



Interview

Maarit Halttunen & Hannamaija Tuovila

VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland Ltd



Maarit Halttunen



Hannamaija Tuovila

Where do you see the benefits of bio-based products compared to conventional fossil-based ones?

It is evident, that to ensure healthy solutions for the planet and its people, new sustainable solutions that replace the fossil-based materials are needed. Bio-based materials lean on the circular principles of reusing, recycling, and biodegradation without waste generation and thus pave the way towards more sustainable production and consumption.

We at VTT are concentrating on the customer perspective in the 3-CO project, and we thus elaborate

this question from the viewpoint of the customers. As we know, the consumers' environmental awareness is constantly increasing, and they aim to make sustainable choices in their everyday life. We therefore argue, in short, that by including more bio-based products in their product portfolio, the producers as well as retailers, can better meet the future customer needs and support their customers' aim to enhance sustainable lifestyle.



What kind of challenges are there in the current certification landscape related to communicating about bio-based products?

A variety of certificates and labels is currently utilised to point out the eco-friendliness and sustainability of consumer products. Due to the diversity of the certificates, it is difficult for the customers to evaluate their content and meaning. There might also exist confusion over the green lexicon used. Consumers are

also more aware of greenwashing, and they are alert to false environmental claims. Consumer scepticism about the actual sustainability and concrete environmental advantages of products is increasing, which also poses challenges to the development of certification systems and labels.

How does the 3-CO project plan to assess and test the role of certification and labelling on consumers' purchasing decisions?

In the 3-CO project, our aim is both to evaluate the effectiveness and robustness of existing label and certification schemes and to create new consumer-based digital labelling solutions. For this end, extensive consumer studies are conducted to find out consumer preferences towards labels and certificates and to co-

create guidelines for the design of labels for bio-based products. As an outcome, the project will develop digital solutions that help consumers to make better-informed purchasing decisions.