

green
expo
RIGA

INTRODUCTORY FORUM ON GREEN ECONOMY FAIRS

Time and place:

21 November 2018, hall No. 1 (5000 m²) of the International Exhibition Centre at Ķīpsalas iela 8, LV-1048, Riga, Latvia.

Target audience of the first introductory forum:

Latvian citizens already involved in promoting the principles of green lifestyle; green economy policymakers in Latvia; company managers and bioeconomy specialists; green start-up community; students and staff of universities; scientists; representatives of Latvian schools; representatives of foreign foundations.

The concept of the fair:

The first fair of its kind in Latvia!



The objective of the fair: To support, shape and promote the development of green economy in Latvia for the next 25 years.

The first and foremost tasks: developing the ideas of green economy in Latvia; promoting the introduction thereof into practical entrepreneurship; educating and informing the society; building the image of Latvia as a green country.

Social context: On 18 November 2018, Latvia will celebrate its centenary. We are awaiting it with pride and respect, as well as a variety of celebratory events from 2017 until 2021. **Three days after the main celebration**, we invite the supporters of the green economy to hall No. 1 of the International Exhibition Centre to set **new goals for Latvia's sustainable development** and growth during the next 100 years.

Organiser:

International Exhibition Company BT 1, Riga, www.bt1.lv, Fair Director Jānis Brinkmanis.

Participants:

Leading bioeconomy companies in Latvia; representatives of government institutions / green economy policymakers; representatives of local governments with green investment development projects; potential investors in the green economy sectors; invited foreign specialists, organic farming representatives; forestry representatives; developers of passive housing projects; invited university specialists; developers of ecode-sign and green products.

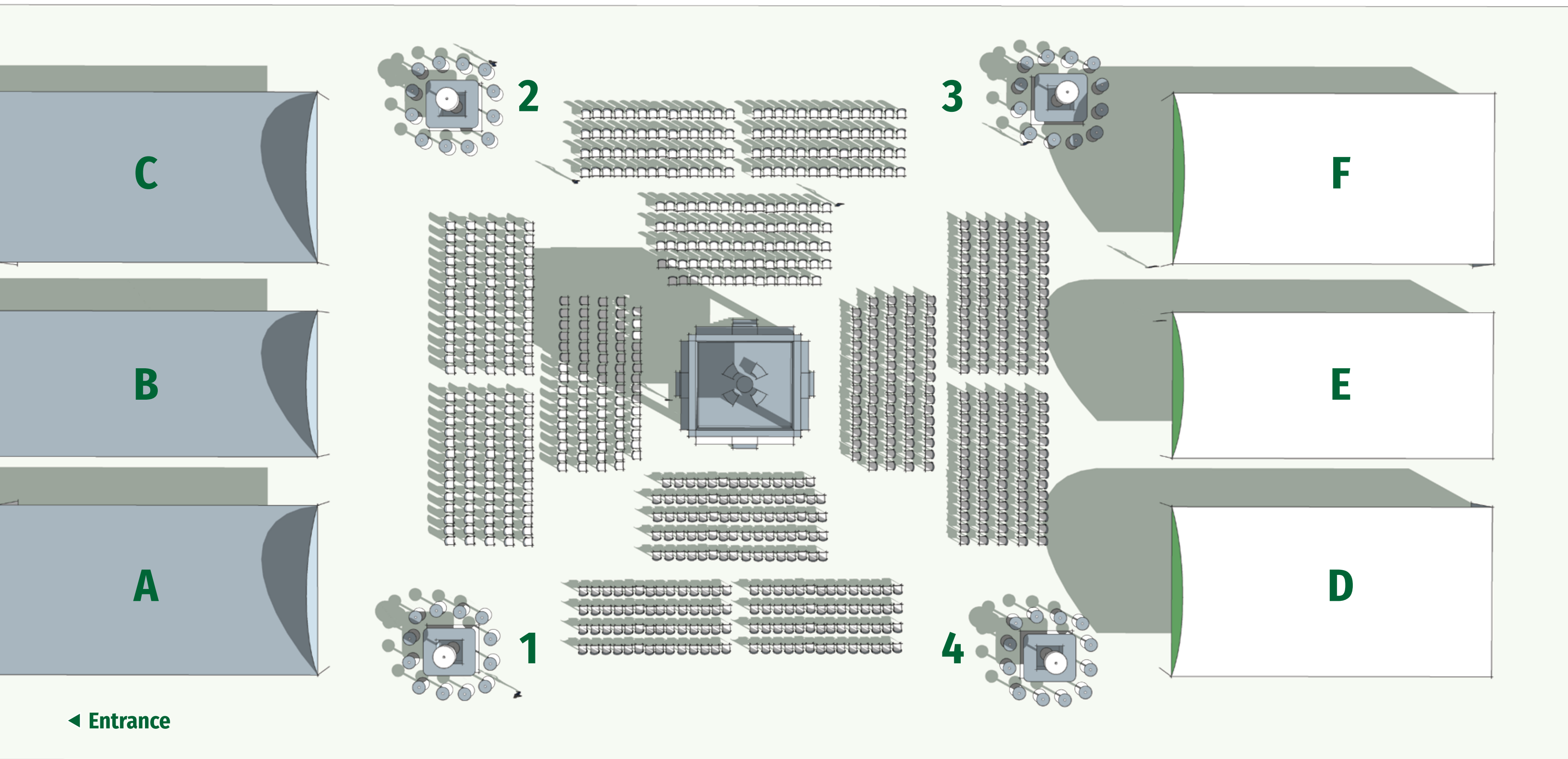
The programme of the introductory forum:

In the centre of the hall: conference stage with presentations by green economy policymakers in Latvia, entrepreneurs and invited specialists. Addresses and discussions will provide an insight into Latvia's green economy objectives in the European context. With the long-term perspective in mind, goals for the next Green Expo fairs in Riga will be set.

In the six main fair sectors: the participants and invited guests will present the current achievements and talk about development opportunities. Hall No. 1 of the International Exhibition Centre will also host an improvised brokerage event where green economy agents will introduce audience to their achievements in order to jointly focus on a full-scale exhibition in 2019 involving the general public.

Contact information:

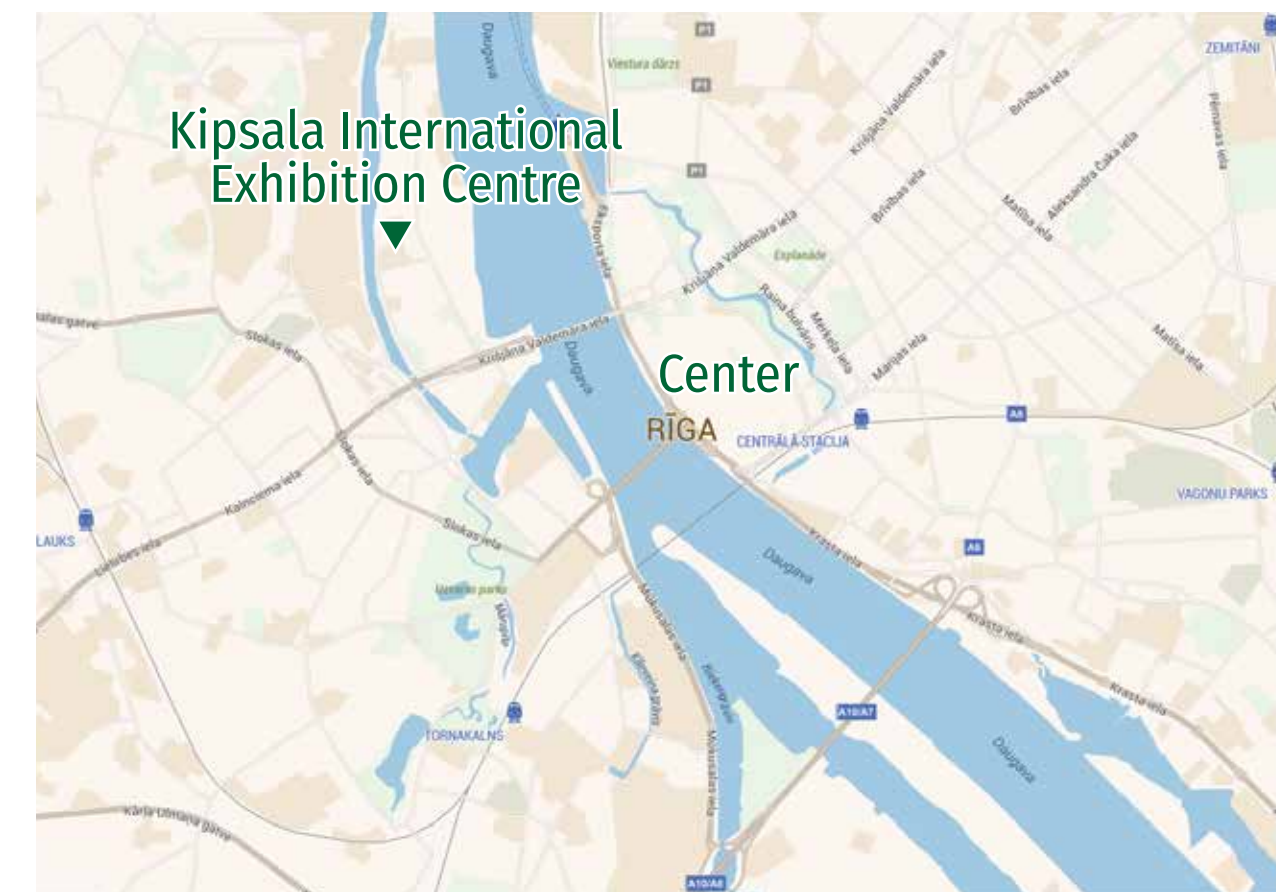
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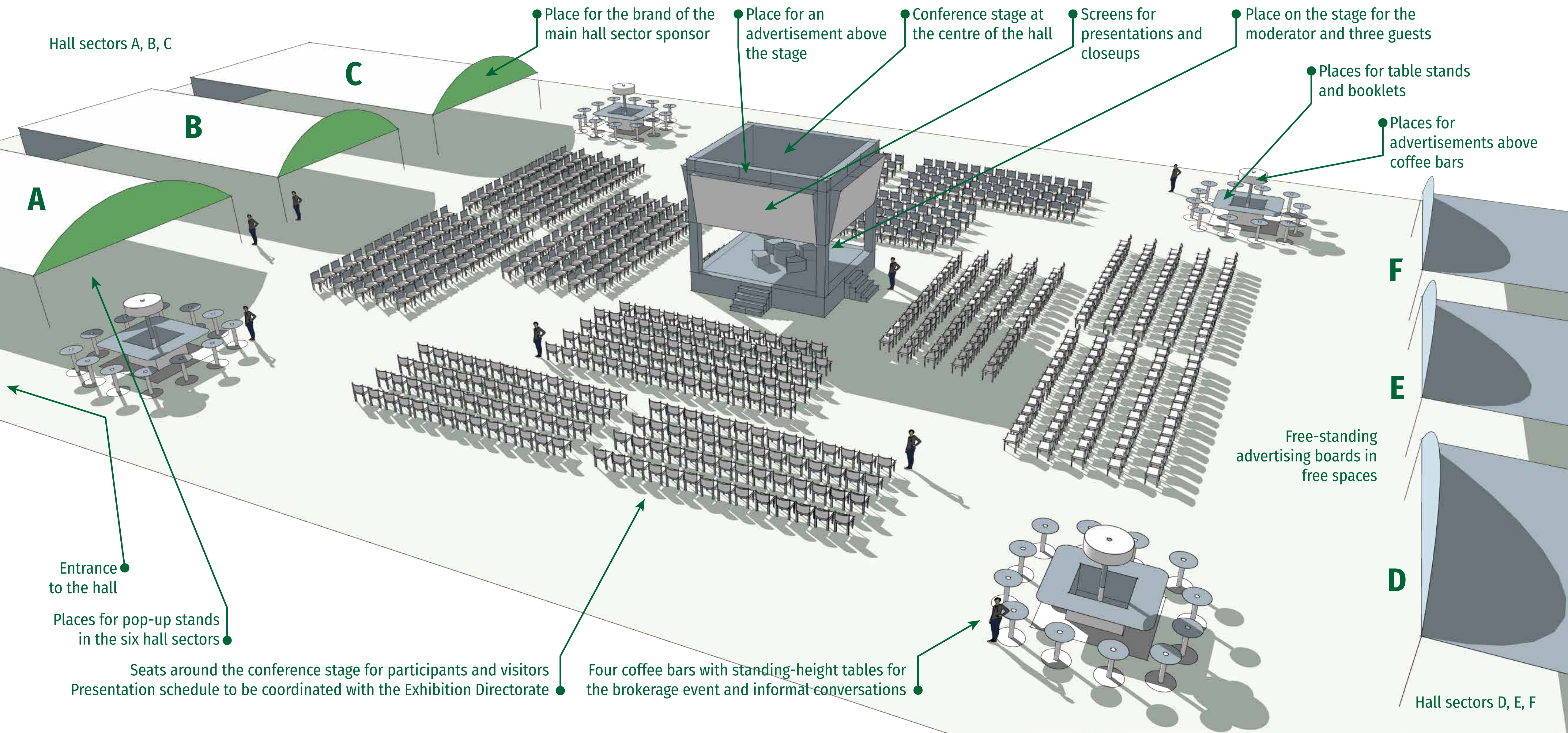
GREEN EXPO RIGA 2018 hall layout – top view



Kipsala International Exhibition Centre
Trade fairs are held by the leading exhibition organiser – International Exhibition Company BT 1.



We are located in the heart of Riga, only a 5-minute drive from Riga's Old Town and City Centre.



Hall sectors A, B, C

A

B

C

Place for the brand of the main hall sector sponsor

Place for an advertisement above the stage

Conference stage at the centre of the hall

Screens for presentations and closeups

Place on the stage for the moderator and three guests

Places for table stands and booklets

Places for advertisements above coffee bars

F

E

Free-standing advertising boards in free spaces

D

Hall sectors D, E, F

Entrance to the hall

Places for pop-up stands in the six hall sectors

Seats around the conference stage for participants and visitors
Presentation schedule to be coordinated with the Exhibition Directorate

Four coffee bars with standing-height tables for the brokerage event and informal conversations

Matters to be Discussed at the First Introductory Forum

As Introductory Forum for the first fair of its kind, it will focus on the creation of a long-term strategy to make sure that Latvian society is regularly introduced to and involved in **relevant green economy matters**. With each fair, a new set of potential solutions will reveal itself.

The next fairs will have a relevant seasonal theme. The focus of each fair will be chosen after consulting with the **leading social and professional organisations** engaged in the Latvian green economy. We will take regional and international relevance into consideration.

We are also planning to gradually introduce the GREEN EXCELLENCE AWARD to be presented during the fair. The potential nominations: for achievements in **bioeconomy**, for achievements in **science and research**, for the **promotion of social activities**, as well as for **innovative solutions** in green, socially relevant fields.



Waters

Latvia is a land of forests and waters. On a global scale, Latvian rivers are small, reaching a total of 19,000 km in length, but they are all a significant part of our ecosystem, just like our 3900 lakes and the wonderful coast of the Baltic Sea.

Forests

The most important renewable resource in Latvia is currently forests. This industry employs about 50,000 Latvian citizens. Those are 7% of all private sector jobs in Latvia. The forestry industry workers' taxes bring in a significant part of the national budget. The majority of forestry and woodworking industry jobs are located in Latvian regions, which is a significant factor in creating more uniform and sustainable development of Latvian regions.

Pines, spruces and birches that have a favourable growing climate in Latvia are premium materials used in the construction, furniture production, shipbuilding and ecodesign industries.

Timber has to be sourced from sustainable forestry practices that take economic, social and ecological aspects into consideration. Latvia has good potential for developing a sustainable local forestry work organisation and certification industry by tapping into the experiences of Latvian scientists and cooperating with international organisations, such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) and others.

Growing forests absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it into wood tissue, and it is released back into the atmosphere when the trees burn or decompose. Afterwards, it is absorbed by new trees.

In comparison with 1923, when forests covered 23% of Latvia, nowadays they have doubled in size and cover 50.2%. Forested areas are expected to keep expanding, and currently Latvia is the fourth richest country in Europe in terms of forests. We are surpassed only by Finland, Sweden and Slovenia.

Nowadays, the forestry industry is one of the cornerstones of our country's economy. Forestry, woodworking and furniture production export volume has reached 20% of the total national export. During the last decade, around 12 million m³ of timber have been sourced in Latvian forests each year. It is below the natural growth rate, which means Latvian forestry can be considered sustainable.

Energy

Latvia is one of the leaders among European countries when it comes to using renewable resources, with about 33% of our primary energy consumption relying on renewable energy resources, mainly from hydroelectric power plants on the River Daugava and wood chips. Latvia has great potential for developing wind energy production.



Organic farming

In early 2011, there were 3593 certified organic farms in Latvia, and the area of organically certified agricultural land spread across 166,338 ha or about 9% of the total agricultural land in Latvia. Even though the number of organic certified farms has decreased over recent years, the area of agricultural land used by these farms has expanded, even if only slightly. This shows that we need more in-depth research on how to support small and medium ecofarms by developing specialisations in niche ecoproducts. In the domestic Latvian market, this can be done in two ways: by providing direct support to small family farms and strengthening cooperation among them and by developing a benefit system for organic farms in terms of VAT and commercial real estate.

European Union industry specialists agree that the current regulations that were adopted 20 years ago stunt the development of this growing industry rather than stimulate it. The value of the European organic production industry is about 28 billion euros, with 125% growth experienced over the last decade. EU growth will be promoted by smaller producers who will now be able to join group certification schemes, thus reducing the cost of certification. Organic farmers will also have access to a new market of organically grown seeds that will improve biological diversity, sustainability of cultivated plants and the development of innovations.

As Latvia is becoming more open to organic farming in all areas of law, we will have more opportunities to create niche product brands that have demand among paying customers from developed countries and that will promote the creation of products with higher added value. A great example is Great Britain's market of organic foods and drinks that grew by 6% during the last year and has reached a record 2.2 billion pounds: growth in regular supermarkets was 4.2%, in specialised shops 9.7% and via direct delivery 9.5%. The popularity of ecoproducts is also supported by a 25% decline in the sales of conventional beauty products and clothing, while the sales of ecoclothing and organic products has increased by 24%.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism can be developed throughout Latvia, including at national parks that are protected as unique natural values. Protected areas and areas with different types of restrictions regarding economic activity take up 28.2% of the total forested area in Latvia. They are inhabited by rare species of birds and various wild animals. By walking on nature trails and riding bicycles or boats, tourists can enjoy relatively untouched forest landscapes. They can see unusual landscapes and enjoy silence at one of the many Latvian bogs. While some European countries no longer have natural bogs, Latvian bogs offer the chance to enjoy tranquil walks in untouched nature.

It is difficult to find a publicly unavailable forest in Latvia – almost all of them are freely available to people who are looking for mushrooms or berries. With each year, the number of various recreational objects in Latvian forests increases, and forests that are mainly managed for recreational purposes take up 8% of the total forested area in Latvia. About half of Latvian forests are state-owned, while the rest are mostly owned by private landholders, the number of which is about 135 thousand.

The biological diversity of Latvian forests is created and maintained by traditional Latvian forestry practices – small-scale clear-cutting system with a relatively long felling cycle period – in combination with a network of forest territories barely affected by people. For the protection of natural values, a total of 683 specially protected nature territories have been created. Some of these territories are included in the Natura 2000 network of nature protection areas of European significance.



Beach

Latvia has a 500 km coastline along the Baltic Sea that is an underappreciated value that should be preserved and maintained. Open sea on the coast of Kurzeme and the coasts of the Gulf of Riga in Vidzeme. The sea and its beaches have great potential both in wind energy production and in the promotion of sustainable investments in resorts and recreation.

Environment

The process of change is constant: our environment, urbanism and technologies are developing, there is a demand for new knowledge and skills and some professions disappear to be replaced by new ones. Another challenge is the ageing workforce as well as other relevant issues. Latvia has to make sure that its educational system properly prepares new employees and provides qualitative lifelong learning to older employees in line with modern-day requirements, because global trends show that spending the entire work life in a single profession is rare.

Latvian citizens care not only about their financial security but also about a healthy and safe environment, emotional satisfaction and opportunities for growth. Another challenge in Latvia is the demographic situation. The statistics for the last few years are rather good though, because the birth rate is one of the highest in the European Union, but these figures are not enough to ensure reproduction. An important prerequisite for the wellbeing of families is the chance to build a family in a neat, accessible and environmentally friendly environment in any Latvian region.

Education

Latvia already has the necessary prerequisites and support in its multi-branch academic educational system for building a sustainable and environmentally friendly Latvian economy that is based on science and education. Practically all specialised departments of all Latvian higher education institutions are related to environmental and materials science, circular economy, green energy and green building, as well as ecodesign:

at the University of Latvia: Faculties of Biology, Geography and Earth Sciences, and Chemistry;

at Riga Technical University: Faculties of Architecture, Civil Engineering, Power and Electrical Engineering, and Materials Science and Applied Chemistry;

at the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies: Forest Faculty, Faculty of Food Technology, and Faculty of Environment and Civil Engineering;

at Riga Stradiņš University: Faculties of Pharmacy and Medicine;

at the Art Academy of Latvia: Faculty of Design;

at the University of Daugavpils: Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics;

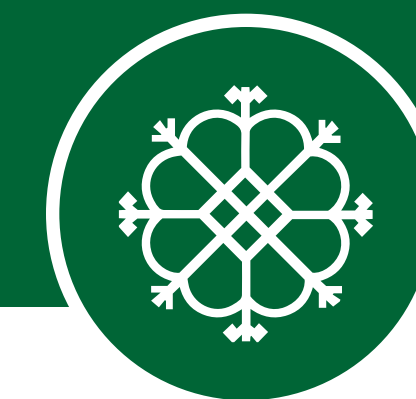
at Liepāja University: Faculty of Science and Engineering;

at the BA School of Business and Finance: the Innovations and Product Development in Business study programme;

at the Latvian Academy of Culture: Department of Cultural Sociology and Management;

at the Rēzekne Academy of Technologies: Faculties of Engineering, and Education, Languages and Design.

This is the foundation for developing the branches of the green economy in Latvia over the next 100 years based on Latvian-educated specialists that could become our future policymakers in many areas of bioeconomy.



Daily life

Life in harmony with nature is close to the heart of the majority of Latvian citizens. It is evidenced by the wish to have their own little space at the countryside to go to in summers or on weekends and grow a vegetable or two in. Mushroom hunting, berry picking and fishing are popular pastimes of any Latvian family.

Nowadays, people might think that if they live in the city and work in an office, at a school or elsewhere and are not engaged in land cultivation or husbandry, the old folksong wisdoms don't apply to them. But is that really the case? If we take a closer look, we haven't changed that much: we are still struggling with difficulties, looking for solutions to our daily problems, studying, celebrating our successes and special occasions just like people have done for thousands of years, only the way we do it is different. Every single one of us wants to live in harmony with nature and be healthy and happy, and we wish the same for the people around us: our family, friends, colleagues, nation, land and all of its neighbours.

Traditions

Once every three years, Latvia organises the Baltica international folklore festival that showcases the ancient traditions and customs of Latvia and its neighbouring countries. The Pulkā eimu, pulkā tekū children's folklore festival has been taking place in Latvia for 30 years, which makes it the oldest and biggest event of its kind in the Baltics. It is all about songs, traditional music, stories, games, folk dance and crafts.

People devote much of their time to thinking about the future: we dream and contemplate and plan. If we were to ask if our ancestors thought about the future and how much they thought of it, the answer would be a resounding yes. A lot. And in many different perspectives. It is clearly reflected in folk songs, beliefs, spells and other written sources and oral retellings. It is also evident in various inherited traditions and rituals that many of us still practice both on a daily basis and on special occasions, such as family and seasonal celebrations. The habit to think about the future is something traditional that we have inherited and still practice today. The image of green Latvia is close to the heart of many Latvian citizens; it is something common to strive towards and something our citizens are willing to make well-considered financial investments into in the future as well.

Culture

Due to its location at the crossroads of western and eastern cultures and its speckled history, cultures of many nations have left their mark on Latvia. We hold the traditions of our ancestors – the culture stemming from Latvian folklore – in high esteem with clear examples being summer solstice celebrations and the grandiose Song and Dance Festival, continuity of craftsmanship and the interest in museum events and other activities. It presents great potential for cultural tourism that can be easily combined with ecotourism and the cultural offering of cities. Music and stage art connoisseurs enjoy the large-scale opera festivals in Riga and Sigulda, as well as the diverse range of concerts and festivals.



Investors

Latvian architecture delights with the heritage of cultural history from various centuries: from authentic farmsteads and unique samples of wood architecture to magnificent palaces and manors, churches and impressive art nouveau buildings. The majority of buildings in Latvia need reconstruction, renovation and insulation work that requires the evaluation of energy efficiency. Increasingly more often decisions will be made in favour of new constructions that rely on passive housing principles. Both in the city environment and rural settings, we should create conditions that portray the investment environment to potential investors in a clear, attractive and nature-friendly manner. It goes for both the residential sector and industrial buildings and technical infrastructure objects.

An attractive environment for investors also includes cultural and recreational opportunities. The Flavours of Latvia movement should be promoted because it makes Latvia attractive, which is something that investors visiting our country often point out. We can be proud of excellent product quality and talented chefs. It's no surprise that Riga has become a popular holiday destination among gourmets and the restaurant weeks in spring and autumn are so eagerly awaited. The offering of restaurants elsewhere in Latvia is also becoming richer and more interesting.

Export

The global economy predictions for 2018 suggest that Latvia's external demand will climb steadily, leaving a positive impact on export. However, considering the high load, the rise of salaries and the low investment rate of previous years, export increase will be moderate in comparison to 2017. One of the challenges in maintaining the competitiveness of companies in the long term is the lack of workforce that prevents many companies from utilising their full potential and stunts further growth.

In 2017, the total value of Latvian export was 11.39 billion euros, which has increased by 1.03 billion euros or 10%. Import volume was 14.03 billion euros. The list of the biggest exporters consists of local manufacturers that are strong pillars in their respective industries and the national economy: Latvijas finieris, Mikrotīkls, Valmieras stikla šķiedra, Grindeks, Olainfarm.

The total economic sentiment indicator of EU consumers and entrepreneurs also demonstrates the stability of the external environment and demand. The latest data on the rise of investments in the Latvian processing industry show that the industry has the opportunity to increase its export potential.

Although woodworking, which is one of Latvia's main export industries, experienced a decline in production volume in early 2017 due to unfavourable weather conditions, in January of this year timber export value showed growth in comparison to December and January of last year. The fact that this industry is not showing any signs of slowing down is supported by an increase in nonfinancial investments during the last quarter of the previous year and several investment project plans.

Latvian farmers and food producers are also committed to keeping up the positive export growth that began last year, by continuing to expand to new markets and strengthening their positions in the current markets. Entrepreneurs of these industries are also planning significant investments.

As is evident, we have a general overview of the current economic situation in Latvia, but we would like to start presenting the public with the following questions: How big is the potential of the green economy? Which factors would facilitate the development of bioeconomy sectors? This is the objective of the GREEN EXPO RIGA fair – to give the policymakers of the green economy a chance to meet a wider audience representing the bioeconomy, circular economy, ecodesign, green energy and the rest of the green economy branches.



Bioeconomy

The Latvian Ministry of Agriculture has prepared a statement on the Latvian Bioeconomy Strategy until 2030 (LIBRA). Bioeconomy is a part of the economy that uses renewable natural resources (plants, animals, microorganisms, etc.) in a sustainable and well-considered manner to produce food and feedstuff, industrial products and energy.

The branches of bioeconomy are agriculture, fishery, food production, forestry, woodworking, pulp and paper industry, as well as certain sectors of the chemical industry, biotechnologies and energetics. These branches of the bioeconomy are the basis for an economy that strengthens the viability of the territory of Latvia. They also have great potential for creating well-paid jobs.

LIBRA goals are divided into three main directions:

1) to ensure that employment in the traditional branches of the bioeconomy in 2030 is the same as in 2015, i.e. 128,000 people; 2) to increase the added value of bioeconomy products from 2.33 billion euros in 2016 to 3.8 billion euros in 2030; 3) to increase the value of bioeconomy export products from 4.26 billion euros in 2016 to 9 billion euros in 2030.

To fulfil these goals, we have to continue collaborating with the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Latvia in the organisation of seminars and international conferences to ensure the transfer of the best Nordic practice in the branches of the bioeconomy. The Latvian government has declared that from now on the Ministries of Economics, Finance, Education and Science, Welfare, Environmental Protection and Regional Development, and Agriculture as well as the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre shall take into consideration the directions and measures outlined in the informative report when reviewing and developing new policy-planning documents, European Union and other foundation support instruments, including the Rural Development programme for 2021–2027 and national research programmes in the priority scientific branches in accordance with the Smart Specialisation Strategy, in order to promote the development of the bioeconomy in Latvia.

We invite industry specialists and investment environment planners, as well as domestic and foreign consultants to participate in the first Introductory Forum Green Expo Riga at Kipsala International Exhibition Centre. See you on 21 November, so the introductory forum dedicated to the 100th Anniversary of Latvia would contribute to raising awareness of the Latvian society and open up discussion on the sustainable development of the green economy of Latvia in the next 100 years!

See you at the Introductory Forum GREEN EXPO RIGA 2018!