

From oldies to goldies

Building from initial connections established in 2012 through the StarDust Comfort in Living network, the Danish Lifestyle & Design Cluster and Swedish Tillväxt Tibro clusters teamed up with the French Silver Valley cluster to transform the challenge of an aging society into a business opportunity for their enterprises.

The clusters engaged their SMEs to participate one-day workshops (one in Denmark and one in Sweden) that included expert interventions and matchmaking opportunities. The workshop in Sweden provided new knowledge on sustainability and circular economy, and smart materials. While the workshop in Denmark provided new knowledge about “Generation Jones” – the 50+ segment with high demands on service, quality and appearance, as well as strong purchasing power. *“The goal with the day was to inspire housing and clothing companies about this business segment, which appears to be large in the future.”* (Joan Knudsen, Lifestyle & Design Cluster, DK)

In total, 15 companies within wood and furniture, interior and clothing industries (as well as representatives from the municipality, university and other educational organizations) participated in the workshops. The workshops resulted in both the identification of marketing and product development opportunities within participating companies, and also the possibility to cooperate with leading actors specialized in other sectors to create smart products adapted to seniors’ needs.

“Generation Jones is an interesting target group to develop products for – if you understand their use patterns. The workshop provided us with relevant insights on how users in this segment think and act. Based on this, we’ve increased our attention to factors related to product development and communication.” Niels Stendys, Kvik A/S

In addition to providing new knowledge and new connections, the Innovation Express project resulted in a broadened partnership among clusters and specialized research environments in the Baltic Sea Region. The clusters in Denmark and Sweden – together with other partners in Poland, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and Norway – were successful in attaining three-year funding from the BSR Interreg programme for the Balt Se@nioR project. The project will combine expertise in furniture, design, technology, ICT and robotics, economy and social sciences to provide companies with new tools and working methods for product design and development in furniture safety – addressing the specific needs and preferences of seniors.

Read more about BSR StarDust Comfort in Living here:

<http://www.bsrstars.se/project/comfort-in-living/>

and read more about BSR Innovation Express here:

<http://www.bsrstars.se/project/bsr-innovation-express/>