

Finland 15.2.2021

Dear Prof. Dr. Algirdas Jasinskas,

Vytautas Magnus University, Agriculture Academy,

We are pleased to announce that we start implementation of H2020:BRANCHES. BRANCHES *Boosting Rural Bioeconomy Networks following multi-actor approaches* is the project implemented during 36 months (01/01/2021 – 31/12/2023) on the topic RUR-15-2018-2019-2020: Thematic networks compiling knowledge ready for practice.

The overall goal of BRANCHES is to foster knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas, enhancing the viability and competitiveness of biomass supply chains and promoting innovative technologies, rural bioeconomy solutions, and sustainable agricultural and forest management.

This will be achieved by applying a participatory, multi-actor approach which engages relevant stakeholders across the various targeted value chains, combined with a strong dissemination, exploitation and communication strategy which will share the activities and results of BRANCHES. This will ultimately result in improved energy efficiency within biomass supply chains, and the energy self-sufficiency of farms will be improved, while energy-related costs will be minimized.

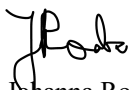
Research on creating a strong, self-sufficient, circular and sustainable bioeconomy has accelerated during the last ten years and a vast amount of knowledge has been generated. However, due to the multiple sectors and complex value chains involved, a significant part of that valuable information is in danger of remaining untapped, due to insufficient communication between experts on these advances, and practitioners, i.e. the potential end-users of this knowledge, such as farmers, foresters and entrepreneurs. The practitioners are expected to supply raw materials and endorse the strengthening of a sustainable bioeconomy as a major aspect of rural development in their regions, but require improved networks such as those developed in BRANCHES, in order to facilitate knowledge exchange and uptake.

We would like to establish the cooperation of the UWM research team represented by Prof. Marek Marks with Prof. Dr. Algirdas Jasinskas as one of Facilitators of H2020:BRANCHES for knowledge transfer to 3rd countries and the Coordinator of the Vytautas Magnus University contribution to the Project.

Cooperation between Consortium of BRANCHES and Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy in the frame of the Project would cover following activities:

- Receiving and transferring information about BRANCHES to interested Lithuanian actors.
- Cooperation in the field of a cross-border exchange of innovative practical knowledge for the mobilization of biomass and the integration of bioenergy solutions in rural environment.
- Invitations to relevant workshops and show-case days
- Reporting on the actions, which could be developed in Lithuania in connection with BRANCHES, especially your role as a national contact point for BRANCHES in Lithuania
- Involving the target actors of the BRANCHES actions to ensure an appropriate impact of the knowledge transfer. The practical knowledge collected by BRANCHES can be relevant to the development of new initiatives on biomass supply and bioenergy generation in rural areas of Lithuania.

Sincerely yours, on behalf of the BRANCHES Consortium



Coordinator Johanna Routa
Natural Resources Institute Finland