

**SMES SHARE PERSPECTIVES ABOUT AGROFORESTRY BIOECONOMY
AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

The "INBEC for the future" ended today in Bragança, where more than 70 people contributed to leverage project ideas on different key themes for business competitiveness and territorial development.

In this initiative, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (FEDER) through the Interreg V-A Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) 2014-2020 programme and by the Spanish foundation Cesefor, supported by the Collaborative Laboratories ForestWISE and MORE, the Secretary of State for Regional Development, who attended the opening session, stressed the importance of active cooperation between cross-border territories and the alignment of this initiative with the Regional Development Strategy. She also mentioned the importance of boosting the forestry sector, essential condition for sustainable social development, and also the need for companies to continue working together with the Academy and the Collaborative Laboratories, ensuring the valorisation of the territories, their competitiveness, regional development and, consequently, territorial cohesion.

With a high level of participation from companies, this Iberian conference highlighted some key aspects for the development of new business opportunities, namely the digitalisation of the forestry sector, the use of biomaterials and wood in construction, the valorisation of non-wood forest products and forest subproducts and waste, road construction with subproducts from the forestry industry, the commercialisation and management of hunting and fishing resources, the potential of mountain water resources, the valorisation of cultural heritage, among others.

In this context of agro-forestry bioeconomy and circular economy, some limitations to the implementation of business strategies were also identified, namely the lack of incentives adjusted to the companies and the territory, the difficulties associated with the structure of forest property, the need to create profitability for forest owners, and the need to retain qualified people and companies in the region that invest in processes that promote bioeconomy and circular economy.



The initiative ended with the creation of working groups to develop and present project ideas related to technologies and trends in agroforestry bioeconomy and circular economy. Some of the projects were selected in order to elaborate their conceptual design, and the dynamics of this workshop also allowed the interaction between participants and potential business partners, besides the connection with experts for the planning and implementation of their projects. Following this event, companies can also access, free of charge, specialized support to develop their project ideas and prepare digitalisation and innovation processes, by contacting Cesefor and CoLAB ForetWISE.

The main conclusions of this initiative highlighted the need to create innovative solutions in line with the territory need, promoting job creation and the establishment of critical mass in the region, the need to establish more partnerships between companies and entities of the scientific and technological system that promote the cooperation between the two countries, the digitalisation of the agroforestry sector and the promotion and development of new markets related to the bioeconomy and circular economy.

For more information, please go to this page <https://inbec.org/> or send an email to media@forestwise.pt

