

## Community building innovation

What will come from the combination of commitment, passion, a defined mission of action, and a large dose of creative enthusiasm? An absolutely positive outcome can be expected. Such an example for the maritime industry is the action taken at the Starter Incubator in Gdansk, where the BluAct project established a group of male and female experts who took a fresh look at the challenges in the industry and ways to address them.

- The main idea behind the URBACT Local Group was to invite people representing different backgrounds and viewpoints. At the same time, an important prerequisite for a successful end result was to build a foundation of trust and mutual responsibility towards each other, Anna Miler, coordinator, said of the project's beginnings. The democratic nature of the group and the participation of practitioners gave us the opportunity to work on real problems and challenges of the industry with a sense of empowerment. - One of the most important goals of the group is to involve experts in the development of the local community and to act for the benefit of the maritime sector in our region, added Izabela Richter, coordinator of the BluAct project at the Starter Incubator.

The active participation of representatives from various fields related to the blue economy from Gdansk and Pomerania helped define the most important challenges in our region, but also work out alternative methods of building on them. These include a competition for young design teams and startups for innovative solutions for the maritime industry (Techseed 2022) or a youth marathon for designing innovations in response to the sector's challenges (Maritime Innovaton). The joint involvement of representatives of both business and academia, as well as experienced experts and young people, made it possible to combine very different experiences and look at many issues from a new perspective.

- The BluAct project is a network of European port cities aimed at sharing good practices in blue economy entrepreneurship. Participating in it has given us many benefits. We have raised and continue to raise awareness of the potential of the maritime industry for the city and the region. We include young entrepreneurs and innovative ideas in the process of developing the industry. And also, which is our particularly important achievement, we have built a network of cooperation, sums up Magdalena Wójtowicz, vice president of the Starter Incubator, one of the project's partners. Therefore, it is the fostering of collaboration and development of the community around blue economy issues that is the key result of the project, and it will continue after the project's completion.

Starting in 2023, the group will operate under the name Baltic Blue Community. Its goal will be to build a broader community giving space for new ideas and further joint activities. An important intention will be to combine business and education and promote the industry to young people as an attractive career path. It is planned to organize the next edition of the maritime innovaton for young people, the first edition of the congress for women in the maritime industry, or meetings on educational and business topics. The group is open and all individuals as well as companies and institutions for whom the development of the industry is important are invited to join.



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