

# Training programme

WORKPACKAGE 4.1

DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIAL AND ARRANGE FOURTEEN  
TRAINING EVENTS FOR THE BSR CONSUMER CLEANTECH IN-  
NOVATION ECOSYSTEM INTERMEDIARIES

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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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# Foreword

The training programme developed in 4.1. aimed to increase the capabilities of intermediaries to support startups. More broadly, the goal was to build a consumer cleantech ecosystem in the Baltic Sea Region. We also wanted to pass on key learnings from Smartup Accelerator to participating intermediaries.

In addition to increasing the capabilities of the intermediaries, there was the goal of increasing the capabilities of the Smartup partners. Through the training programme, the idea was to give partners a basic introduction to foresight methods and how those can be used to design new concepts and business models. So there was definitely a “train-the-trainer” approach in the training programme.

Our vision is that in the future, numerous consumer cleantech innovation platforms will be collaborating in the Baltic Sea region, and with the best possible tools.

To drive towards this goal, the training programme aimed especially at increasing intermediaries’ ability to:

- ✗ use foresight methods to identify grand challenges
- ✗ leverage futures insight in developing new business solutions
- ✗ learn about the Smartup Accelerator model and best practices in ecosystem management & communication

In the following pages, we present the documentation from work package 4.1. and share our key findings.



# 1. Description of activity, its objectives and outputs

## 1.1. Activity description

Activity 4.1. develops a series of state-of-art training materials for intermediaries based on consumer cleantech prospects and key issues related to SME support, incubation and acceleration of the so called SmartUps. This training material is developed and further enhanced with a strong linkage with activity 4.2 and 3.3.

Based on the training material for 14 training events (2 per country) it will be implemented in order to distribute the knowledge amongst the consumer cleantech intermediaries around the BSR.

Every participating country will have two events during the project life time. All the procedures, learning expectations and basic level of the knowledge from where the intermediaries start will be described and analysed as well as the final results after the training activities. 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.

## 1.2. Objectives

As a result of this activity, a trained BSR consumer cleantech network of skillful intermediaries is able to understand different structures in innovation processes and cooperate in different multicultural environments for support activities for SmartUps and consumer cleantech.

It understands that transnational cooperation structures are integrated and interdependent networks, where decisions on centralisation or decentralisation of tasks are based on specialised competencies of the network participants.

The participants will be the initial framework for the SmartUp Accelerator (WP5) which results to a BSR wide network of high level trained and connected intermediaries who 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 intermediaries' interdependent role in transnational processes guide the whole ecosystem towards the knowledge on how to pool the scattered resources better in order to address common problems more efficiently and for the mutual benefit of the BSR consumer cleantech innovation ecosystem members.

Target group, being the BSR consumer cleantech intermediaries, is participating actively to this activity which also has a strong transnational character since it is combining the intermediators around the BSR together to a shared learning experience.

### 1.3. Output from work package

Output 4.1. is a documented BSR consumer cleantech intermediaries training programme that describes the structure, content, learning experiences, materials and methods used and which also describes how the fourteen documented training events have been conducted.

The training events will target all innovation intermediaries within the BSR. The consortia will participate as speakers and sharing their findings from the initial bootcamp etc. This implies that all 14 events will have an external audience of intermediaries. This is crucial for reaching impact as well as creating the foundation for a BSR innovation ecosystem and the planned SmartUp accelerator.

As described above the content of the training programme is mainly targeted to help the intermediaries to understand their role in the new transnational consumer cleantech BSR network and increase their ability to cooperate there effectively and jointly orchestrate the processes but the documented training material includes also tools that the intermediaries need in their everyday work with their customers such as how to understand and support the entrepreneurial mindset and skills, how to support growth, competitiveness and innovation, service innovations, SBAs, creating business strategies, financing business operations and internationalisation support mechanisms.

Intermediaries have a wide and different variety of skills, resources and abilities and that's why the document also has basic knowledge checklists and links to sources in order to function best for all skills levels of target groups and to ensure that at least the most relevant basic aspects in their everyday work are covered.

The document is publicly distributed and its virtual form enables easy updates when needed. Also this document forms a part of the building blocks for the SmartUp Accelerator model.

The communication and dissemination of the training materials and programmes will be carried out within the plans and activities of WP2.

### 1.4. Summary of activity & outputs

The activity includes:

- ✗ Development of training materials and a training programme targeted for intermediaries including updates and revision throughout the project period.
- ✗ Conduct 14 training programmes in period 2 to 6
- ✗ Documentation and assessment of each training event and key findings and experiences for improvement
- ✗ Integration of key findings, results, lessons learned and experiences from the training events and other activities into the training materials and schemes

## 2. Training events

### FIRST ROUND OF TRAINING EVENTS

#### 2.1. Russia

SmartUp Accelerator's St. Petersburg Foresight and Training session was held on October 1, 2019 in Yasnaya Polyana coworking space, St. Petersburg.

Representatives of business incubators, technoparks, investors, support institutions and large companies discussed the future of consumer cleantech in St. Petersburg and the BSR.

The training sessions were an opportunity for support institutions learn about support tools, future cooperation possibilities as well as how to use foresight for understanding how the this emerging industry is evolving locally and internationally.

#### **Key findings from Russia training**

- ✗ Participants pointed out that the city will face several challenges for green companies to tackle in the coming decade. These are natural resource scarcity and population growth, increased traffic density causing environmental degradation, construction of apartment blocks as well as mounting effects of globalization and digitalization.
- ✗ Meanwhile, environmentally friendly solutions gaining in popularity, technologies are rapidly developing, and consumer habits are changing. The shift in preferences and demand for environmentally friendly solutions support the emergence of new companies, startups, that offer rational and eco-friendly solutions for the end-user.
- ✗ Experiences from the SmartUp Accelerator project also showcase the potential in international cooperation between organizations and how synergies can give new ideas for working with support for consumer cleantech SMEs and startups. Therefore, both cooperation opportunities with the Smartup Accelerator team and support tools developed by the SmartUp partners were shared at the event.
- ✗
- ✗ It was agreed that future trainings will have more concrete examples to make the theoretical points more tangible and useful for participants.

#### 2.2. Poland

The training in Poland was held the 28th October, 2019 in Warsaw at HubHub, Nowogrodzka Square. The training was hosted by Agnieszka Młodzinska from the Foundation for Technology

Entrepreneurship (FTE). The training took place in a compact setting with a highly focused group of participants.

One of the discussions that took place was with the energy firm PGE, whose representatives have been much involved in Smartup Accelerator. It was very interesting to hear about their progress in corporate venturing and working with cleantech startups.



### Key findings

- ✘ In the feedback form, one participant noted the importance of an ecosystem project focused on cleantech: “I find sustainability issues absolutely relevant when thinking about technologies that startups could develop on the markets. This is absolutely crucial to think about the solutions of tomorrow - these supporting sustainable development - and implement them already today. That is why it is great that such ecosystems like SmartUp Accelerator are being build on an international level.”
- ✘ There could have been more participants. Something like 15-20 participants would be ideal.
- ✘ Participants saw that doing ecosystem work like this is very important, since it is all too easy to do the same work in different countries when, instead, it would be more useful to share results and findings and create networks across countries.

### 2.3. Latvia

The training in Latvia took place at the University of Latvia downtown campus, at Kalpaka boulevards 4 on the 7th of November, 2019. This training was one of the bigger ones in terms of participants, with almost 30 participants taking part at least in some portion of the training.

The wealth of participants meant that this training event was also valuable as a networking event. Also, it was easy to form groups for the horizon scanning exercise. Furthermore, one of the key features of this training was the fact that there were quite a few participants from the University of Latvia – this was really interesting and promising in terms of facilitating academic entrepreneurship in the future. Also, it was interesting to hear about the intersection point between research and entrepreneurship.



#### Key findings

- ✗ Based on the feedback some participants would have liked a more practical approach, as opposed to macro level theories about societal change.
- ✗ One participant thought the training was too short, and that the event should have been 1-2 days to further develop ideas and methods.
- ✗ A quote from the feedback form on the value and usefulness of foresight: “This kind of thinking and problem solving methods should be more used much more in different kind of industries.”

### 2.4. Sweden



This training was conducted on the 14th of November in Gothenburg, at a co-creation space hosted by the Chalmers University of Technology. In this training, there were several entrepreneurs present, who were able to bring a commercial point of view to the discussion. This was very valuable, because these perspectives brought the insights of the training into practice. Also, Tony Christensen, a top Swedish environmental influencer, was present and had some valuable insights to share about the needs of different kinds of organizations.

The participants were very active in the Horizon scanning group work, and would have hoped to have even longer to discuss and imagine a 2030 futures for Gothenburg and Sweden.



#### Key findings

- ✗ There was very much interest in the Smartup Accelerator project as something that fosters international cooperation. While Sweden has a relatively developed consumer cleantech domestic market and lots of domestic demand, there nevertheless seems to be a lot of interest for export and international cooperation as well.
- ✗ The networking aspect was especially valued in several feedback answers.
- ✗ The idea of societal tensions as a key one in foresight was something that raised a lot of discussion during the session as well as in the feedback. This is a theme that could be further developed in the other sessions.

## 2.5. Estonia

The training in Tallinn, Estonia took place on the 20th of November, 2019. The training was held at the Tehnopol Startup Incubator premises, in Tehnopol Tallinn Science Park. In this training, there were several participants from NGOs representing business interests and startups in Estonia. There were several fruitful discussions on the role of such organizations in the coordination and monetary support of both early-stage and more developed consumer cleantech startups.

In the Horizon scanning exercise, the participants discussed in particular the social dimension of future tensions. Several participants had discussions on aging, extremism and the level of social care and services in rural areas. It was rewarding to hear the participant discuss these complex issues from different perspectives and with a longer timeframe.



#### Key findings

- ✗ The future is a tricky place to think about, and at times it was difficult to separate the present moment and the thoughts about what might come in 10 or 20 years to come. That is ok, because part of the exercise was to imagine the influences of current trends on future developments. The exercise could still be developed to focus on the scale of possibilities in the future even if there are constraints in the present system.
- ✗ The feedback noted the interest to combine the foresight methods with funding opportunities. This is an important point: there should be perhaps more of a futures perspective in many funding instruments and opportunities.

## 2.6. Germany

The training in Germany took place in Berlin, at the AteneKOM offices at Invalidenstraße 91, 10115. This training benefited from the experience of the previous ones, and the presentation was further developed. However, it suffered perhaps a bit due to a small number of participants (5 participants). Then again, it was useful to have an intimate atmosphere with plenty of time for discussion and peer-to-peer learning.

It was particularly interesting to hear the experiences of the participants in how they have thought about the future and used trend analysis in their work. For example, one of the Smartups taking part in the project was present, and could reflect on the importance of thinking about long-term societal trends and tensions in the identifying of new business opportunities and

### Key findings

- ✗ The marketing of events in big cities is not always easy, as people have many simultaneous events they can choose from.
- ✗ There was one participant who worked in a ministry. It was valuable to have voice of government in the table, as it was useful to link the discussions around consumer cleantech to relevant regulation.
- ✗ The technology infrastructure in Germany is one where a lot of work is needed and a lot of investments are being made. The carbon footprint of this network is one big question to consider in the coming years and decades.



## 2.7. Finland

The training session in Finland took place as an online event on the 20th of August. The tool used was Zoom, with particular use of breakout rooms. The event had a nice amount of participants, with 13 of the 24 who signed up taking part.

The format of the Finland training was a little bit different from the previous ones, due to not only the corona restrictions, but because of the learnings and insights developed in the interim after the 2019 trainings. The concept of the event included two keynote speakers, followed by a discussion round on the development of the startup ecosystem.

The keynotes delivered were:

### **Jouni Lounasmaa, CEO of Startup Foundation**

Jouni focused on introducing his insights from his work in the foundation sector in Finland, especially how entrepreneurship can solve societal problems. Startup Foundation owns eg. Slush, so it was very interesting to hear Jouni's views on the prospects of the ecosystem.

### **Kimberly Oguilve, CMO of Maria 01 startup hub**

Kimberly shared learning from Maria 01 and analysed the current state of the ecosystem. She shared a series of very valuable and important points on diversity and inclusion.

After the keynotes, each participant shared their comments and learnings about how the ecosystem could best be developed to serve startups in the future.

### **Key findings**

- ✗ After the event, Jouni and Kimberly suggested they could host these kinds of events in the future. That was a very good thing to hear, as it means Smartup Accelerator is creating impact and continuity even after the end of the project.
- ✗ There is a big demand for skill-sharing sessions and trainings in the ecosystem – it was mentioned time and time again during the discussion.

## SECOND ROUND OF TRAINING EVENTS

Lessons from first round of training events that informed the second round:

- ✗ **Overall, there was a lot of interest toward training events.** The response 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 Smartup Accelerator project. The fact that the trainings featured an international speaker was purposeful in that regard, 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. It seemed to be the case that this approach was new for a lot of participants in this particular context. Obviously 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 really 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 perhaps would have hoped more for was **even more practical examples** about how foresight and business development go together. We thought that there should perhaps be an element of hearing from practitioners in the second round of trainings.

### 2.8. International training event

Due to the COVID crisis a decision was made to hold an online international training event across the BSR, instead of organizing separate training events in each of the countries. The event was held September 1, 2020 using the Zoom platform.

The event brought together over 50 representatives from business incubators, technoparks 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 also 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 3 distinct parts. First, two keynote presentations and a following Q&A inspired and prompted the participants to reflect on their roles and strengths in the ecosystem. Then, taking advantage of the international nature of the events, participants were randomly grouped into pairs to introduce themselves and share their insights from the presentations. The last part of the event enabled participants to connect in a more intimate setting with participants

from their own country. Below, each part of the event and the learnings are described in more detail:

- ✖ The training session included 2 keynote speeches by Maija Itkonen, Head of Innovation at Gold&Green and Katariina 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, Hielenimi emphasized that impact is not enough for startups; developing solid business models is what will make or break a startups. 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.
- ✖ 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.
- ✖ The third part of the training presented an 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 clean-tech 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 have 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.

## 3. Conclusions & discussion

To summarize the findings and conclusions of the training programme, we offer three key learnings:

**1. Intermediaries already know a lot**

At no point during the training programme it was not clear that intermediaries know a lot. They have a lot of expertise and experience about their stakeholders, startups and relevant business fields. This was a really important thing to bear in mind when planning and conducting the trainings: the trainings must tap into that knowledge and offer tools to recontextualize the existing knowledge.

**2. Intermediaries desire perspective**

Traditionally, cleantech has been perceived as efficient industrial production processes. However, new cleantech opportunities lie in domains that have not always been fully understood as relevant for cleantech: namely food, housing, and mobility. To arrive at this conclusion one needs to look at megatrends and recontextualize existing knowledge. Intermediaries really desire new perspectives and ways to communicate the changes happening in the operational environment to their stakeholders, clients and startups.

**3. Collaboration is paramount**

Everywhere we went, participants were eager to learn about and take part in both domestic and transnational collaboration. There are so many opportunities for sharing insights, resources, skills and deliverables but – many feel – few practical tools for sharing these. What we did was to propose a platform, a Smartup Accelerator model to help foster the kind of collaboration that intermediaries need. And there seems to be a lot of demand for that, something which we are very proud of and excited by.