Republic of Serbia

#ЕУ ЗА ТЕБЕ

This project is funded by the European Union

EU for Green Agenda in Serbia

The Green Transition in Practice: Awards for 15 Leading Innovations in Serbia

Green innovation leaders recognized for special contributions to decarbonization and pollution reduction:

1. **Impol Seval Sevojno** is a prime example of how decarbonization, pollution reduction, and alignment with European standards can be achieved through smart industrial innovations. With the support of the European Union, this green innovation leader has introduced advanced process monitoring and energy-efficient technologies, reducing natural gas consumption and CO2 emissions while simultaneously improving overall energy efficiency. This solution contributes to knowledge sharing, offering recommendations that other companies can utilize on their own path toward decarbonization.

2. **The Agro-Industrial Combine (AIK) Bačka Topola R.J. Žibel** has demonstrated how upgrading industrial wastewater treatment processes directly contributes to environmental protection. Supported by Switzerland, this green innovation leader invested in advanced wastewater treatment technology, which successfully reduced the pollution of the Krivaja River. This green investment has helped the company align its operations with national and EU environmental standards, reduce industrial pollution, and boost its competitiveness in export markets.

3. An exemplary solution by the **Public Utility Company "Gradske toplane" Niš** illustrates how upgrading district heating systems simultaneously reduces pollution and energy consumption. At the "Majakovski" heating plant, an innovative solar system for heating domestic hot water was introduced, replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. Meanwhile, at the "Jug" heating plant, wastewater treatment and air quality monitoring were upgraded in compliance with EU and national standards. At the same time, the entire district heating system was digitalized using modern software, enabling efficient control of energy production and distribution tailored to changing climate conditions and user needs. Together, these measures contribute to cleaner air, lower energy consumption, efficient energy management, and financial savings.

The Project is implemented by UNDP, in collaboration with

Шведска Sverige

European Investment Bank

Additional funding by the Government of Switzerland

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Green innovation leaders recognized for special contributions to accelerating the circular economy:

1. **RKC Kompoziti Čelarevo** have upgraded their circular economy solutions by addressing one of the key environmental challenges in agriculture. With the support of the European Union, this green innovation leader has developed an innovative approach to recycling plastic waste from "drip irrigation" systems, transforming it into new products that protect water resources and reduce pollution. This method prevents the improper disposal of plastic waste and increases resource efficiency through the recycling and reuse of hundreds of tons of waste, while also reducing emissions.

2. **Champicomp Kovin** has successfully turned waste into new value, providing a powerful example of the circular economy in practice. Champicomp processes around 36,000 tons of chicken manure annually, transforming it into high-quality compost for mushroom production through controlled collection, treatment, and environmental pollution reduction. This modernization project replaces outdated, resource-intensive processes with advanced technologies, including a new natural gas steam boiler that will reduce CO2 emissions by up to 700 tons per year, eliminating harmful pollutants and the use of chemicals.

3. **Repol d.o.o.** is an example of how circular economy solutions can drive industrial decarbonization and sustainable growth. This project has expanded the capacity for polymer recycling—including plastic packaging and films—by introducing innovative, energy-efficient technologies for plastic waste recycling. By installing equipment for the filtration, homogenization, and processing of plastic into high-quality granules tailored to various waste streams, and by implementing an air-to-air cooling system, the company has significantly improved production efficiency. As a result, recycling capacity increased from 6,000 to 10,000 tons per year, the range of recyclable materials was expanded, CO2 emissions were reduced by approximately 4,656 tons annually, and electricity consumption was lowered. Concurrently, the project contributed to creating six new jobs, supported education through dual education programs, and strengthened the long-term business sustainability of the company.

4. One of the green innovation leaders is also the solution by the **Regional Landfill Subotica**, which serves as a true example of how waste management systems can become more energy-efficient, sustainable, and contribute to emission reductions. This solution treats biodegradable waste, including sewage sludge and green waste, which is reused to produce valuable compost. This significantly reduces the volume of waste sent to landfills and creates organic fertilizer to enrich agricultural soil.

   The Regional Landfill Subotica has also integrated renewable energy sources into the operations of its waste management facility by installing a solar power plant and two air-to-water heat pumps,

which provide electricity and heat for waste management operations. This significantly reduces the facility's reliance on electricity from the public grid and cuts greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 73 tons of CO2 equivalent per year.

Green innovation leaders recognized for special contributions to reducing air pollution:

1. **The Municipality of Sokobanja** is an example of how innovative local solutions can directly improve the quality of life and living conditions for citizens. With the support of the European Union, this project replaced a polluting heating system with a solution based on renewable geothermal energy, using thermal wastewater to heat schools. This has led to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and polluting airborne particles.
2. **Zorka Šabac** is an example of how industrial decarbonization and air quality improvement can be achieved through energy efficiency and process optimization. Across two production plants—for manufacturing ceramic tiles and construction materials - this green innovation leader introduced a waste heat recovery solution in ceramics production, alongside process automation, enhancing energy performance, operational control, and the monitoring of kilns, dryers, and production flows. As an IED/IPPC and ETS operator, the company aligns its business with EU environmental standards, Best Available Techniques (BAT), and future carbon pricing requirements, while reducing fossil fuel usage, electricity consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.
3. **The Silbo Company** is an example of how innovations in food distribution and logistics processes can bring both environmental and economic benefits by introducing a state-of-the-art cooling system for deep-freeze warehouses, the first of its kind in the region. Instead of conventional refrigerants with high global warming potential, the system uses a more climate-friendly alternative. What further sets this solution apart is an integrated heat recovery system that captures and reuses the waste heat generated by the cooling units to heat the facility's concrete floors. This not only boosts overall energy efficiency but also significantly cuts energy consumption. This initiative contributes to emission reductions, improved air quality, and the transition toward more sustainable and resource-efficient industrial practices.

Green innovation leaders recognized for special contributions to biodiversity conservation:

1. **The Public Utility Company "Drugi oktobar" Vršac** clearly highlights the importance of nature-based solutions. They have successfully implemented an innovation that restores and protects ecosystems by establishing protective green belts across more than 9 hectares of public land. This has created a

functional ecological corridor that connects two major natural habitats, while simultaneously slowing down winds, reducing soil erosion, improving local microclimatic conditions, and supporting biodiversity. By planting climate-resilient native tree species and actively involving the local community, this initiative builds long-term green infrastructure and fosters a shared responsibility for nature protection, delivering a clear and measurable impact on ecosystems and community resilience.

2. **The innovation by the Public Enterprise "Vojvodinašume"** is an outstanding example of nature-based solutions that combine ecosystem restoration, biodiversity protection, and sustainable land management across multiple protected areas. In the Obedska Bara Special Nature Reserve, natural grazing was introduced through the release of water buffaloes, which help clear invasive plant species and restore natural habitats. By grazing across 25 hectares of marshes, meadows, and forest edges, they enrich the soil, enhance ecosystem balance, and create ideal conditions for endangered species to return. At the same time, these magnificent animals replace the need for human and mechanical interventions. This green innovation leader has also restored three Ramsar sites—Gornje Podunavlje, Koviljsko-Petrovaradinski Rit, and Obedska Bara—by improving water flow, reducing siltation and excessive algae growth, and preserving habitats for fish and birds. These results were achieved by removing invasive species, reconnecting waterways, conducting continuous environmental monitoring, and improving biodiversity data.

3. **The Tara National Park** has been recognized for an innovative solution focused on protecting the sensitive ecosystems of endangered peatland habitats, which support numerous rare species, including the endemic Serbian spruce (*Pančićeva omorika*). The dominant moss species in these habitats, which plays a critical role in the formation and maintenance of the ecosystem, was disappearing due to water scarcity and the spread of invasive species. To overcome this, an innovative solution was introduced by installing fog collectors, which helped restore the proper water conditions necessary for the peatland's recovery. By improving water availability, removing invasive species, and strengthening monitoring systems, this initiative protects endangered species and enhances long-term ecosystem management.

4. **The Citizens' Association "Jadovnik"** is an example of a comprehensive approach to biodiversity conservation through concrete, active measures on the ground. As part of this solution, an emergency assistance, rehabilitation, and release center was established for injured birds, as well as for sheltering individuals that cannot survive on their own in the wild. Located near the protected areas of southwestern Serbia, right by the border with Montenegro, the center includes a fenced area for bird recovery, alongside facilities for veterinary examinations and interventions. Additionally, to address climate change challenges—primarily the shortage of surface water which threatens protected species like the griffon vulture, cinereous vulture, steppe eagle, Eurasian eagle-owl, and brown bear—a reliable year-round water supply system was established. This involved constructing watering holes and supporting infrastructure near wildlife feeding stations, equipped with video surveillance to collect data on species movement and diversity. These active field

measures were paired with community outreach, campaigns, and education, encouraging citizens to actively participate in wildlife protection and biodiversity conservation.

5. **The Sports Fishing Association "Deliblatsko jezero" has** successfully revitalized the habitat of the strictly protected mudminnow (*Umbra krameri*) in the Kraljevac Special Nature Reserve, alongside activities that contribute to preserving other endangered aquatic plants, fish, amphibians, and birds. By reconnecting fragmented wetland habitats, reforesting the shores with native trees and shrubs, and removing invasive species, the project has created the conditions necessary for the survival and recovery of these threatened species. The initiative was carried out in close cooperation with the local community, ensuring that the protected area is managed in a way that supports both biodiversity conservation and the needs of local residents.