Summary description of the strategy/action plan (developed and/or implemented)

The strategy describes the background context with specific reference to recent European Plastic strategy and SUP directive. Based on the present EU regulation and development of the packaging market it highlights our vision regarding the advantages of multimaterials made of paper/bioplastic in comparison to conventional plastic packaging. The CE situation of the value chains is shortly recalled to point out the basic challenges that need to be addressed to increase the market maintaining sustainability and proper waste management. Multi-materials often poses constrains in recycling therefore sustainability strongly depends on real, not potential, waste management practices and available infrastructure. Since bio-based plastics can be either biodegradable or non-biodegradable the end-of-life is addressable through two options “Material recycling or organic recycling”. In our vision material recycling is the preferred option, before organic recycling (industrial composting/anaerobic treatment) due to material preservation. Besides in order to reduce the impact on recycling plants the following general rule should be implemented: (i) Non food packaging and dry food packaging shall be recycled, preferentially in the paper stream (ii) Wet food packaging in contact with wet or greasy food shall be organically recycled – composted in aerobic or anaerobic conditions.

Developing of effective recycling standard for ecodesign and multimaterial recycling as well as the advanced recycling infrastructures in CE shall be encourage in order to meet the complexity of new packaging multimaterials. Packaging fees could play a crucial role in the promotion of multimaterial packaging better suited for recycling or composting. Improved technical communication among stakeholders of paper-bioplastics value chain and policy makers may help to support the change and make proper decisions.
NUTS region(s) concerned by the strategy/action plan (relevant NUTS level)

The strategy was developed with the contributions of partners from NUTS regions: SI02, SI01, HR04, HR03, PL12, PL11, SK01, HU32, ITC4 and will be implemented at least in the same regions or broader.

Expected impact and benefits of the strategy/action plan for the concerned territories and target groups

Our strategy will help to spread awareness regarding sustainability of paper/bioplastic packaging solutions thus contributing to a gradual replacement in CE of conventional plastic packaging in several applications. The development of these new products represents a relatively large potential new market for many SMEs of the region that will contribute to export as well. The strategy point out some critical factors with reference to waste management and set up solutions to reduce the impact on the two major recycling routes of these materials. Decision makers in private companies may use it to identify the most reasonable/sustainable end-of-life for their products while political decision makers may use it to promote the development of advanced recycling infrastructures in the CE region.

Sustainability of the developed or implemented strategy/action plan and its transferability to other territories and stakeholders

Sustainability of the developed strategy will depend upon the implementation at regional level by the value chain stakeholders, however, the TBPC will adopt the strategy and will continue to update and promote it as function of implementation of general EU strategy in the field.

Lessons learned from the development/implementation process of the strategy/action plan and added value of transnational cooperation

During the discussion with stakeholders it became clearer that the current market push to replace plastic packaging with wide development of compostable products it is not sustainable. There is a need of shared value chain guidelines to address end of life as a function of packaging product application to reduce the impact on recycling plants. Material recycling shall be the preferred solution for most of the applications meanwhile considering the development of advanced collection systems and recycling infrastructures.
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