

TRAINING FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEURS: STRATEGY, CIRCULAR ECONOMY & DIGITALISATION

Business Model Case Studies

**re:GREEN - Green and Digital Skills for
Rural Entrepreneurs**

re:GREEN

<https://www.facebook.com/reGREEN.info>

<https://lisva.org/>

www.ttogether.org

www.swideas.se



Co-funded by
the European Union

Business Model Case Studies from Germany, Lithuania & Sweden

These materials showcase different circular and resource efficient business models in the fields of agribusiness, green, resource efficient and/or traditional knowledge-based practices. The goal of these is to serve as inspiration for other rural businesses, including those of Rural Entrepreneurs to further implement sustainable practices and Circular Economy principles within their business models and operations. These cases illustrate how companies working on very distinct areas can act sustainably, following Circular Economy principles and being resource-efficient, despite their field of action.

Six business models from a diverse range of sectors are presented and enshrined the reGREEN learning-teaching program devised under the Erasmus+ project 2022-1-LT01-KA210-ADU-000084225.

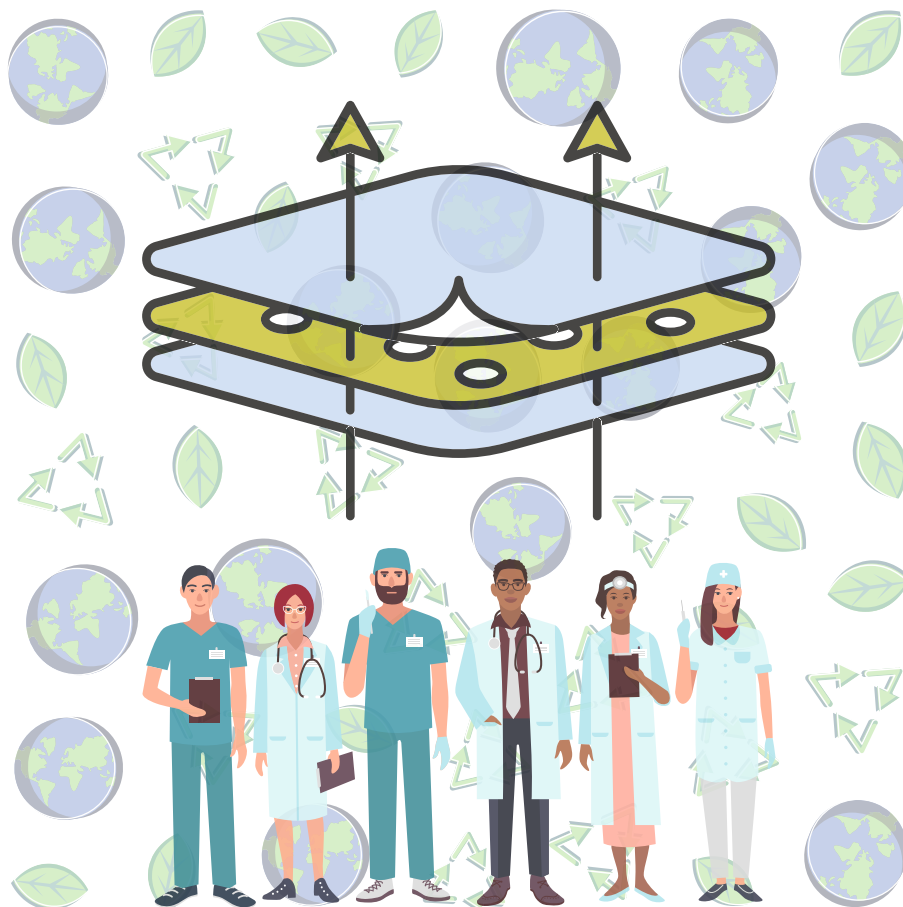
1. Companies such as Green Textile Solutions exhibit the possibility of being successful while being producers that focus on fair-trade, organic and skin-friendly clothing.
2. Raumly is an example of concept innovation, as they ease the process of space renting and living both to costumers and owners, promoting collaborative consumption.
3. Ekoväx i Norden AB is an example of sustainable farming and green practices within the farming sector.
4. Mönsterås Biogas AB unveils the possibility to contribute to its community by providing a necessary service – in this case, manure product – in a sustainable manner.
5. Dirbinyčia and Būk su manimi illustrate how two organisations can cooperate for achieving better results that promote the reuse of clothing and other home items.
6. Finally, Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas illustrates how beekeeping can still be realized in a sustainable and respectful way that ensures no-harm to the bees.



1. Green Textile Solutions

Germany

Green Textile Solutions motto is 'Stay Healthy and Enjoy Sustainability'. Meanwhile it pursues its mission through development of sustainable textile solutions which save energy and water, leveraging competence through innovation, focusing on sustainable and better health, working on Sustainability and Fairtrade inclusion. The company established in 2017 by Dalia Hassan in Bonn, Germany. She is the founder of Green Textile Solutions.



GREEN TEXTILE SOLUTIONS, producers of fair-trade, organic and skin-friendly medical workwear. Dedicated to fair working conditions, minimal use of chemicals, and responsibly sourced materials, we are excited to share our “healthy textile” vision with you! Green textiles, Hospital Clothing, Sustainable Textiles, FairTrade Clothing, Sustainable Workwear, and FairTrade Workwear.

There are three main values upon which GREEN TEXTILE SOLUTIONS was founded:

- Providing Safe and Healthy Textiles for our Medical Clients.
- Fair-Trade Production.
- Protecting the Environment with our ecological production and product.

Sustainable professional textiles made of natural fibres for the medical workers, hospitals, and health related companies and industries. There is an option in the website that customers can order a sample to use and observe the product quality. Afterwards, they can place a full order. Also, it is possible to contact them through online channels and set a consultation beforehand.

Green Textile team take part in different trade fairs, events, conferences, and seminars nationally and across border also where they reach their consumers and do product / service marketing directing with consumer groups. Using social media channels and circulating newsletters are also promoting the communication between the business and consumers.

Green Textile Solutions stands for social and ecological sustainability in the field of workwear in the medical sector.

- Natural fibres for more comfort:
 - The innovative textiles prevent bacteria from picking up and offer additional protection against various liquids. At the same time, the natural fibres ensure an optimal balance of body temperature.
- Less energy consumption:
 - In the washing process, our innovative textiles can be washed, dried, and ironed faster. The use of 97% natural fibres almost eliminates the excretion of microplastics into the environment.
- Fair and sustainable:
 - Green Textile work directly with specialized and certified textile production facilities. Transparency along the entire supply chain ensures sustainability and fair working conditions. With each product, you can improve your eco-balance, reduce CO2 emissions and attract new employees to your facility.

Green Textile focus on making of natural fibres clothes with natural protection and prevent the absorption of bacteria in a completely natural way and without chemicals. The company give its best effort to be aware of how much emissions they result. They have adapted the business contracts with their consumers so that the data is stored on servers that are operated with green(renewable) electricity.

2. Raumly *Germany*

Raumly, an emerging online platform that offers tech-driven solutions to find shared spaces and equipment in North-Rhine Westphalia. We make a change in the way we consume resources. We at Raumly strongly believe in collaborative consumption and the growing potential of sharing economy. Raumly was set to become a game-changer in the market of collaborative consumption. The platform has advanced features such as automated recommendations and smart pricing. Both these features are meant to offer the local renters and owners ease of use sustainable space renting and living.



Founded and managed by Ivan Golovko who started his company in 2020 with home visits, right at the beginning it was a challenge to find the first host for event at home space. Then he approached other local companies, as well as companies throughout Germany and entered cooperations. It didn't take long for his schedule to be full of local event hosting, but there was a downside. He had to give up more than half of his turnover to companies and focus on the networking. Thus, he opened his own company at the beginning of 2020 in the centre of Bonn.

Sustainable and collaborative space sharing, space renting with green environment for local events, and visitors. The beneficiaries are local business owners, enterprises & event management companies and industries in Germany.

People can reach out through the website which help to see the place and contact the team. Afterwards, they can place an order with Raumly. Also, it is possible to contact them through online channels and set a consultation beforehand. Raumly is being active on their online media and other local social platforms. By this, they are reaching out to their expected consumers and visitors.

The goal of Raumly is to provide sustainable green space to everyone who desired to host event. Through Raumly, every company can host a full-time or part-time event of up to 100 people an hour and enjoy the freedom of using and utilizing the space.

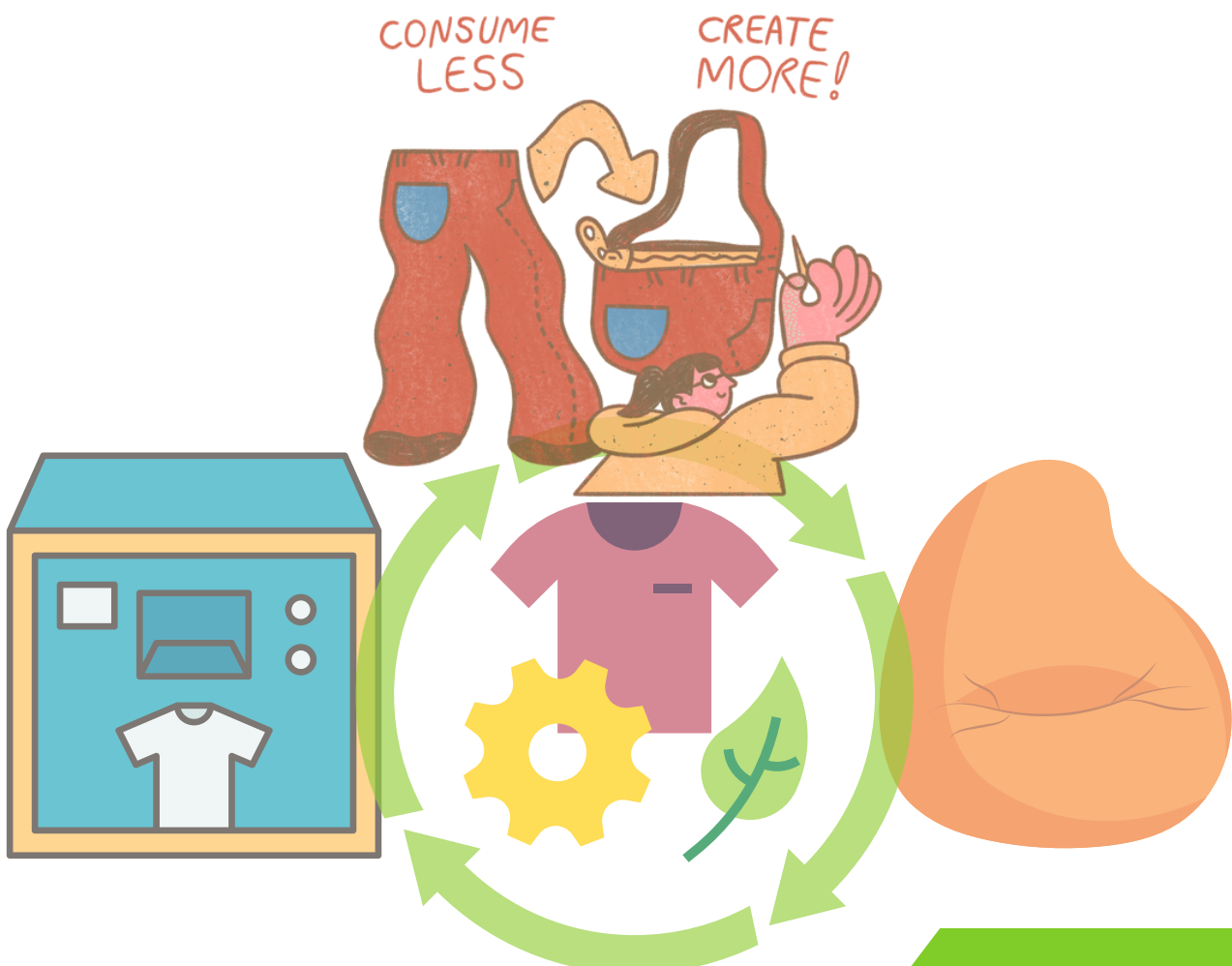
Raumly focuses on establishing networks between local and internationals by hosting different events locally with green space. The company tries its best to keep the space energetic and liveable with green thing's touches. They also provide green electricity and green plants in the space to make the usage of resource efficient.

Raumly has set remarks of using the space in a green way to save energy and hosting events to broaden the chance of networking. This is how the company plays a role in sustainable usage of spaces and utilizing available resources with efficiency and skillset.



3. VšĮ „Būk su manimi“ & VšĮ „Dirbinyčia“ *Lithuania*

“Dirbinyčia” and “Būk su manimi”, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Mažeikiai, a town in northwestern Lithuania, have formed a powerful collaboration aimed at reducing textile, furniture, and footwear waste while promoting sustainability and social welfare. Through their joint efforts, these female-led entrepreneurs have established an innovative circular business model that not only benefits the environment but also supports those in need and fosters educational initiatives.



The partnership between Dirbinyčia and Būk su manimi thrives within a shared workspace, where their complementary activities seamlessly complement each other. Būk su manimi takes charge of collecting used textiles, toys, household items, and even furniture, carefully sorting and cleaning them to prepare for their next phase. These items are then either sold at a symbolic price or donated to individuals who require assistance. This dual approach ensures that usable items find new homes and are not needlessly discarded.

For the items that are not suitable for direct reuse, Dirbinyčia steps in and works their transformative magic. Within their premises, textiles are repurposed and transformed into appealing beanbags, toys, and other handmade crafts. This creative process breathes new life into discarded materials, giving them a second chance to serve a useful purpose. Through this upcycling process, approximately 13 tons of items are collected each month, and an impressive 10 tons are refurbished or reused, drastically reducing the waste that would have otherwise ended up in landfills.

Dirbinyčia and Būk su manimi cooperation for circular business model embodies the principles of sustainability, environmental consciousness, and social responsibility. By effectively managing the flow of resources and products, they have created a virtuous cycle that minimizes waste and maximizes value creation. Not only do they contribute to the preservation of the environment by diverting significant amounts of waste from landfills, but they also address social issues by providing affordable goods to those in need.

Additionally, education plays a vital role in the operations of these NGOs. They organize workshops and awareness campaigns to engage the community and raise awareness about the importance of recycling and reusing materials. By sharing their knowledge and skills, Dirbinyčia and Būk su manimi empower individuals to make sustainable choices, fostering a mindset of responsible consumption and waste reduction.

The success of Dirbinyčia and Būk su manimi tandem model serves as an inspiration for other organizations and communities. Through their partnership, they have not only created a thriving social enterprise but have also become catalysts for positive change. By combining their unique strengths and resources, these NGOs have proven that it is possible to achieve sustainability, support those in need, and promote education in a harmonious and profitable manner.



4. Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas (Musteikos kaimo bendruomenė "Musteikos pirkia") *Lithuania*

Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas, located in the village of Musteika in Varėna district municipality, is an important destination for tourism and education. Founded in 2006, the apiary offers visitors a chance to learn about the history and uniqueness of beekeeping in Lithuania, the life of bees, their place in the ecosystem, and their ecology. The wild beekeeping exposition also showcases a number of other old traditional Lithuanian crafts. In summer, it also hosts a braiding week, another vanishing craft.



Beekeeping has been an important tradition in Lithuania for centuries, and Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas is a significant contributor to preserving this traditional craft. This apiary shows the traditions of the longest-surviving and once-profitable beekeeping business in Lithuania, dating back to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It reached its peak of prosperity during the first half of the 16th-17th centuries, and by the 19th century, was only practised in the heavily forested southeastern region of Lithuania where forests were not yet heavily exploited.

Romas Norkūnas, one of the few remaining representatives of traditional beekeeping practice in Lithuania, is known for his work at Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas. While archaic beekeeping is almost forgotten in Lithuania today, this ancient tradition was popular throughout Europe in the past. At Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas, bees are kept in an archaic manner, adapting to the biological cycle of bees, using one of the most sustainable and environmental-friendly practices of beekeeping. The apiary uses specially designed wooden structures for bee colonies. When the bees become active, they are observed, and when they swarm, they are captured and housed in free-standing trees or pole barns. Typically, one tree can yield 2-3 kilograms of honey, and a portion of the honeycomb is left for the bees.

Musteikos Drevinės Bitininkystės Bitynas also provides educational programs, tours, and training in traditional beekeeping. During national and international projects, the apiary was renovated and adapted to meet the needs of visitors. The old tradition and customs were documented in the film "Šilų bitės" (also available in English) and the book "Drevinė bitininkystė iš kartos į kartą". Visitors can take the "Honey Trail" tourism route (also available in English and as a mobile app) and children can learn about bees from the booklet "Bičių pamokos". A pedestrian trail for visitors was installed to renew the infrastructure.

This apiary is one of the exemplary social enterprises which focuses on preserving the traditional customs and preserving traditional practices. It also integrates sustainable practices and reaches its customers through products tailored to their needs, such as an educational route mobile app. The apiary received media coverage and is rather well known in Lithuania, gaining enough customers through word-of-mouth.



5. Ekoväx i Norden AB *Sweden*

Ekoväx started in 2008 with large-scale pellet production. Quote from CEO Emil Olsson: "Succeeding requires a little more thought and a little more accuracy - and we all have to work on motivating consumers to continue to make environmentally friendly choices regardless of the economy. But the reward is worth the effort. Not just on the bottom line of the income statement, but also in the form of a really good conscience."

Production of KRAV-certified manure product for different needs. (KRAV is the main Swedish organization that develops and maintains regulations for ecologically sustainable agriculture, founded in 1985 by a consortium of organic producers. KRAV is a member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements.) Ekoväx's products provide balanced fertilization that gives the soil the nutrient content and structure that in turn yield increased harvest levels.



They have over 20 fertilizer products on the market as well as their own range of seeds – spring, autumn and rapeseed. They sell approximately 12,500 tons of pellets per year and, in addition to pellets, also sell wine pomace, seed, fennel seed and other fertilizer products approved for organic production. They also offer their customers advice and training to succeed with their cultivation.

There is a product catalogue and an online assortment with detailed information about the product. Today they have over 20 fertilizer products on the market as well as their own range of seeds. They sell approximately 12,500 tons of pellets per year and, in addition to pellets, they also sell wine pomace, seed, fennel seed and other fertilizer products approved for organic production.

Since 2017 their facilities are driven by solar cell power. The circular economy is thus at the core of their activities, prompting the availability of renewable energy and reducing the consumption of non-renewable resources.

The company highlights the environmental aspect of their products especially by outlining their contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions. For instance, they mention that they are "a well-rounded team from raw material receiver to finished product ready for delivery" and that they themselves cultivate approx. 1,600 ha. They further capitalize on the fact that they are accessible and that other farmers can identify with them, because they are farmers just like them. Ekoväx affirms they want more people to succeed, stand side by side with customers and assist with advice and training for the customer to succeed with their cultivation.

Ekoväx is an example of how rural entrepreneurs can capitalize on the environmental benefits their local activity and collaboration can create. Rather than focusing on the profit, the company emphasized the goals of promoting the success of their community, providing training for others to succeed like them in the utilisation of circular economy practices and principles to reduce their companies/enterprises' impact on the environment.



6. Mönsterås Biogas AB *Sweden*

Scandinavian Biogas and Mönsterås Biogas signed a cooperation agreement to build and operate a biogas plant that will produce liquid biogas and hygienic biofertilizer by recycling farmers' manure. The parties have formed a joint development company, Mönsterås Biogasproduktion AB, which will be responsible for future production. Their customers are large gas station companies, stakeholders in industry and shipping but also major European energy companies. The company starts production in Q4 2024. Information about Scandinavian Biogas: Scandinavian Biogas is a leading Nordic producer of biogas as vehicle fuel. The biogas is CO₂-neutral, extracted from sewage sludge and waste from households and agriculture as well as industrial organic waste. Today there are facilities in Sweden, Norway and Korea. In 2021, the company delivered 366 GWh to the market. Scandinavian Biogas has 100 employees and had a turnover of SEK 394 million in 2021.



Mönsterås Biogas AB is a daughter company of Scandinavian Biogas Fuels International AB. Large-scale production of biogas and biofertilizer. Scandinavian Biogas contributes to a sustainable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

The biogas facility will convert manure from beef, pig, chicken, and egg production in the area into liquid biogas (LBG) and various types of refined biofertilizer. The facility is dimensioned for an annual production of 125 GWh of biogas and approx. 250,000 tonnes of high-quality biofertilizer in various fractions in both liquid and solid forms.

The products of Mönsterås Biogas AB present environmental benefits due to consumers using clean fuel. There is reliable data about how biogas is an alternative to natural gas.

Mönsterås is a daughter company of Scandinavian Biogas. Its differential aspect lies in the direct incorporation of circular economy practices and principles by utilizing manure, a by-product of the ranching industry, to generate electricity in a renewable manner through the generation of biogas, without the need for fossil fuels.

Circular economy and resource efficiency are at the core of this initiative, as it represents an innovative approach to biogas generation. The focus is on the use of manure, a by-product of the ranching industry. The description of the initiative is also associated with its location in Mönsterås, where there is good access to substrate combined with strong local support and committed partners. The targeted customers are for instance sizeable gas-filling station companies, industry and shipping players, and other significant European energy companies.

This case study demonstrates that even bigger and established rural enterprises can use creativity to identify by-products of other industries that can be repurposed to produce other results. This shows that the circular economy can emerge from creative ideas and thrive on collaboration among different industries to ensure the repurposing of resources along different supply chains.



re:GREEN

LIETUVOS
SOCIALINIO VERSLO
ASOCIACIJA 

<https://lisva.org/>

Swideas 

www.swideas.se

 Tomorrow
Together

www.ttogether.org