilot project within the panel entitled Innovation for Development and Competitiveness through clusters in the field of Bioeconomy.

In order to increase the trans-sectorial collaboration, a regional matchmaking event and dissemination of newest technology within FBI sector have been organized within Expowood exhibitions.

In the same time, in order to support the establishment of innovative environment among the different business and R&D institutes matchmaking events were organized between SMEs, public authorities and academia from international level (such as Univeristy of Sopron, Croatiaoan Forest Research Institute, Univeristy of Ljubliana, Slovenian Forestry Institute, Transilvania University of Brasov and editor board of Imageline Revista Intarzia, national journal of wood industry), on this events the opportunity was given to develop new, joint innovative project ideas.

In order to increase international collaboration among the SMEs from PRO WOOD cluster and international stakeholders, PRO WOOD Cluster participated at four different international events. First event was the „Joint Romanian – Hungarian International Cluster Conference in 20-22 November, 2018 in Oradea, Romania - Debrecen, Hungary. Second achievement of transnational collaboration between PRO WOOD and other FORESDA partners regarding pilot activities was the cluster conference and meeting in Sofia, 26th-28th March, 2019. During the meeting in Bulgaria the FORESDA project partners discussed the following topics: access to forests for disable people, building with wood and creative industries in relation of FBI. The third achievement of transnational collaboration between PRO WOOD Cluster and other FORESDA partners regarding pilot activities was the co-organization of EXPOWOOD by PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster and the participation of Competence Centre LTD for Research and Development from Croatia at Expowood. The fourth event was the European Cluster Conference 2019, 14th-16th May, 2019 in Bucharest, where PRO WOOD Cluster presented the FORESDA project and the main activites in the cluster, with particular focus on the concept of cascading use of wood.

In order to increase the visibility of new technological initiatives and innovative project ideas, information about the upcoming and held events, PRO WOOD Cluster provides regular newsletter service for its members and the is very active on different social media networks as well.

2. MOTIVATION FOR PILOT INNOVATION ENVIRONMENT

2.1 BACKGROUND

The context of the Pilot Innovation Environment is promising in terms of cross-sectorial collaboration and innovation among SMEs and R&D entities. In the region there is a strong wood industry sector, including international companies but also a number of SMEs. In the same time the most acknowledged university, namely Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering, Transilvania University of Brasov is in the region. The PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster has more than 40 SMEs as cluster members, several local and regional public authorities, consulting companies and catalysts. This regional context with a strong presence of PRO WOOD Cluster, the Pilot Innovation Environment can be developed in Romania. f

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Pilot are to:

- increase the sectorial business collaboration
- increase cross-sectorial business collaboration,
- develop new innovative products in FBI
- more competitive FBI
- more innovative FBI

In order to achieve these objectives, the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering, Transilvania University of Brasov was assisting the innovation ideas, development of the cascading concept. Actually the cascading concept within the FBI is not known by the SMEs in Romania, therefore PRO WOOD cluster considered the importance to elaborate the implementation strategy for this approach. The use of cascading concept will help to reduce the raw material lose, improve the wood manufacturing by channeling the different raw materials and decrease the raw material demand for the same production outputs. Regional Development Agency was offering its support in terms of involvement of regional and national policy makers, while Holzindustrie Schweighofer offered the opportunity to

organize several site visits, giving the opportunity to learn and to get an insight into their way of processing wood efficiently for local SMEs was provided.

3. SHORT DESCRIPTION OF PIE

Within the FORESDA project the PIE was established and developed. PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster organized several support activities, meetings, B2B matchmaking events, working group meetings and conferences. The following activities were realized by PRO WOOD Cluster:

- Establishment of working groups in each interest sector, like academic, business, public authorities and expert/consultants
- Development of concepts for the pilot by FORESDA working group
- Dissemination of cascading concept, uploads on online platform, upload public material on social media networks
- Site visits for demonstration of cascading concept in wood factory (Holzindustrie Schweighofer)
- Organization of different meetings for network development within FBI and cross-sectorial stakeholders
- Organization of EXPOWOOD for dissemination of technologies for SMEs, technology and know-how transfer for target SMEs
- Organization of regional, national and international matchmaking events and dissemination activities for FBI
- Development of new innovative technological initiative within a collaboration between SMEs and R&D entities
- Participation on different international cluster conferences, presentation of Cascading Concept for different stakeholders from different countries

4. PIE ACHIEVEMENTS

The establishment of working groups in each interest sectors was successful, namely: academic, business, public authorities and expert/consultants.

In collaboration with the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering, Transilvania University of Brasov, PRO WOOD Cluster elaborated the implementation strategy of cascading use of wood concept in Romania. Permanent dissemination of cascading concept has been achieved, by uploads on online platforms, uploading public materials on social media networks, all provided by PRO WOOD Cluster.

For member SMEs of the PRO WOOD Cluster and to domestic and international partners site visits were organized with the aim of demonstration of cascading concept in wood factory (Holzindustrie Schweighofer).

Several working group meetings, meetings for network development within FBI and cross-sectorial stakeholders were also organized by PRO WOOD.

However, the main event co-organized by PRO WOOD Cluster was the EXPOWOOD exhibition and conference for dissemination of technologies for SMEs, technology and know-how transfer for target SMEs. This platform offered a perfect place to meet SMEs with R&D entities and to start thinking and developing innovative projects with common goals. Within EXPOWOOD, national and international matchmaking events, B2B meetings were organized. Moreover, in each year PRO WOOD Cluster participated on different international cluster conferences, where FORESDA presentation and new approaches related to cascading concept were presented for different stakeholders from different countries.

4.1 CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL STRATEGY (RELATED TO FBI/FORESDA)

Since there is no existing strategy or implementation plan related to cascading concept in the romanian FBI sector, the elaborated implementation strategy of cascading concept for FBI was a real necessity in Romania. In this perspective the dissemination activities of cascading concept were and still are necessary in Romania. PRO WOOD showed its engagement by organizing stakeholder meetings, working group meetings, exhibitions and

site visits within the FORESDA project. These activities are in line with international strategies and sectorial approaches, while in domestic circumstances it means a real pilot progress to show and implement new ways for the FBI sector.

4.2 CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL/REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION POTENTIAL

The romanian PIE contributed to the national/regional development and innovation potential of SMEs by facilitating the matchmaking events, where SMEs met with R&D entities, developed joint innovative project ideas. One of the most relevant example for this collaboration is the innovative project idea led by TE-K 26 SYSTEM Ltd. in collaboration with universities from Romania, while the name of the project is „Innovative Equipment for Reduction of Power Consumption and to Ensure Permanent Energy Supply at Small and Medium Power Consumers by TE-K 26 SYSTEM Ltd.” PRO WOOD organized a number of meetings by the involvement of public authorities, SMEs from the region and universities. These events offered a unique opportunity to match the interests of different stakeholders within the FBI sector. The output of these events are the better understanding of the needs of businesses, the regulatory framework from the authorities but also due to brainstormings a regional network has been elaborated among the SMEs and R&D entites. The SMEs got information from R&D entities about newest technologies, while the SMEs from the region understood, got to know and started to invest in new technologies such as in CNC machinery, more energy efficient technologies in production lines, in insulation at doors and windows, but also got knowledge about 3D Printing. The SMEs were very thankful about this knowledge sharing. According to their feedback, through these channels they have got knowledge and business partners to develop their businesses in innovative and sustainable ways.

Moreover, PRO WOOD invited to present at many events different pilots from other countries, for local SMEs. The role of PRO WOOD was to show the national and international trends for its members, in terms of technology development, new innovations, business cooperations, etc. PRO WOOD has also provided new directions towards to

innovations to the SMEs by analyzing the state of the art of FBI sector and presentation of the newest international trends.

4.3 CONTRIBUTION TO THE OBJECTIVES OF FORESDA

Through the PIE, many SMEs, R&D entites and regional and national authorities from FBI have been reached. In order to involve more partners in the regional business development in FBI sector, PRO WOOD cluster invited for joint collaboration different stakeholders, such as local vocational schools, universities, representatives of the Ministry of Forests, national association of different business sectors, NGOs, and member SMEs of PRO WOOD cluster. The aim of these activities was to improve the low level of collaboration and dialog among the Government, education, industry and representatives of local society. PRO WOOD has also collected detailed information about its member SMEs and provided an online platform on prowood.ro webpage with the aim of increase the online visibility of micro- and small businesses, to increase the business collaboration among the cluster members. In the same time several innovative project, update of technology have been realized at the SMEs. One of the most relevant example for bringing together multiple stakeholders and contributing to joint innovation is the above-mentioned collaboration between TE-K 26 SYSTEM Ltd and universities from Romania.

Related to supporting cross-sectoral, transnational innovation the management of PRO WOOD Cluster participated on different cluster meetings, exhibitions and conferences. In the same time, member companies of PRO WOOD cluster also participated on such events with the aim of get knowledge and to develop own innovation in FBI. PRO WOOD permanently shares information to the member SMEs about international exhibitons, available financial support programs, in order to increase the participation of SMEs but also to increase the visibility of SMEs on international level. Several site visits and dissemination activities, matchmaking events have been organized to provide adequate knowedledge - and technology transfer to SMEs. Moreover, in order to develop the skills of human resources at SMEs, PRO WOOD does also support the organization of different trainings. Few years ago, the cluster started a mentoring program where they involve experienced masters and students from vocational schools with the aim of knowledge transfer in practice.

4.4 HOW DOES THE PILOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRAMME PRIORITY “INNOVATIVE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DANUBE REGION”?

The pilot contributes to the Programme Priority “INNOVATIVE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DANUBE REGION” in many different ways.

In order to foster cooperation and exchange of knowledge between SMEs, academia and the public sector in FBI of Danube Region, PRO WOOD Cluster organized each year matchmaking events within the EXPOWOOD exhibition, but has also organized meetings for different stakeholders. PRO WOOD has also developed new project ideas in collaboration with SMEs, university and vocational schools for development of human resources, innovative technology transfer and elaboration of new wooden products.

In order to improve business support, to strengthen the capacities of SMEs for cooperation and trade, PRO WOOD informed the SMEs about upcoming international exhibitions and provide technical support to SMEs to submit business development project proposals, but also to start new startups in FBI.

PRO WOOD Cluster offered also support to the member enterprises to organize trainings for employees at SMEs. The cluster contributed to the establishment of startups, especially in case of cross-sectorial collaboration, in rural areas, in particular with the agricultural sector.

In order to increase the international business collaboration in Danube Region, PRO WOOD involved several SMEs in participation on different events in countries from Danube Region. The cluster also supports the SMEs to improve their webpages, skills in communication, or in other framework conditions where competitive infrastructure is missing.

4.5 HOW DOES THE PILOT FIT INTO EUSDR?

PRO WOOD tried to identify the specific needs, challenges for the FBI sector, not only in Romania but also from the Danube Region. In collaboration with the most relevant stakeholders from FBI of the Danube Region, the common interest is to find an appropriate response for these challenges. The FORESDA project was one of the most successful projects within the FBI sector of the Danube Region, in the countries the FBI sector were characterized by low level of technology transfer, lack of collaboration among the SMEs, low level of participation on international fairs and meetings, and well embedded or traditional but sometimes outdated knowledge. In the frame of the FORESDA project, the PIE was well established and organized with the involvement of a number of stakeholders from universities, wood industry, government and civil society. With the opportunity of meeting all of stakeholders, a communication and collaboration started, which was not experienced before. In this perspective, this supportive activity within FBI has to be continued by all FORESDA project partners as well as by PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster.

5. CONTINUATION OF PIE

PRO WOOD is dedicated to realize new business collaboration with other SMEs from the Danube Region. As first priority that should be mentioned is the development of new innovative project proposals and to find the most suitable project partners for these projects. According to the EU strategy for the Danube Region, the strategy itself is „not for funding, it is about closer cooperation.” In this perspective, the activities of the cluster fit perfectly into this strategy, where the development of regional cohesion and improvement of overall living standards are the main objectives. In terms of continuing of the started activities PRO WOOD cluster elaborated a 5 years strategy, namely the FINCOM Local Action Plan with the time framework of July 2019 – July 2024. The FINCOM working group has been established, who is the responsible for implementation of the FINCOM LAP. There are four objectives, identified by FINCOM working group, which have to be improved/developed. The strategical areas are:

1. Development and improvement of the image of FBI sector
2. Provide lobby and legislative support the interests of FBI sector in policy shaping and legislation.

3. Collaboration for an innovative wood industry by ensuring well-structured financial and business environment for FBI.

4. Prioritize the education and human resources development for the FBI sector.

The involved stakeholders to achieve this objective are member companies of PRO WOOD Regional Wood Cluster, local vocational schools from the region, consultancy companies, designer companies, and the KO-FA Association – management entity of the PROO WOOD Cluster.

There are several new project ideas, developed under the framework of FORESDA project, which are partially already submitted and under development for the future. The aim of PRO WOOD Cluster is to implement these project ideas and to keep up the transnational collaboration for further projects.

PRO WOOD Cluster permanently provides project consultancy for its member SMEs but not only, while the new funding opportunities are also continuously monitored. In the same time, members of PRO WOOD Cluster are informed via newsletter service and physical meetings about newest regulations and funding opportunities.