Virtual library end-user guide

What is the virtual library?

The virtual library gathers a collection of inspiring rural business ideas that have been implemented in various regions across Europe. Each business idea is described in detail on a dedicated page, for visitors to better understand the background and success factors and gather some tips from business owners to replicate success at home.

The business ideas featured on the virtual library cover three complementary and interlinked sectors presenting promising opportunities for rural economies: **food**, **bio-based value chains**, and **ecosystem services**. You can click on each sector's name to know more about these categories.

Who can use it?

The virtual library addresses in particular **current and future entrepreneurs**, looking to start or develop their business in rural areas. And since each citizen can become an entrepreneur one day, the tool is open to everybody!

Nonetheless, the information provided library can also be very useful for **other actors supporting the deployment of new business opportunities in rural communities**, such as networks and clusters, rural advisors, rural development agencies, or policy-makers.

Finally, the data presented on the virtual library is also made available to support the work of **researchers** in rural development and agricultural sciences who would like to further explore the dynamics of rural business success and analyse practical business cases from all over Europe.
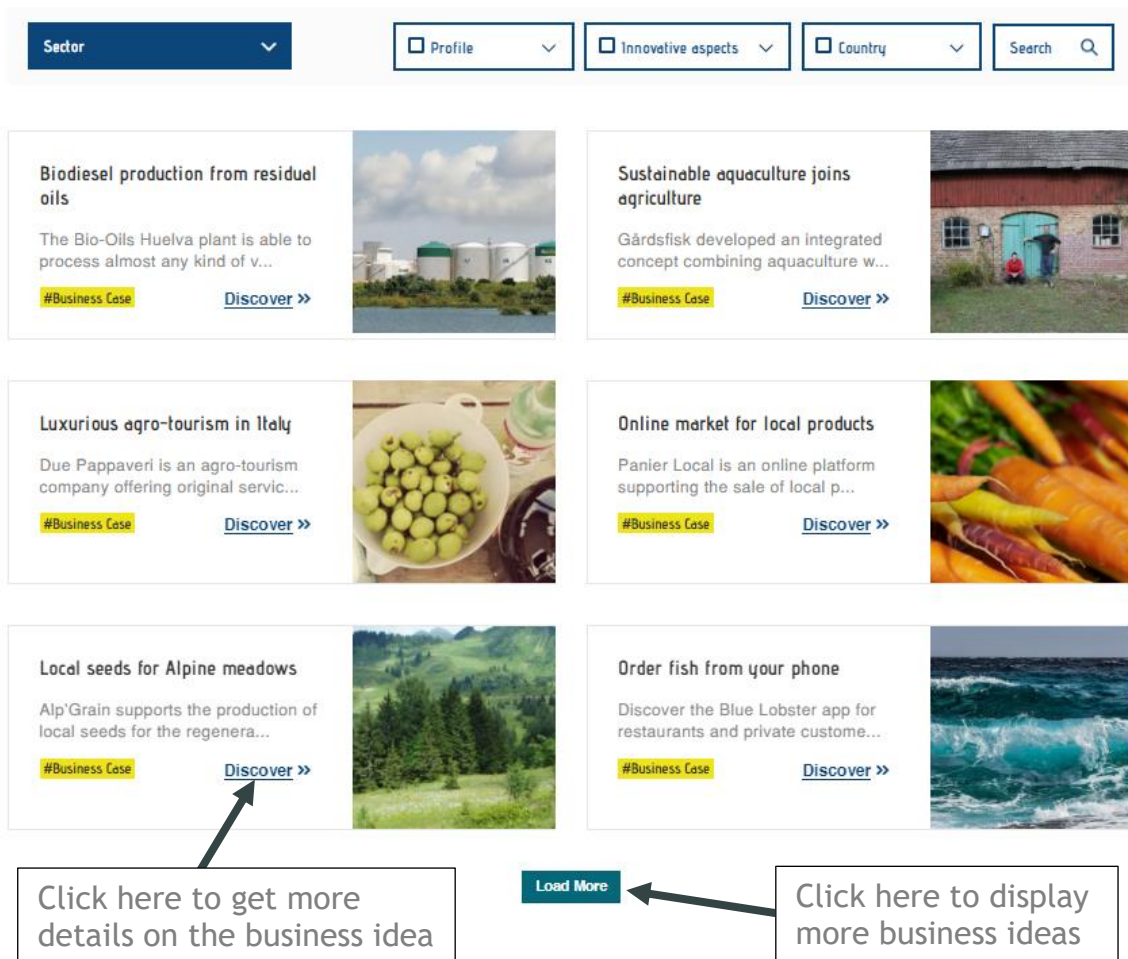
How can I use it?

When you arrive on the virtual library homepage, you have two options:

1. **Explore the library by yourself, by looking at the titles and short descriptions**
2. **Use the filter system to select the ideas corresponding to the criteria of your choice.**

To explore the library by yourself, you just have to scroll down and click on the button 'Load more' at the bottom of the page, to discover more business ideas. If you are interested by a specific business idea, you can click on '**Discover**' to get more details and you will be redirected to another page.

To use the filter system, pass your mouse on the filter of your choice and tick the boxes on the categories you would like to select. You can tick as many categories as you want in different filters. If you would like to select all the categories in one filter, just tick on the box in front of the filter's name.

If you would like to change your selection, you can click on the **RESET** button, and all the boxes you have ticked will be unticked, and all business ideas will appear again below.

Click here to select all the 'food' categories

Pass your mouse here to select your profile(s)

Click here to clear your selection

If you are looking for something more specific, that is not included in the filters, you can also use the free search box:

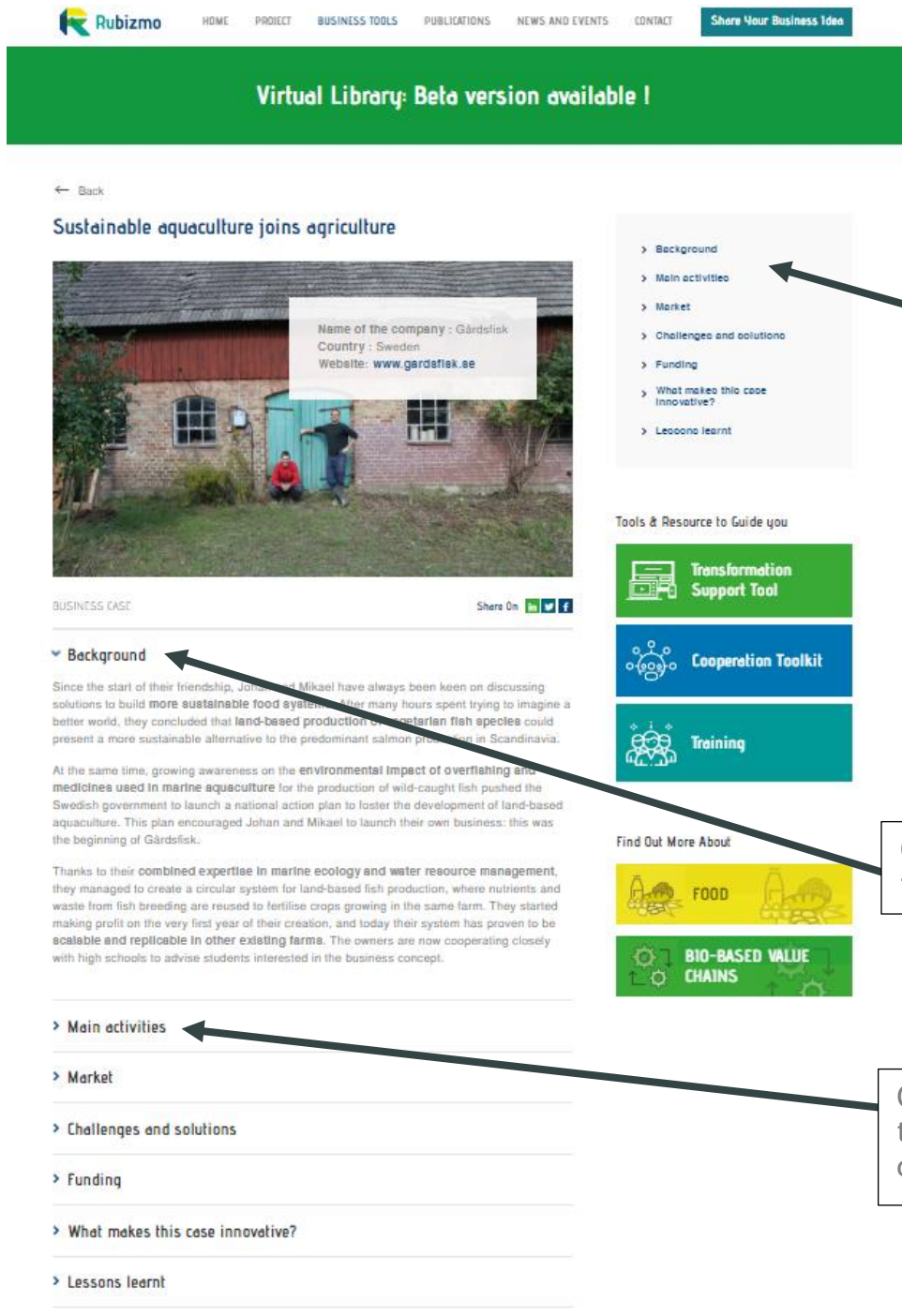Four main types of filters can be applied to refine your selection:

- **Sector:** you can select the market sector(s) in which you are working / interested. Market sectors are divided into three main sectors: Food, bio-based value chains, and ecosystem services.

- **Profile:** here is the place to indicate who YOU are, what is YOUR profile. Depending on the categories of stakeholders involved in the development of our business ideas, we selected the most interesting types of business ideas for each type of actor.

- **Innovative aspects:** in this filter you can select the types of innovations you are interested in. Are you looking towards technological innovations for example, or are you rather interested in new ways of collaborating? This is the type of information that can help you adapt your selection depending on the type of action that you are trying to implement.

- **Country:** here is an easy way of discovering business ideas that have been implemented in your own country, or in any other country of your choice.

If you are interested by a specific business idea, you can click on '**Discover**' to get more details and you will be redirected to another page.

Please note that on each business idea's page, you can navigate through the page by different means:

- **Via the side menu at the top of the page**
- **By clicking on each title to hide / unhide content**
- **Using the green arrow on the bottom right corner to come back at the top of the page**

Click on the titles in the menu to go to the section of your choice

Click on the title to hide content

Click on the title to unhide content

What information will I find there?

When you click on '<u>Discover</u>' to get more details on a business idea, you will get a detailed description, including most of the time:

- **Background:** a section presenting the history of the business idea, how it came to life and when.

- **Main activities:** what the business or project is actually doing, and changes that have eventually occurred since the business creation.

- **Market:** who are the customers addressed and how is the company communicating with them, where are the revenues of the business coming from.

- **Challenges and solutions:** what challenges did the company or project face or is still facing, and what solutions did they find to overcome those challenges – an inspiring section to identify potential risks and mitigation solutions when developing your business plan if you are an entrepreneur or to find out about the issues faced by entrepreneurs in your region if you are a decision maker or a rural advisor!

- **Funding:** what was the level of investment, where did this investment come from, did the company / project receive public money, etc.

- **What makes this case innovative:** what is new in this business idea, what makes it different from others and how can this contribute to economic, social and environmental welfare in rural areas.

- **Lessons learnt:** the advice from entrepreneurs themselves, what helped them to be successful, what they would change if they would have to do it again – the perfect section for future entrepreneurs to learn from other's experiences!

Where is this information coming from?

To discover the recipe for business success, the partners of the European research project RUBIZMO have screened hundreds of rural initiatives across Europe. To select the most inspiring examples that should be featured on this Virtual Library, they carried out several interviews with the businesses and public projects identified through their screening process.

The data on each business idea's page has been gathered through a dedicated interview with the business owner / project representative and validated by the latter before publication.
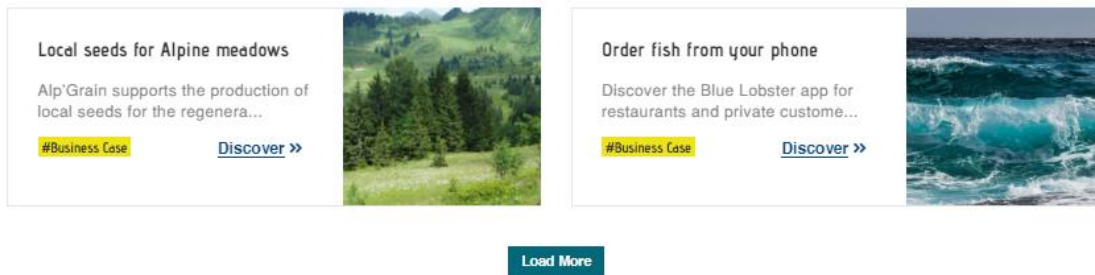
Can I promote my own business on the virtual library?

Yes! If you would like to share your own experience with us, you can click on the button 'Share your business idea' at the top and the bottom of the page, and you will be redirected to a dedicated questionnaire. This questionnaire will help
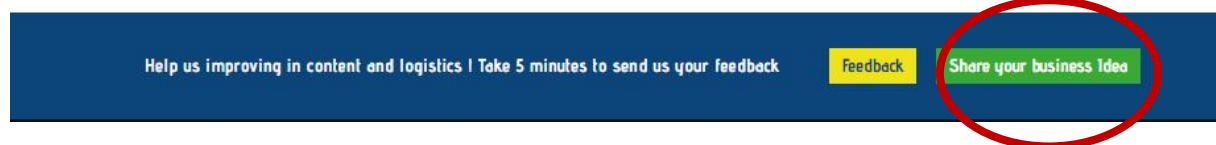
RUBIZMO partners understand your business idea, and they will contact if your business meets the criteria to be promoted on the Virtual Library.

In that case, you will have to provide more details to prepare your business profile for publication. No information will be published online or made available to any third parties without your consent. All businesses are expected to be described in a similar manner. You can find an example here: https://rubizmo.eu/virtual-library/online-market-for-local-products