Fuels of the future
Panel: Putting in place charging and alternative fuel infrastructure.

Alternative fuels are one way to make the boating industry more sustainable. Boat builders and fuel manufacturers want to establish suitable solutions for the market. However, only very few marinas have the necessary infrastructure in place.

The needs to prepare marinas for modern fuels and boats were presented and discussed by Alex Bamberg (Aqua superPower, CEO), Ismail Ertug (Member of the European Parliament), Jose Luis Fayos (ANEN, Technical Consultant), Mehdi Hocine (European Commission), Robert Perocchio (Assomarinas, President), Lana Sissing (GoodFuels, Commercial Manager), Karl-Oskar Tjernström (Fossil Free Marine, Co-founder and CEO) at the blue innovation doch at boot Düsseldorf.

Developments in the boating industry do not only bring new opportunities, but also risks for marinas, as well as boat owners or buyers. Different sustainable fuels require different infrastructure in marinas, for example, to charge electric motors or refuel boats running on biodiesel, hydrogen or methanol. The lack of existing infrastructure discourages buyers, and low numbers of buyers, in turn, make marinas reluctant to make the high investments.

The type of alternative propulsion and alternative fuel station depends largely on the intended use. Fast charging stations are certainly essential for some of the fleet with electric motors, while for others who use their boats infrequently or only for very short distances, charging may take longer and existing shore power can be used. Boats that travel long distances at slower speeds can rely on hydrogen solutions, while for others, diesel and biodiesel make more sense. As a drop-in fuel replacement, suppliers offer a fossil-free alternative to diesel that can be used in conventional engines.

Offering all alternatives at the same time is not only very complex for marinas, but also costly. Representatives of the various sectors within the industry are therefore calling for support from policy-makers in order to be able to finance the conversion of marinas. Policies must prescribe the industry's goals to minimise risks.

An innovative solution could come from floating fuel stations that carry and provide different fuels. These fueling pontoons are easy to integrate into current facilities without

massive and expensive reconstruction work. Networks that provide information on the availability of fast-charging stations in different areas facilitate planning for boat owners during. Inevitable for the development of functioning networks and the transition of the boating industry to sustainable fuels is good communication and close cooperation between the different segments of the industry. Solutions need to be developed and implemented in parallel.