

## Energy, wind, sea and... ULG

Blue economy, offshore, networking, quadruple helix - these words are more and more frequently repeated in the media, scientific articles, and policy documents. They also represent challenges for the URBACT Local Group (ULG), a group of experts involved in knowledge transfer in the maritime industry. The purpose of the group's work is to verify the potential and develop innovations in the broader sector. The initiation of ULG was possible thanks to international cooperation within the framework of the project "URBACT III Transfer Networks Second Wave - BluAct 2nd Wave" funded by the European Union under the URBACT III Operational Program 2014-2020. Similar expert groups have been established in other countries participating in the project- Slovenia, France, and Greece.

The Gdansk Starter Incubator, recognizing the potential of the blue economy, invited representatives of local and municipal administrations, scientists and representatives of the academic community, companies and business institutions to collaborate. In October 2021, a unique place for the Pomeranian maritime environment was initiated.

"The group is a space to share knowledge and experience not only with other decision-makers but also with startups and industry enthusiasts. Thanks to multidisciplinary teams, it is possible to learn more about the industry and its challenges from different perspectives", says Alicja Jankowska, Account Manager at MacGregor, a member of the ULG group.

Thanks to the cooperation of representatives from different areas of the market, fields representing the most important four challenges for the maritime industry - education, energy, information, and ecology - were also identified. Solutions to the challenges posed were sought, among others, during a competition for startups and young entrepreneurs called Techseed, organized by the Starter Incubator.

Pawel Mawduk, Offshore Wind - Supply Chain Project Manager at Polenergia, described the benefits of participating in ULG for his company: "The BluAct project is part of the activities of the Fourth Flagship Program "Center for Offshore Innovation" implemented as part of the offshore wind projects Baltic II and Baltic III. Through such activities, we want to interest innovators in the offshore wind energy sector and the challenges that can contribute to the further sustainable development of the offshore energy industry, where Polenergia is an active player".

The potential for action and exchange of experiences among ULG experts was strengthened by participation in international meetings in France, Slovenia, and Poland. The challenges worked out together became the foundation for further activities, which led to new concepts and the implementation of innovative ideas. These, in turn, according to Pawel Mawduk, are most often born in small teams presenting out-of-the-box thinking and unique competencies. Supporting the development of the market potential of Pomeranian companies includes activities carried out jointly with local companies and research and implementation centers, projects and actions promoting the maritime industry, or meetings in the form of speed dating, reverse pitching, or scouting. This is the future planned for the Pomeranian blue economy, thanks to the cooperation of experts in the ULG group.

The ULG group is open - all those interested in further development of the industry, promoting new solutions, looking for inspiration or verification of their ideas can join it by applying to the Starter Incubator in Gdansk.