

The idea of Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea was to develop transnational cross-sectoral collaborations in the Baltic Sea Region within the creative industries. This was achieved by designing an integrated experience (pitching contest, training event and B2B program²) that built on existing CCI-support frameworks (involving CCI support organisations and cultural institutes).

There were two Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea events; one was an “analogue” event in 2019 and one a digital event in 2020.

Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea was organised by the Danish Cultural Institute, a self-governed organisation that has fostered mutual understanding between people and cultures since 1940. The institute is committed to sharing knowledge

Danish Cultural Institute

and appreciation for Danish values. In cooperation with partners, they develop international, cultural and social events, projects and contacts to provide mutual value and inspiration.

The Danish Cultural Institute's mission is to strengthen Denmark's handling of the challenges of globalisation. They do this by focusing on arts, culture and society within a prioritised number of themes: children and youth, education, science, welfare and sustainability. They also focus on developing new ways of cooperation, which stimulate innovation and co-creation. Their activities always aim to create opportunities for intercultural relations, understanding, sustainable growth and development.

Aim and target group

The aim of Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea was to gather startups, SMEs, incubators and CCI organisations from the Baltic Sea Region and show how the UN Sustainable Development Goals can create value, give direction and lead towards future innovation and investment.

Moreover, the event aimed to ensure that participating companies and entrepreneurs gained inspiration for new ideas, methods and technologies by participating in an international pitching competition. They also had the opportunity to visit and listen to keynotes from Danish companies that have successfully combined business and sustainability and participate in an internationalisation workshop.

Pitching for a Better

Baltic Sea in figures

2 two-day events

18 startups from the
Baltic Sea Region

3 keynote speakers

13 jury members

5 judging criteria

Creativity, uniqueness,
innovation, team and
market potential

2 winners Ette Tete and
Kira Shoes (SIA Snores)

2 Business-to-business, a transaction or business conducted between one business and another, such as a wholesaler and retailer.

Tool 2 – Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea

Participants expanded their network and gained a greater understanding of existing transnational cooperation and financing possibilities. They also acquired new contacts through networking, meeting local companies, incubators, CCI support organisations, experts and other CCI actors.

The program

The Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea internationalisation tool was split into two concrete sets of pilot activities. The first taking place on the 28th - 29th of October 2019, the second a year later. The 2019 activities took place as a physical event and included two Baltic Sea Region countries, Denmark and Latvia. The organisers had to turn the 2020 activities into a virtual event with partners and participants from five countries: Denmark, Sweden, Latvia, Estonia and Germany.

The goals of the pitching competition was to empower CCI participants; for them to learn from each other and connect to each other, to other CCI actors and to international markets; for them to gain inspiration and knowledge of concrete examples of CCI projects in the Baltic Sea Region that are both commercially viable and environmentally sustainable; for them to strengthen their innovative capabilities and pitching skills; for them to showcase their products and services to the audience.

Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea 2019

28 October

Keynote session

by Kasper Petersen, co-founder of LABFRESH

For CCI participants to gain inspiration and knowledge of methods and technologies and to learn from a concrete example of a Danish company that has successfully combined commercial interests and sustainable methods and approaches.

Creative intervention

Concert by Latvian band Carnival Youth

The performance aimed to inspire and create a starting point for dialogue and exchange between the participants.

Reception/networking

For CCI participants to connect with each other, incubators, support organisations and other CCI actors, creating and strengthening contacts, networks and collaborations.

29 October

Internationalisation workshop

by Karoline Haulund, Vice Director of Creative Business Network

The workshop aimed to teach participants about CCI internationalisation, building their capacity and providing inspiration and knowledge about relevant methods and technologies.

Visits to local companies and incubators

The non-local CCI participants visited, networked with and exchanged experiences and knowledge

with local Danish incubators as well as companies that had successfully combined commercial interests and sustainability. They gained inspiration and information about methods and technologies. They built their capacity through peer-to-peer learning and learnt about the Danish market and existing transnational cooperation and financing opportunities.

Optional participation in “this.series”, part of “this.festival” for digitalisation and creative industries in the region of Midtjylland

CCI participants had the opportunity to meet, network with, listen to, learn and gain knowledge and inspiration from other creatives and experts.

Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea 2020

(digital adaptation)

28 October

Keynote sessions

by Rebecca Vera Stahnke from Veras Vintage and Caroline Gjerulff from Vision Denmark

CCI participants gained inspiration and knowledge of methods and technologies and learnt from concrete examples of Danish companies and projects that have successfully combined commercial interests and sustainable methods and approaches.

Creative intervention

Concert by Latvian artist Chris Noah

The performance aimed to inspire and create a starting point for dialogue and exchange between the many different participants.

Danish Cultural Institute



Tool 2 – Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea

Images
Pitching for a Better
Baltic Sea 2019.
Photo Gorm Branderup

29 October
Internationalisation workshop
by Rasmus Wiinstedt Tscherning, Founder and
Managing Director of Creative Business Network

The workshop aimed to teach participants about CCI internationalisation, building their capacity and providing inspiration and knowledge about relevant methods and technologies. During the workshop, the participants also met startups and were inspired by their stories and got unique insights into scaling better and faster.

Communication

The events were communicated online, via social media platforms and newsletters using videos, images and programme descriptions. Direct invitations were also sent to relevant stakeholders and potential CCI participants.

Testimonials from participants

“Good pitching is very important for the growth of a startup and for turning good ideas into reality! Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea is a great platform for developing pitching skills and receiving valuable feedback and learning from others.”

“It was a great experience to be a part of the jury and to meet so many new and innovative

Danish Cultural Institute

creative startups from different countries and creative industries. They were not only brilliant entrepreneurs but also had great visions for how to make the Baltic Sea Region greener and more sustainable.”

Images

Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea 2020.

“Great job adapting to the online format. It's not easy and there are always unforeseen incidents. I was very impressed.”

“Great event! Really good I have to say! I was inspired!”

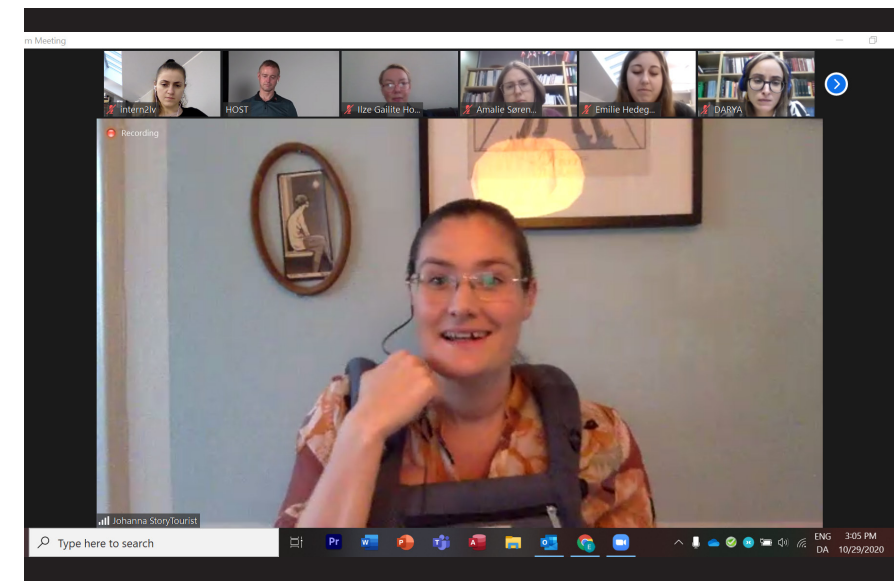
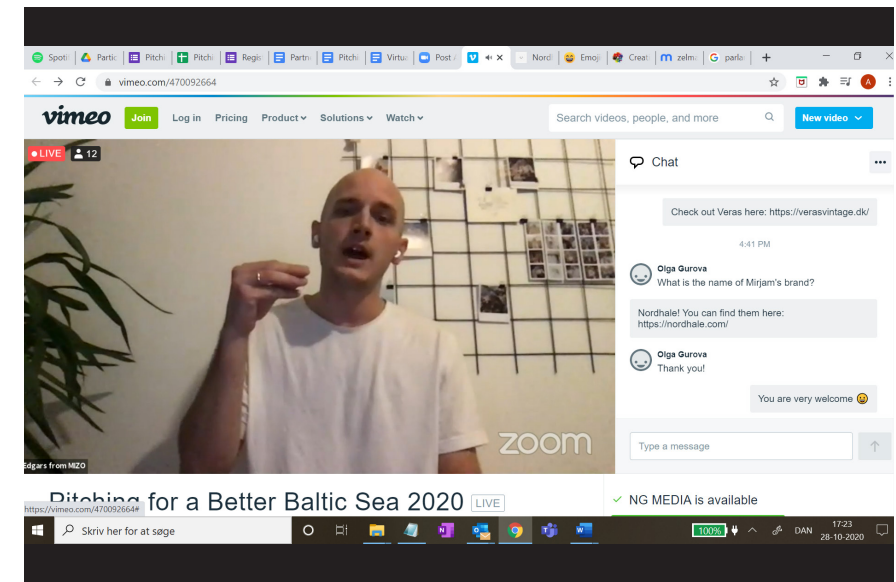
“Everything was great.”

“I hope that next year it is possible to meet people in real life again, it's much more comfortable to network and get new contacts.”

Lessons learnt on adapting to a digital format

Although the overall process of organising an international pitching event stays the same, some specific and significant aspects need to be considered when moving to an online platform. Firstly, organisers should think about the necessary technology, digital tools and platforms they will use for the event and whether there are enough resources (competencies, equipment, etc.) to ensure the success of a virtual event. Secondly, organisers should think about ensuring engagement and effective interaction among participants, jury members and the wider audience.

Tool 2 – Pitching for a Better Baltic Sea



For digital events, it is important not to improvise technical aspects. The choice of moderator is, furthermore, even more critical than for a physical event and the job is even more challenging without a physical audience.

Participants at the physical event in 2019 gained a greater understanding of existing possibilities for transnational cooperation and financing, e.g. the Accelerace Acceleration Program, by meeting and visiting different CCI incubators and support organisations. This, however, was very difficult to include to the same degree in the 2020 digital programme as physical visits to incubators and support organisations were not possible. The networking dimension of events like this is particularly challenging to maintain in a digital environment.

As a final note, it's relevant to point out that it was a great achievement of the organisers to create events that played into all the defined goals for Creative Ports tools and working actively with a sustainability focus and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.