Financing innovations and start-up disruptions
Panel: Challenges and opportunities of start-ups and investment in boating industry.

Start-ups and new players in the boating industry are a key element for a transformation of the industry towards more sustainability. Cornelius Eich (Team Malizia, Partnership & Sustainability Manager), Laurent Probst (PwC Luxembourg, Partner), Gabbi Richardson (Yachting Ventures, Founder & CEO) and Benno Weissner (ZENIT - Center for Innnovation and Technogy, Project Manager & Enterprise Europe Network), moderated by Marcus Krall (Krall Media GmbH, Communications specialist/Founder) at the blue innovation dock at boot Düsesldorf, explained what requirements they have to meet in order to find investors.

The investment opportunities in start-ups and projects are diverse. Companies can contribute with fresh ideas and developments to make the boating industry more sustainable. To implement and manufacture the products, small and medium-sized companies in particular often lack the financial resources. So it is up to investors to enable these start-ups to establish themselves on the market.

In order to bring investors and companies together, platforms such as the European Commission's blue invest, Yachting Ventures or Enterprise Europe Network offer various ways to establish suitable connections. However, this requires more than just an idea, as the speakers at the sustainability forum at boot Düsseldorf made clear. Investors need data about the market in which the product is to be sold, feedback from the market and the experiences of the start-ups. Help in creating business plans or even strategy consulting are ways for companies to meet investor requirements. At the same time, they are sensitised to the market and the opportunity of innovations in workshops, so that they can decide to finance suitable projects.

The example of professional sailor Boris Herrmann's Malizia sailing team took a different approach to building their new boat. The goal was to make the boat as sustainable as possible, replacing all components for which there are sustainable alternatives. As Cornelius Eich reported, it was not only facts and market analyses that played a role for the team, but above all the personal exchange, people and their visions. Through their own network, they were able to enter into fruitful cooperations and empower companies with sustainable ideas to manufacture their products and place them on the market.

In order to offer companies and investors more security, the speakers in Düsseldorf called for guidelines from policy-makers. Long-term targets for the industry could bring about a standardisation of industrial measures and thus create incentives for further sustainable innovations for the boating industry.