

Awareness raising communication activities and results

OUTPUT 2.3

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SmartUp Accelerator is a collaboration project between seven countries around the Baltic Sea with the focus on building consumer cleantech ecosystems, activating its innovation actors and improving their skills to identify brilliant ideas and foster teams committed to creating new businesses. These startups and SMEs are aiming to reduce the environmental burden of consumption.
<https://www.smartupaccelerator.eu/>



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Summary

This report describes the implemented actions and analyses how well they have supported the given goal to engage the BSR consumer cleantech innovation ecosystem actors to an internationally competitive transnational ecosystem. It analyses and reveals how effectively the chosen action points have supported the identification of relevant stakeholders, and stimulation and communication actions in the processes built for the ecosystem formation. It gives recommendations for the continuous operations in the ecosystem by giving examples of best practices from the project lifetime as well as ideas for new tools.

Analysis of implemented actions

1. Identification of ecosystem stakeholders

The process of identifying ecosystem stakeholders in the Baltic Sea region was one of the earliest tasks in the SmartUp Accelerator project. It was the task of every partner to support identification of relevant intermediaries, consumer cleantech startups/SMEs (i.e. smartups), corporations, associations, investors, public organizations, research organizations and stakeholders with local or regional focus in the beginning of 2018.

In early 2019, the CRM of BSR consumer cleantech stakeholders was updated to make sure organizations with limited interest or relevance were not included in the targeted efforts of the project. This was identified for example through personal interaction with them, such as by noting a lack of feedback.

Increased market understanding over the course of the project has also contributed to the level of insight of all partners, which has allowed for a narrower and/or updated election of organizations that could be relevant specifically to consumer cleantech. For example, such understanding has developed as market studies have been conducted, events have been held, and as testbed opportunities have been sought for the benefit of smartups in the project.

2. Stimulation of ecosystem stakeholders

The SmartUp Accelerator project set out to create a continuous model for a BSR wide consumer cleantech innovation ecosystem. It was set up to help the Baltic Sea Region to become a front-runner in the consumer cleantech field through targeted actions in the project. Working together to resolve complex tasks like managing barriers and grasping opportunities in a BSR wide ecosystem would require **commitment, elements of interaction and trust building processes over time**. This stimulation plan frames the actions - mainly events - that were set to be taken during the project to build the necessary relations for supporting the project's long-term goals. SmartUp Accelerator stimulates its potential partners with the sense of community and trust on the individual level and ecosystem management and leadership on organizational level.

2.1. STIMULATION ACTIONS, OBJECTIVES AND TARGET GROUPS

National seminars

WP	2 (A 2.2)
Responsible Partners	Activity Leader: Innovatum AB WP lead: Demos Helsinki WP co-lead: Innovatum AB
Target Groups	Intermediaries, governmental bodies and agencies and others

Time of implementation:	Period 3 to 6
Description:	National seminars will be arranged three times per participating country to attract and stimulate innovation ecosystem actors such as intermediaries, governmental bodies, agencies, and others towards consumer cleantech prospects and solutions . The national seminars should encourage and prepare the participants mindsets to the emerging transnational cooperation. It is anticipated that enterprises will get non-financial support in relation to the national seminars.

Training events

WP	4 (A 4.1)
Responsible Partner(s)	Activity Leader: Demos Helsinki WP lead: Demos Helsinki WP co-lead: European Institute for Innovation
Target Group	Intermediaries
Time of Implementation:	Period 2 to 6
Description:	<p>As a result of this activity, a trained BSR consumer cleantech network of skillful intermediaries can understand different structures in innovation processes and cooperate in different multicultural environments for support activities for startups. It understands that transnational cooperation structures are integrated and that interdependent networks, where decisions on centralization or decentralization of tasks are based on specialized competencies of the network participants. The participants will be the initial framework for the model, which results to a BSR wide network of high level trained and connected intermediaries.</p> <p>The intermediaries are all individually committed and able to marshal consumer cleantech networks, orchestrate their global commercial success and continuous network development. They will gather a better understanding of how to pool scattered resources better to address common problems more efficiently. The material and training programmes will be tailored according to the needs of the target groups. Trainers and facilitators will be best of their field with a multitude of relevant experience and proof of orchestrating transnational innovation processes successfully.</p>

Matchmaking events

WP	3 (A 3.2)
Responsible Partner(s)	Activity Leader: Alexanderson institute

	WP lead: Johanneberg Science Park WP co-lead: Tallinn Science Park Tehnopol
Target Group(s)	The events will target intermediaries mapped and communicated with through activity A2.1, A3.1 and A3.4
Time of Implementation:	Period 2, Period 5 or 6
Description:	<p>14 matchmaking and connection events will be arranged, two in each participating country. Matchmaking will be focused on connecting intermediaries and potential startups with specific actions to elaborate on cross-border cooperation, based on the skills, experiences and focus areas of intermediaries. This shall enhance the BSR SmartUp Accelerator establishment. Finally, the events will also be an opportunity for discussions and sharing of knowledge.</p> <p>Every event is tailored to each country's situation, opportunities and needs. They will be arranged back to back with other events if possible, to guarantee maximal interest and effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The main objective of the first round of events is to <i>gain interest towards consumer cleantech and building network and relations</i>. Outputs, results and findings from WP2 and WP3.1 will be presented. - The main objective of the second round of events is to <i>facilitate interaction between potential startups and intermediaries as well as gain interest of the training materials, market studies, pilot startups cases and the launch of the model</i>. (5.3)

Further means of stimulating SmartUp Accelerator target groups can be identified through additional activities that will take place during the project's lifetime. These are less clear-cut as stimulation actions than the aforementioned events but nonetheless include:

Interviews conducted through activities relating to A2.1, A3.1, A4.3. will support the establishment of contact with target groups, offering them also some insight into the consumer cleantech field. This, in turn, provides an opportunity for future relations and stimulation through newsletters, reports, events and more. The progress and development of the project will be described, along with challenges and opportunities as described by interviewees.

Startup interactions further leads to stimulation of the target groups, whereof intermediaries working with business support in various ways will be prioritized. Intermediaries may be stimulated in conjunction to the spreading of information through national competitions, mentor participation during international bootcamps or testbed facilitation (3.3, 3.4, 3.5)

Partners responsible for stimulation actions through their roles as WP-leaders or activity leaders will have the responsibility of management, gathering results and/or compiling reports of stimulation actions. As such, any patterns, new potential or strategic modifications in working with the consumer cleantech ecosystem should be identified primarily by these partners.

The progress of the aforementioned stimulation activities will be continuously discussed during partner meetings and among members of the steering committee, which consists of one representative from each partner organization. Stimulation actions may also come to be covered during advisory board meetings. The Steering Committee is to have 3 meetings with the advisory

board, which gathers representatives relevant to consumer cleantech and our transnational and cross-sector objectives.

2.2 STIMULATION ACTION RESULTS

2.2.1. National Seminars

Summary

The first national seminars in each country were held between November 11th, 2018 - April 25th, 2019. The second national seminars in each country have been held between April 10th and December 5th, 2019. The final round of national seminars was merged into a single event - a webinar spanning all seven countries and beyond on June 5th, 2020. Formats have varied and consisted of hosting events covering SmartUp Accelerator activities and topics exclusively, joining or co-arranging events based on shared interests with other organizations or events or hosting a debate which was later summarized in a news article. In the second round of national seminars, there were more collaborative elements and arrangements than in the first year. The third and final event was arranged to take place online using Zoom and Facebook to broadcast online discussions. The events offered a variety of formats for spreading messages, such as stage time or hosting stands at external events enabling both broad communication and 1-on-1 discussions.

Highlights

Raising issues linked to consumer cleantech in the no. 1 business magazine in Poland ("Puls Biznesu") was a highlight supported by the Foundation for Technology Entrepreneurship (PL). Another example is that University of Latvia involved a Lithuanian expert to join one national seminar, which was especially positive given that the action included perspectives from a target area of the project where there were no project partners. A final example is that the Finnish seminar was arranged at a point in time when the testbed phase (A 3.5.) of the project was active, allowing for a German smartup company that was targeting the Finnish market to join the event and gain benefit from it.

Highlights in the second round of seminars included international speakers at events, such as Lawrence Leuschner with German TIER Mobility at the Finnish seminar. In Sweden, SmartUp Accelerator was selected to present the project during a national event for intermediaries. Here, the project posed as an example on how to support the development of smart cities from a transnational perspective, including views on cooperation methods. The project also gained visibility at large conferences in both Russia and Poland, and there was coverage from media during the Polish event.

The selected format for the third round of seminars deviated from the original plans to have one final seminar simultaneously in each of the seven partner countries. In the lights of the covid-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, it was decided that the event should take place online instead and was thus held as a webinar. This allowed however for sticking with an original idea to synchronize the seven final events.

Many people from the Baltics and beyond tuned in to listen to the keynotes during the webinar. The event had three inspiring speakers: Francesca Grossi with The Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP), Claudia Fusco, Head of Unit responsible for Environmental Knowledge, Eco-Innovation, Small and Medium-size Enterprises and Green Cities in

the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission and Tobias Degsell, thought leader and frequently hired speaker on the topics of collaboration.

Transnational value and possibilities

The transnational value of the national seminars came from presenting of the SmartUp Accelerator project, the values of collaboration it promotes and the concrete business and learning opportunities it brings. Transnational value also come from the inclusion of international experts and other stakeholders such as smartups, who can contribute both with concrete cases and suggestions for international collaboration as well as highlight a variety of perspectives on the importance and value of such activities. Having local smartups join and discuss their identified hurdles and opportunities as was done during Swedish, German and Polish seminars was a clear example of the roles local actors can take in business support and innovation for smartups – and its importance.

Stressing the importance of international efforts for consumer cleantech could be achieved without the presence of foreign stakeholders at events as well. One main example is that the SmartUp Accelerator project was selected to represent an initiative to support the development of smart cities from a transnational perspective at an event in Sweden, The international possibilities of the project have been communicated in all countries, and in some events more international initiatives were mentioned, which made SmartUp Accelerator part of a bigger picture. In Russia, one event was arranged as a part of a larger conference which gathered people from not only Russia but 7 other countries. Similarly, one German event had attending parties from another cross-border project.

The transnational value of the future Smartup Accelerator platform and collaborations was a focal point during the final awareness-raising event. This was to some extent due to it being shaped to suit stakeholders from all over the Baltics and beyond. In the selection of keynote speakers for the event, it was considered important that there should be speakers of different nationalities covering different perspectives on the selected event topics. It was also possible for viewers to leave comments or questions to the speakers.

Who benefited from this activity and how?

The national seminars have benefited intermediaries, private companies, startups/SMEs, authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders around the Baltic Sea region and beyond. The main benefit is an increased understanding of consumer cleantech, relevant ecosystem actors and the business potential for consumer cleantech around the BSR. The events have also posed an opportunity for participants to reflect on their own roles in the ecosystem. In some instances, smartups have shared their story during events, offering a good communication channel for them and an opportunity for the audience to hear about the needs of smartups directly or even initiate discussions with them.

The consortium members have also benefited from the national seminars, as it has been an opportunity to pick up on how messages have been perceived - especially if there have been elements of discussions and feedback during, before or after the events. It can also be stated that the project has been selected to join external events most likely due to its relevance, and as such there has been benefits to those arranging the external events where SmartUp Accelerator has joined.

Finally, the national seminars have been beneficial to BSR stakeholders that were considering joining the Smartup Accelerator network. It supported them in getting an overview of the

relevance of consumer cleantech as a business and development opportunity for them, to learn about the needs and barriers in the field and the importance of collaboration for its successful development.

How the seminars have stimulated sense of community and trust building on the individual level and ecosystem management and leadership on organizational level

Opportunities for the audience to discuss the presented topics has given a forum for trust building through feedback and broadening of the presented views. Activities such as workshops additionally offered a chance to work together, and coffee breaks or similar have been an opportunity to network.

The ecosystem management includes the chosen strategies, participants and coordination. The seminars supported this development through the discussions held, as these gave insights that the consortium members carry with them through the project lifetime and shaping of the ecosystem. The understanding of the consumer cleantech field is continuously shaped as the consortium works with the topic and input from target groups is received. The leadership of the potential ecosystem is defined through the same mechanisms and may also come to change as the SmartUp Accelerator Model takes its form. By allowing for influence from stakeholders outside the consortium, new ideas were included which ultimately increased the relevance of the network and its functions, which may also be important for building trust.

Some events where the project has appeared took place where the attending parties were part of an already established association or cluster. This means that there is already some sense of community there, thus lowering barriers for creating trust and new collaboration. For example, it was experienced by the Russian partners that participants identified several areas relating to consumer cleantech where they could take joint action. This was the case in Latvia as well, even though participants did not have the common denominator of being part of the same network or similar. This proves that not only under circumstances where one is a part of an established group is it possible to feel a sense of community and identify common goals.

The 2020 webinar had one speaker that talked specifically about the critical points for successful collaborations and supported the participants with some specifics to avoid the most common pitfalls. Especially important to the success of collaboration were for example aspects such as trust and diversity. Also, messages about new opportunities and European strategies during this event could stimulate ideas on a management for the affected stakeholders.

Gathering people from all partner countries for one single event such as the webinar also stimulated a sense of community - it was a forum for all kinds of organizations to (e)meet within the framework of the SmartUp Accelerator project, no matter their geographical location. During all events, parties who are interested in the model are invited to stay in touch.

How did we attract and stimulate actors to enhance consumer cleantech prospects and solutions

In some sense, co-arranging events has meant ecosystem actors have been stimulated towards consumer cleantech. Ultimately, the cooperation actors have identified the relevance of their organization or work in relation to consumer cleantech and the project, and thus accepted ideas for hosting events together or allowing SmartUp Accelerator to be a part of their agenda. Making these arrangements is also highly effective in that the target audience of this organization has the potential to be very relevant for SmartUp Accelerator as well.

New connections have been established throughout the project when there has been interest in

keeping in touch regarding the development of the SmartUp Accelerator Model. The new connections and identified fields for joint efforts among event participants also contributes to enhancing prospects locally and internationally. As mentioned, some seminars were attended by stakeholders who discussed potential joint efforts, or local or foreign startups who were able to make business connections during the event. The events have also supported the SmartUp competitions by gathering new leads for potential startup projects to apply, or for startup finalists to gather leads on their new market.

How have participants been encouraged to participate in the emerging transnational cooperation

Consumer cleantech has previously not been known as a concept to most actors in the SmartUp Accelerator target groups. However, the great mix of stakeholders gathered during the events show how multifaceted the field is. Correspondingly, this demonstrates a wide range of opportunities both for startups and larger entities of various character, who may identify potential points of collaboration between themselves and others of different sizes or focal areas in the consumer cleantech sector. Parties interested in the SmartUp Accelerator model have consistently been encouraged to stay in touch and the consortium has also had them in mind for events or activities. The gathering of leads for the SmartUp Accelerator Model prospects has been continuous, and following the development on social media, the website or through personal contact was always encouraged. When found especially relevant, there has been follow-ups by the partnership to potential members of the emerging network.

Methods and reflections on this do not widely differ over the rounds of seminars. Finding the right forum for the discussions has however proven to increase the chances meeting a higher number of relevant organizations. The webinar is one example of an event where the emerging transnational cooperation was the central theme.

Learnings for future events

During the planning, execution and follow-up, certain learnings for future events have been identified.

For Sweden, one very important challenge is the large spread of intermediaries all over the country. Parties that are active within the field of cleantech have shown interest in the event and concept as such, but the long distances make their attendance during physical events less likely. Joining the meeting of the industry association Swedish Incubators and Science Parks for the second round of seminars in Sweden allowed for reaching many more people from all over the country who were the exact target group. A challenge is on the other hand knowing exactly who from the organizations were at the SmartUp Accelerator session, aside from those with whom it was possible to speak to personally. With the goal to raise awareness about consumer cleantech in mind, this type of format does still serve its purpose. Generally, planning for events to take place through collaboration with other organizations has proven to be a good strategy to reach more stakeholders, and it allows for being linked to already established brands and related topics. To the new topic consumer cleantech, this has been an important way to reach target groups through otherwise challenging noise.

Additional examples of co-arrangements included the Congress of Urban Technology in Poland, and Last Mile in Finland. Naturally, the events have not focused solely on SmartUp Accelerator. On the other hand, joining suitable events has put consumer cleantech and the project in a context, showing that this cross-cutting field is not separated from existing industries but rather a mix of them and emerging technologies and mind-sets.

In Latvia, there were no co-arrangements made as no suitable events were identified. For their and other independently held seminars, some partners experienced the following challenges and needs:

- No-shows and intense programs
- Managing clashing with other events targeting similar topics and target groups.
- Finding a way to make use of other project activities and arranging them to support the activity goals in a mutual way
- Including workshops or other opportunities for the attendees to interact to support building personal connections and trust, as well as keeping the energy up.

The main downside of hosting a webinar is that it is not possible to speak face-to-face with participants. Meanwhile, it is possible to meet or reach out personally on other occasions. The webinar served as a good complement to the previous offline interactions with the target groups. An important aspect is however to draw learnings from general strategies for hosting good online events, for example how to include music to create the right atmosphere, elements of interaction, or to include buffer time to make sure there will be time for Q&As.

The upside of hosting the seminar online was that it widened the opportunities for whom it was possible to ask to join the event as a speaker. Having online speakers is something that has not been done aside from during the events that went online due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. In the future, it may be possible to mix physical meetings with online speakers, or to find other fruitful combinations to support the most important values and goals of each event and the tools used. Through Zoom, the online seminar reached 91 external participants from 14 different countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Great Britain, Italy, Korea, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, US). A final learning for the webinar, was that additionally streaming the event on social media was a very good initiative. The idea was raised in discussions with the partnership, which also speaks to the benefit of arranging feedback actions prior to events. The webinar reached at least 300 people on Facebook in June 2020. By the end of August, the number had doubled, and the video on Facebook had reached almost 600 people. This amounts to around 700 views. The numbers are approximate.

2.2.2. Training Events

The following section has been selected from output 4.1, “Startup Accelerator training programme.”¹

Overall, there was a lot of interest toward training events. The response towards the first round of trainings in each country was enthusiastic both by number of participants and the participation of those who attended the trainings.

There was particular interest towards the ecosystem aspect: many people were at the same time frustrated by a lack of connections to different intermediaries and excited about the prospect of connecting with and learning from other actors through the Startup Accelerator project. The fact that the trainings featured an international speaker was purposeful in that regard

¹ Output 4.1 was written by Christopher Rowley with Demos Helsinki. The full version of the document can be found on the [Startup Accelerator website](#).

because it helped create a sense of transnational connections and opportunity for international networking.

- The other aspect that sparked interest was the foresight and futures studies approach taken in the training events. People were familiar with megatrends and had used them in strategic planning, but the connection between foresight methods and cleantech business was both novel and useful for participants.
- The participants seemed to value the active side of the trainings, namely the group work exercise done during each of the training. Doing a horizon scanning exercise in groups gave participants an opportunity to discuss and work together, while applying the theories they had learned into a practical context.
- What the participants would have hoped more for was even more practical examples about how foresight and business development go together. Therefore, it was planned for including elements of hearing from practitioners in the second round of trainings.

Instead of organizing separate training events in each of the countries for the second round of events, a decision was made to hold an online international training event across the BSR due to the covid-19 crisis. The event was held September 2, 2020 using the Zoom platform.

The event brought together over 50 representatives from business incubators, tech parks and science parks, investors, and support institutions working with cleantech topics from Estonia, Finland, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The event had over 80 registrants and included people from Germany, Latvia and Kenya. For online events, the gap between registrants and actual attendees is expected to be greater than in real-life events.

The training session had three parts:

1. **Two keynote speeches** by Maija Itkonen, Head of Innovation at Gold&Green and Katriina Helaniemi works on Strategic Impact Research at Illusian Group and with extensive international experience with supporting impact driven startups. Itkonen reflected on her journey and the role of helpers from the founder's perspective. She shared key moments and experiences from the journey from founding to launch, especially the difficulties in getting funding for scaling production, which would have required a significant loan for a factory. Helaniemi on the other hand highlighted key learnings from her experience supporting impact driven startups. She shared three important points. First, she encouraged supporting organizations to identify and own their areas of strengths. Second, she highlighted that investors only fund things that they understand. Supporting organizations can play a role in educating investors around the sustainability topics and innovations that are sought to be funded. Third, Helaniemi emphasized that impact is not enough for startups; developing solid business models is what will make or break a startup. Supporting organizations should encourage and support impact driven startups to develop and solidify business models. The two presentations prompted a rich Q&A discussion with the participants afterwards.
2. In addition to the presentations, participants participated in an international **networking roulette**, where they were randomly paired with other attendees to meet

and greet, and share their insights from the session so far. This was repeated twice, so each participant could meet as many participants as possible.

3. There was opportunity for smaller **group discussions**, which were grouped according to location to enable more focused and locally relevant discussions for participants. The breakout discussions were facilitated and focused on questions related to sharing learnings and experiences, learning about support tools, future cooperation possibilities as well as what actions are needed to propel the consumer cleantech in the country. The learnings from the event varied significantly in local groups. For example, the Finland group highlighted that researchers and startups should be brought together in more systemic ways, and that the structural racism and discrimination that is present is something to be addressed head on. In Estonia, issues around the nature of current environmental regulation was highlighted as a major hindrance. In Poland, the issue of supporting startups beyond funding through mentorship and networking was raised. Overall, in the closing session the participants highlighted that strengthening the cooperation between actors would reduce duplication of work and would overall create a more efficient and effective supporting cleantech ecosystem.

Areas of further development

- The online format that brought together different players across the BSR presented some difficulties, as the different countries have significantly varying starting points and types of challenges they face. However, it has also created opportunities to weave and strengthen international cooperation between BSR countries. The three-part format, that created opportunities for making international connections but at the same time enabled locally specific discussions worked well in balancing the challenge and the opportunities of this specific format. In the future, the discussions and facilitation format of the local breakout sessions could be further developed to concretize the discussions to maximize the benefits of this portion of the event.
- After the event all participants were sent a feedback form to reflect on their experience. 10% of the participants (from Sweden, Russia and Estonia) have responded, which is unfortunately often a typical response rate for online feedback forms. Participants have emphasized the value of the event in giving them further inspiration in their work, and especially learning concrete lessons from the peers in their country. Fewer respondents emphasized their ability to build an international network, which suggests that this aspect of the online event could be further emphasized and elaborated. For example, the international networking roulette could have taken up slightly more time.
- The number of participants dropped after the keynote speakers and Q&A portion of the event, since afterwards more active participation was required. This is typical with online events, however, in the future the interactive nature of the event could be more emphasized in the promotion and advertising of the event. This could mitigate the drop-off and set the right expectations for the participants about the nature of the event. For some, meeting others in this way online may simply not be comfortable or appropriate. In in-person events, participants could freely choose or not to choose to engage in networking activities, but the online format forces participants to

either engage or drop out of the event. Perhaps this could be further mitigated by making it an optional part of the event and enabling participants to “sit out” some parts as they see fit without dropping out entirely.

2.2.3. Matchmaking Events

The following section has been selected from output 3.2, “Smart(Up) Match-making – How to improve your skills as organizer of matchmaking events.”²

Summary

All seven partner countries covered the general topic of consumer cleantech in their first match-making event. The events took place in the early stages of the project, and had startups, partners, intermediaries, researchers and others attend. The set-up with venue, time of day, and planning for the events to take place back-to-back with other project activities varied across the Baltic Sea based on possibilities and preferences. The second round of matchmaking events was arranged in four countries before the lockdown in 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic. The set-up was thereafter pivoted to go online, to be able to still arrange matchmaking events but in a safe and innovative way. A digital matchmaking event was planned and had representation from all seven partner countries. Focus in the second round of seminars was to facilitate interaction between startups and other stakeholders. Common for both rounds of events was raising awareness on upcoming events and activities in the project, such as our developed studies and the future launch of the SmartUp Accelerator model.

Success factors

Some events have managed to have participants from the wide range of fields relevant to consumer cleantech. In Sweden for example, another benefit that the attending parties were familiar with one another, which supported the atmosphere in a positive way.

The matchmaking events were a forum for startups and the expert community to start discussions, some of which continued after panel discussions, pitching sessions or arranged meetings online during the final online matchmaking event. What is more, the selected speakers were good choices and often accessible in the partners already established networks. In addition, the events offered an opportunity to present the project, the learnings thus far and the consumer cleantech topic, which was key in round one of the events.

Further success factors included the selected forums for the events. These included the already well-known “Science Café” in Latvia, and a venue to match the cause such as in Germany where the event took place on a solar powered boat.

Learnings for future events

Learnings both for the online and the offline event was the insight that there was a need for a longer buffer time or fewer speakers. This supports for activities to be able to take place on time and ensures there is time for discussions among participants. For online events, elements of introducing oneself and including commentary on a current topic allows for everyone to speak and creates a nice atmosphere, but these activities must be prepared with consideration of the number of participants.

² Output 3.2. was written by Eva Hjalmered and Ida Thomsson with the Alexanderson Institute. The document can be found on the [Smartup Accelerator website](#).

Some partners found that it was challenging to get people to attend the event, especially in the first round of matchmaking events. In addition, some found it would have been fruitful with higher attendance from some specific target groups. In Finland, for example, higher attendance from startups would have allowed for a wider spread on the word of the upcoming competition for consumer cleantech companies. To some extent, some low attendance figures could be attributed to that other events took place during the same time and that the topics of the project were very new at this point. Already at the early stages of the project, it was noted that making use of established brands and topics could support spreading knowledge on consumer cleantech. Also, personalized invitations and earlier interaction with the stakeholders was identified a good strategy for easing these barriers for future events. Helpful tools for developing the processes of the matchmaking events include observations and analysis by all partners and feedback through online forms. One final learning of special relevance to the online event was that sharing materials in advance, such as pitch decks for startups, could be one strategy for making the actual meetings more efficient.

Connecting intermediaries and startups

The second round of matchmaking event was due to facilitate interaction between startups and intermediaries, and to increase interest towards the outputs and activities of the project. On May 26th, 2020, the activity leader arranged an online matchmaking focusing on the startups that were involved in the testbed phased of the project at the time. The startups formulated a request based on their needs relating to their acceleration process towards a new market entry around the BSR. Based on this request, the startups were set up with intermediaries and experts on the target markets based on their skills, experiences and focus areas. The online event thus supported cross-border cooperation in a very concrete way.

3. Communication to ecosystem stakeholders

This section maps the objectives of communicative actions in the project, including monitoring results from the communication actions.

3.1 COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The following communication objectives have been identified from the communication strategies for all work packages of the SmartUp Accelerator project (WP2 - WP5).

Objective 1 To gain deeper understanding of CC through dialogue with companies, end users, decision makers, testbed hosts, intermediaries, and others.

**Outcome
O1**

This objective has been achieved especially through interviews with startups and experts in consumer cleantech related fields. Also, the testbed phase for startups under which they have been supported in reaching a new target market has offered a learning experience for the consortium members. Startups have expressed their needs and desires in the process and been supported in making any necessary pivots. In addition, the strategies have required for the partnership to be in discussion with a broad variety of stakeholders to support the strategies of startups, thus offering an opportunity to better understand

	the points of interest, level of development and innovation capacity of testbed hosts, intermediaries and others.
Objective 2	To raise awareness and increase knowledge about CC and its logic, potential, business opportunities and challenges in the BSR.
Outcome O2	The objective to raise awareness has been achieved by interaction with BSR stakeholders, especially through the project events. It should be noted that the level of knowledge within the consortium has increased over time, as the project has focused on one specific consumer cleantech topic per year (smart mobility, smart consumption and smart housing). When comparing the level of comprehension of the consumer cleantech field in year one versus year three, it is likely that differences could be identified which in turn would have an effect on shaping the messaging for awareness-raising purposes. However, relevant BSR stakeholders were identified early in the project, which means that many of them that have been subject to communicative actions in the project.
Objective 3	To increase knowledge among the CC innovation ecosystem actors about the BSR-wide ecosystem, the value of belonging there and collaboration opportunities it provides.
Outcome O3	Knowledge about the BSR wide ecosystem for consumer cleantech has been increased by mentioning during events and 1-on-1 discussions. Learnings from the project have provided the backbone for setting the framework for the network, and value propositions for each of the networks main target groups have been developed accordingly. The successfully established network for future discussions about collaboration opportunities in the region is a testament to that.
Objective 4	To increase knowledge about CC, fields with cross-bordering elements in relation to CC and the transnational context to change attitudes, behavior and enhance skills among target groups.
Outcome O4	Again, the successfully established network for future discussions about collaboration opportunities in the region is a testament to changed behaviors to support consumer cleantech in the BSR. Also, skills have increased among the stakeholders through trainings (A. 4.1) and concrete work with startups (A. 3.5)
Objective 5	To ensure that startups & SMEs are aware about the intermediaries' support network available for them within the national and transnational ecosystem
Outcome O5	21 startups have experienced support activities firsthand through the project's bootcamp and testbed phase (A 3.3 & A 3.5). What is more, the companies that applied to the competition (A. 3.4) are also aware of the benefits of the developing ecosystem. The project has seen an increasing number of applications each year, which indicates that awareness about SmartUp Accelerator opportunities has been raised.
	A value proposition has been developed for startups that wish to access the

	support network in the future. Invitations have also been extended to them via email, personal invitations and social media.
Objective 6	To promote collaboration opportunities between BSR CC stakeholders and create opportunities for interaction and matchmaking
Outcome O6	Promotion of collaboration opportunities between BSR stakeholders have been promoted throughout the whole project lifetime during events, social media and during 1-on-1 discussions. Opportunities for the stakeholders to experience this firsthand have been made available at events such as matchmaking events (3.2) or networking, workshops etc. during national seminars (2.2) or trainings (4.1)
Objective 7	To disseminate methodologies and good practices identified to enhance the capacity of intermediaries in CC sector.
Outcome O7	<p>This has been done through the trainings (4.1) where methods for better understanding consumer cleantech opportunities have been presented. The events have also had sessions focusing on sharing best practices and to reflect on what can be done better by organizations to support sustainable products and services for consumers. Also, events have encouraged reflection and dialogue about areas for improvement within organizations and on a national level.</p> <p>In addition, good practices have also been shared using for example blog posts covering success stories from the testbed phase, which also gives an indication about the potential for the network.</p>
Objective 8	To disseminate results about new solutions to European and Global markets.
Outcome O8	Event discussions and presentations, social media and the SmartUp Accelerator website have been the most used tools to share information about results from the project. The adjustments that had to be made to some events due to the Covid-19 pandemic caused for them to go from offline events to online events. This opened for a wider audience to join the SmartUp Accelerator discussions in a smooth way and for results to be spread beyond the BSR.
Objective 9	To raise awareness about the SmartUp Accelerator model and brand BSR wide
Outcome O9	The project has reached its goals for output indicators in terms of successful testbed cases, enterprises cooperating with research institutions and organizations receiving non-financial support. By the end of the project, September 30 th 2020, the network had gathered interest among potential members throughout the Baltic Sea region. Based in this, it can be stated that awareness about the model to support consumer cleantech solutions has been increased.

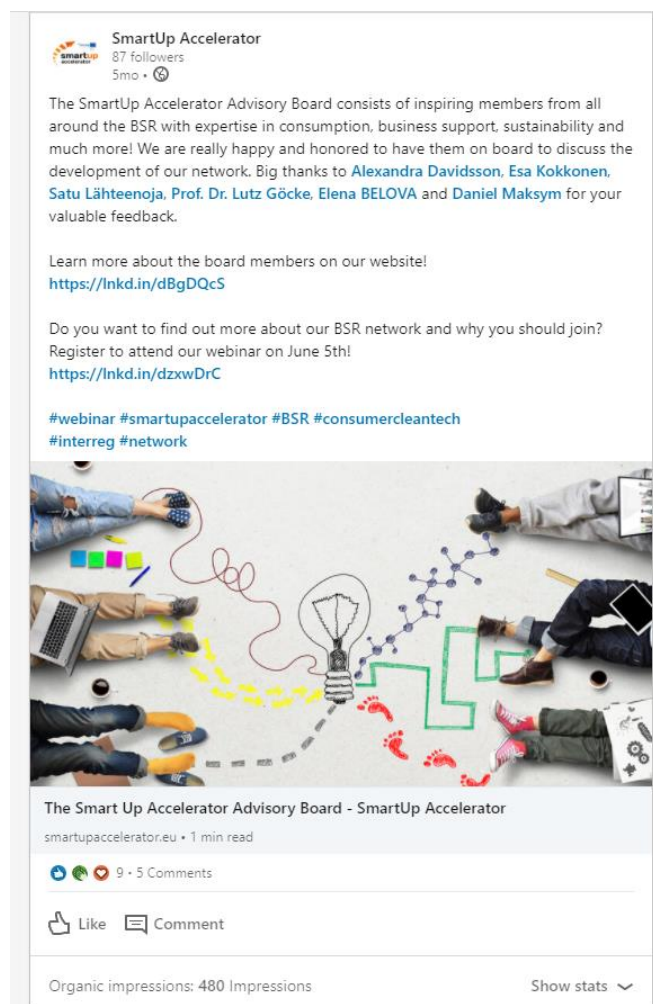
3.1 COMMUNICATION ACTIONS AND MONITORING RESULTS

Website and social media establishment and facilitation

The SmartUp Accelerator website was established in the first stages of the project, as were accounts on the social media channels Twitter and Facebook. A LinkedIn page was created halfway into the project. The LinkedIn page was set up as it was identified as a good channel to reach target groups within the project. As LinkedIn is frequently used by both many professionals and organizations, it was a channel that was appropriate for using tags, allowing for more interaction and sharing of posts by the individuals and organizations mentioned or tagged to them. The main purpose of the social media channels was to draw attention to the website and our messages, which included information about upcoming events, consumer cleantech opportunities and project achievements.

A learning for consistent communication is to create a strategy that indicates what type of material should be produced for what purpose. It was stated in the project application that there should be six blog posts posted per year, for example. Stating instead that each event should be documented with a blog post would support the structure and planning of communication activities in a better way. The turnout was instead a couple too few blog posts in total, but many news items on the website to complement the blog posts.

The social media accounts have had from around 75 – 150 followers each. It has been possible to note an increase in the number of followers especially when the project has arranged events with involvement from stakeholders, such as the competitions and bootcamps for startups in activity 3.3 and 3.4. There was typically also a peak in the number of website visitors a few days prior to events.

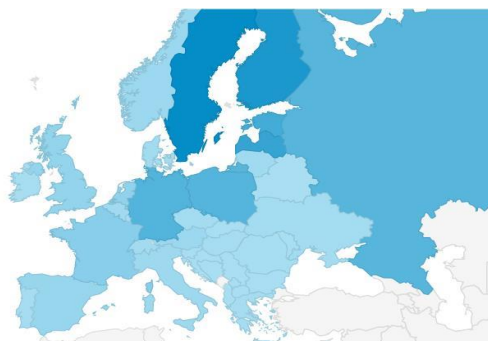


A LinkedIn post spread the word about the SMA Advisory board. Tagging the board members increased engagement in the post.

The SmartUp Accelerator website was created to spread information about the project, consumer cleantech and events. Based on the learnings from the project, a new website was developed to support the SmartUp Accelerator model. Limitations in the setup of the first page and identification of challenges and inefficiencies for rebuilding the original project website prompted the need for a new platform to be developed. New features of the SmartUp Accelerator Network website which was created to live beyond the project lifetime to facilitate the SmartUp Accelerator model. New features include a search function where network members can be found, and members can engage in a forum as well as find the personal bios and contact information of network member representatives.

Printed communication products

The main printed materials used in the project has been roll-ups. This has allowed for allocating resources to communication efforts in a more efficient way, while saving both money and paper. Using more printed materials would not have served the values of the project in a better way, as the most effective means for interaction has been personal communication, online correspondence, and social media/website. In using these online tools, it has been possible to freely develop messaging as the knowledge about the topics has increased, which has been key in this project as it has covered an initially rather unknown business field. Catering to local needs and differences has supported goal achievement in the respective countries.



The map shows the variation in SMA website visitors for the Baltic Sea region. It can be noted that the BSR countries with no partner engagement (Denmark, Norway and Lithuania) have had fewer visitors on the website than the seven project partner countries.

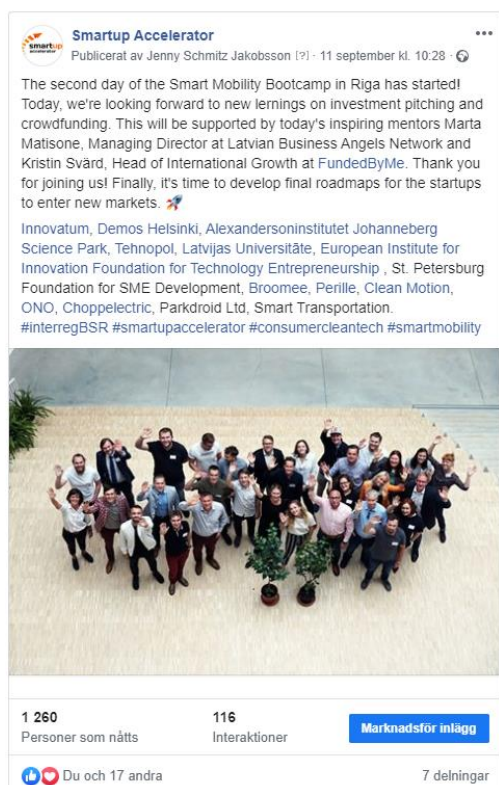


The map shows the geographical location of website visitors from 1.1.2018 – 21.10.2020

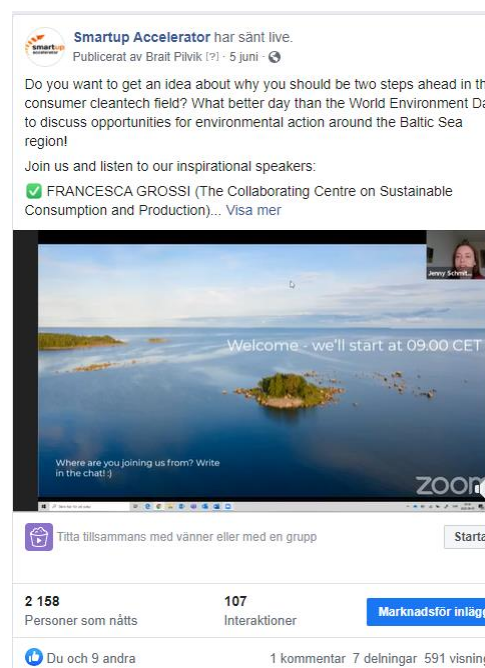
Communication related to events

The communication goals and general guidelines have been set between the project management team and the activity leader for each event. To support partners further, activity leaders have also provided the consortium with suggestions for invitation letters or one pagers. These have then been adjusted to the local markets and target groups – be it through personalization if the recipient was already an established contact, or translation in cases where use of English was less appropriate. Often, reaching out personally with an invitation has been the most effective way to increase the number of participants at a given event and been a critical complement to social media and website information.

Information about upcoming events was posted to the website event page and shared on social media. For the webinar (A 2.2) which was open for anyone to join, Facebook was used to livestream the event. This widened the reach significantly. For most events, either a news item or blog post was written. Again, stating early on what type of activities should be followed by which communication actions and when would have supported more consistency in the post documentation of events.



A Facebook post from the Riga bootcamp on September 11th, 2019 reached over 1000 people.



The webinar on June 5th was livestreamed on Facebook, appearing in the feed of more than 2000 people and showed almost 600 times.

During events, not losing news value by communicating during the event itself supported the general interest and the engagement of participants and organizations in the post where they were mentioned. The most prominent example is the SmartUp Accelerator bootcamp (A 3.3.) in Riga, 2019. All participants and their organizations were tagged in the picture and/or in the text, and the post reached more than 1000 people.

SmartUp Accelerator has joined external events that were not related to planned activities. However, participating in events has increased the awareness of the project and its topics, as part of the work package for communication. Examples include the World Circular Economy Forum that took place in Helsinki, Finland in 2019, and the World Economic Forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2018.

Newsletter

Early in the project, it was clear that there was a need for more understanding of the target groups and the themes before interaction with stakeholders through newsletters could start. Interviews, desk research and internal discussions all shaped the common understanding of what to communicate, when, to whom and why.

Sending newsletters has been a good tool that has been used to share posts on the website, information about upcoming events or reaching out to specific target groups with customized messages. Following up on the newsletters and any un-subscriptions has supported other activities as well, for instance when identifying relevant stakeholders or for sending out personalized event invitations.

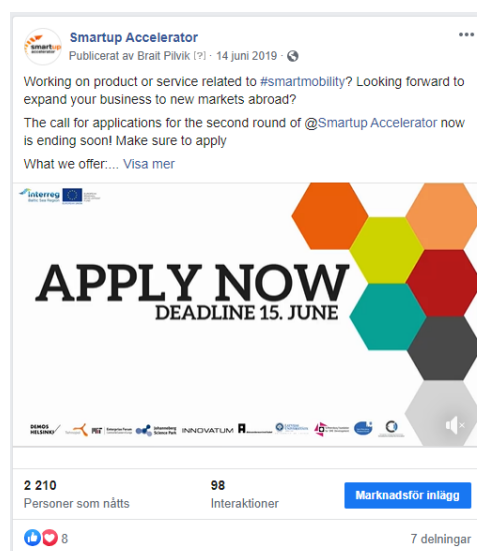
Production of videos and infographics on consumer cleantech

For the initially rather unexplored topic of consumer cleantech, the first communication activities using video and infographics was of general character and allowed for familiarization with consumer cleantech as well as the project partners of the SmartUp Accelerator project.³ Most videos and infographics about consumer cleantech and the project were created using project activities as the content baseline, examples being project meetings or the Gothenburg and Riga bootcamps. The SmartUp Accelerator bootcamps and launch of the SmartUp Accelerator model are two examples of infographic and video content materials, which both covered consumer cleantech and linked it specifically to opportunities or stories of concrete startup cases. These videos have been useful for various purposes aside from documenting the activities. For example, the bootcamp video from Gothenburg in 2018 was valuable promotion material during the second competition round. The videos have thus also increased awareness about startup solutions to a variety of stakeholders and increased insight about consumer cleantech and BSR opportunities. Documented materials can also be of value to those participating in the video in their own communication efforts.

³ One example is available [here](#)



An example of an infographic for example of promotion of the SMA Model.



This infographic was used to share information about the A 3.4 competition for startups and reached over 2000 people.

Translation to native languages of produced communication materials

Translation to native languages has been done when relevant. Examples include promotion of events on the website especially in the first year of the project. However, most website materials were in English and this supported good overview for any website visitor. There are examples however of the contrary, as well. Especially for the Russian market, it has been valuable to produce materials and host a **website** in Russian. Aside from general aspects of risk management and accessibility for all, this is one of the main reasons for keeping all materials in one place, including for example access to updated logos, pictures, and documentation from all events.

Dissemination of Project Outcomes

Project outcomes include reports, extracts from reports or cases from the SmartUp Accelerator project. The most valuable cases from the project have also been included in the reports.

One example is the smartup case *Perille* from the second round of the testbed phase. This smartup managed to successfully establish new contacts on the Russian market with support from their target market partners. Perille was selected for the testbed report (O 3.5.), which covers the best practices from this phase of the project. The Perille case has been presented as a story on the SmartUp Accelerator website. Finally, the case was also presented as a success case during the 2020 online bootcamp, which was not only inspirational to the startups but indeed also a way of sharing results from the project.

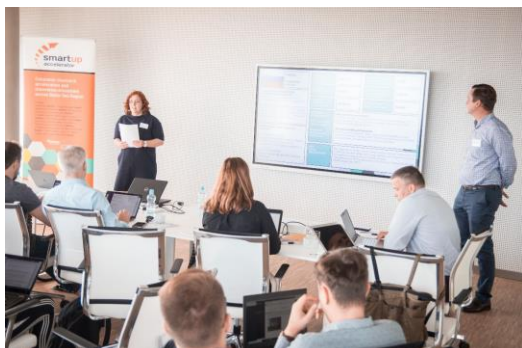
Dissemination of results from the project have further been shared through the descriptions of the challenges and opportunities for consumer cleantech in reports and communication during events. For example, the market studies of activity 4.3 were the foundation for the presentation of BSR markets during the bootcamp.



A view of the Russian website.



The Perille success story was described in a post on the project website.



Key knowledge about the Russian market for smart mobility was presented during the Riga bootcamp in 2019.



Presentation of SmartUp Accelerator in Sweden during the national seminar on May 9th, 2019.

Other examples include the national seminars of activity 2.2. These have aimed to increase awareness about consumer cleantech. For example, the second Swedish national seminar was held during the yearly event of the industry association Swedish Incubators & Science Parks. Here, SmartUp Accelerator was an example of how to work in a transnational environment to support the development of smarter cities. The purpose of the session was to inspire and offer peer learning opportunities. Therefore, the success factors and learnings up until that point was shared during the event. A final example is the first meeting within the framework of the newly established model, i.e. the SmartUp Accelerator Network, which took place close to the end of the project. This allowed for a presentation of the project achievement in numbers, such as mentioning of the number of applications received for the competitions, the number of smartups supported in the bootcamp and testbed phases of the project, and the events held. During the events, SmartUp Accelerator model has been mentioned frequently, as have the outputs as one of the model's most important offers. All outputs have been posted to the SmartUp Accelerator website. Once posted, they have been spread using links in newsletters and social media.

4. Recommendations for continuous interaction in the consumer cleantech ecosystem

4.1 Best Practices

Stimulation and communication planning

- Decide on what type of communication action(s) should follow which activities and when to support consistency.
- Decide on who is responsible for what type of communication action and who needs to support it by providing the necessary materials, including feedback on success factors and items for development.
- Consider aspects of risk management and accessibility for all by planning early on what materials to share in a place where the right people can access it, including pictures, logos, event documentation etc.
- Select tools and platforms that are frequently used by key people and relevant stakeholders both for daily internal communication and external communication. Avoid introducing new tools unless there are clear benefits.

- Working in an unexplored field will entail learning as new information is gathered. This necessitates continuous shaping of messages which makes it is worth considering what type communication channels and materials to use, for whom and when. For example, digital materials allow for smoother reuse and development of materials, and the learning experience will influence the amount and type of content available at different points in time.
- Consider the value of communication actions and materials. For example, video material is important documentation material, useful promotion content for future activities, good content for those featured in the media etc.
- When possible, arrange for events to take place back-to-back with other project activities and have them mutually benefit one another, through allowing for promotion of other events or inclusion of specific stakeholders.

Social media

- Communicate during or as soon as possible after events to avoid losing news value, the relevance and interest towards the news item.
- Engage with event participants and stakeholders on social media by tagging them in posts.

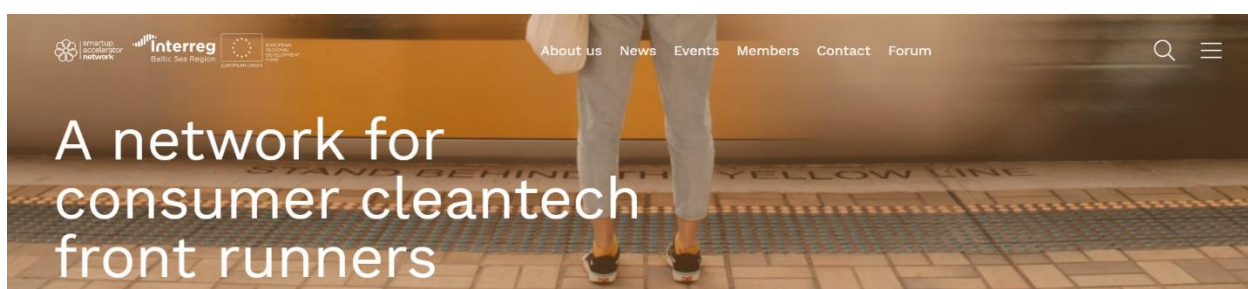
Event and stakeholder communication

- Personal communication has been a key complement in all communication activities, and strongly supported the inflow of startup applications, event attendees and network members.
- Participation in external events has been an efficient way to increase awareness about the project and its topic. This can also put the topics in a context of choice which makes it easier for stakeholders to identify the relevance to their field of business.
- Different communication activities can be attributed different importance in different countries and with different target groups. In some places or to some stakeholder groups, Facebook is very popular for live streaming and event creation, while in others it is more likely to be considered a social media platform for private use. In some countries, printed materials are appreciated. Translation may be a benefit in some countries while not necessary in others.
- Include stakeholder groups and real cases relevant to the topics discussed during events. This includes complementary perspectives.
- Find ways to allow for interaction through exercises and discussions and vary the items in the agenda to maintain good energy and building a sense of community among the participants.
- Practicalities to think about include managing no-shows, including buffer times in the agenda and managing the time and date of the event as to not to clash with other events targeting similar topics and audience. For online events, the gap between registrants and actual attendees is expected to be greater than in real-life events.
- Collaboration and gathering of insight on how to effectively create fruitful online and offline is a good way of sharing knowledge and experiences, and can additionally be a way of dividing and managing tasks and catering to needs in different markets.

4.2 New tools

While many startups testify to a variety of barriers and needs, perhaps most important driver towards solutions for issue is **increased awareness** about consumer cleantech and the global trends that will influence the potential of such solutions in future consumption patterns. The SmartUp Accelerator Model and its close to 50 members by the end of the SmartUp Accelerator project in 2020 are a testament to the this, as the activities throughout the project have contributed to these stakeholders from all throughout the BSR to decide on investing their resources in developing a consumer cleantech network. Through the network, startups can experience easier access to business support tailored to their needs, and easier access to new markets. This demonstrates that building new insights and sharing them in an effective way will be of relevance to spur development of consumer cleantech in the BSR even further.

The project has developed a **new website** that has been shaped to facilitate the tools found useful for the future consumer cleantech ecosystem. New features include an online forum, in-depth presentations of network member organizations and the main contact persons. In addition, the website will be a platform for success stories and learnings from the network, and an event page will be used to spread information about both various sorts of events relevant to consumer cleantech.



A new logo has been developed for the SmartUp Accelerator Model platform. The logo took shape with consideration of the story of the project. It has the shape of a flower, where the seven petals symbolize the seven partner countries that have been involved in the project and where the partners have created a strong coalition. The flower shape also stems from the environmental and cleantech focus of the project. The primary color of the project will be the same as that of SmartUp Accelerator, but the secondary colors have been updated as to symbolize the start of something new.

Learnings from the project that should be considered for the future but were not initially planned for in the project include especially insights about the value of mixing online and offline events, or making use of both online and offline elements during the same event to match the target groups and theme. This would serve values such as promoting transnational elements as well as face-to-face encounters in the same session. Another important aspect for future



communication activities will be considering that different markets have many variations between themselves, for example in the nature of business and communication or even where the relevant stakeholders are geographically located. In some countries, they may be spread out while in others, they are often familiar with each other and situated in one city. Again, online events are likely to be *especially* useful in the SmartUp Accelerator Network as stakeholders are located across the BSR. Benefits to online events include wider reach, lower costs, effectiveness in terms of hours spent on planning (especially in relation to the same event being hosted several times in different locations), easier access to expert speakers from around Europe and beyond, possibilities to record and to have discussions and network with people from other countries. At the same time, different challenges among stakeholders and markets and different starting points should be considered. As done in the training event of 2020, mixing local and international sessions in one event can support catering to many important aspects, as could including optional parts of events and sharing relevant materials prior to the event. It can be noted from the online event descriptions that face-to-face encounters are important, which must be considered also when looking for the right mix of events and set-ups.