



INCUBATOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	FULL TITLE
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
PFAS	Per- and polyFluorAlkyl Substances
R&I	Research & Innovation
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Entreprises
Water4All	European Partnership on Water Security for the Planet
WCBC	WaterCampus Business Challenge

Water4All partners involved in Pillar C sub-task C2.2 and/or mentioned in the report

EUBA	University of Economics in Bratislava (Slovakia)
FORMAS	Swedish Research Council (Sweden)
FWT	France Water Team (France)
IenW	Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (Netherlands)
ISPRA	Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (Italy)
LIS-WATER	Lisbon International Centre for Water (Portugal)
PTEA	Water Technology Platform (Spain)
PtKA	Project Management Agency Karlsruhe (Germany)
UEvora	University of Evora (Portugal)
Water Alliance	Water Alliance (Netherlands)
ZINNAE	Spanish cluster for the efficient use of water (Spain)

ABSTRACT

The work for the development of an Incubator Strategy has been carried out as part of the European partnership Water4All – water security for the planet, in the framework of Pillar C activities on Science - Policy - End-users Interface. The main objective of this Pillar is to support knowledge transfer and the uptake of research outcomes and innovative approaches in the water sector. To achieve this ambitious goal, the activities aim at acceleration of the dialogue between science and policy communities, in order to ensure that research and innovation actions are responding to policy needs, but also to reinforce the connections with the economic sectors for a more effective implementation of innovative solutions at local and regional scales.

Within the activities implemented in the frame of Water4All Pillar C, the Task C2 on “Accelerating the uptake of Research and Innovation (R&I) results by the economic sectors” focuses both on the creation (subtask C2.1) and incubation (subtask C2.2) of start-ups. So, the work in subtasks C2.1 and C2.2 is very much related regarding the sustainable development of start-ups and SMEs. This document links subtasks C2.1 "Supporting the creation of start-ups" and C2.2 "Co-developing the strategy of a European Water Incubator".

This report builds on another Water4All report published in 2023, entitled – Entrepreneurship/ Business development training program with focus on inspiration, education and incubation. In this report, the role of a common and integrated training program for entrepreneurship and business development across Europe was presented. This new report describes the first steps developed jointly by partners involved in Water4All Task C2 for the set-up and organisation of a European Water Incubator in order to support early stage start-ups and European projects spin-offs, to increase the European water start-ups’ abilities to bring their technology faster to the market. The organisation of the 2024 edition of the WaterCampus Business Challenge (WCBC) is the joint starting point for this Water Incubator and a best practice for incubation of start-ups and a follow-up activity on the training program. The last chapter summarizes the future steps for supporting the implementation of a Water Incubator for European entrepreneurs and early stage start-ups.

1. INTRODUCTION

Context

Launched in June 2022, the Water4All Partnership – Water Security for the Planet, co-funded by the European Union within the frame of the Horizon Europe programme, aims at enabling water security for all in the long term through boosting systemic transformations and changes across the entire research – water innovation pipeline, fostering the matchmaking between problem owners and solution providers. Within the Partnership, Pillar C promotes the uptake of results from research and innovation activities through science-policy interface actions and capacity building.

Within Water4All Pillar C activities, the Task C2 on “Accelerating the uptake of R&I results by the economic sectors” focuses on improving the uptake of research outcomes and thus creating impact via the sustainable development of start-ups and SMEs.

The results described in a report published in 2023 on Entrepreneurship / Business development training program with focus on inspiration, education and incubation¹ (Deliverable D3.2) showed that there is no integrated start-up support program across Europe. Start-ups in region A are very well supported in the field X, while start-ups in region B do not have this support, but are very well supported in field Y. Bringing together the strong parts of the different programs across Europe would be beneficial for watertech start-ups. The focus of Task C2 is to bring together the strong parts of different start-up support programs and, if needed, to add the missing parts to the program to be developed as part of Water4All activities.

An outcome of the previous study is the identification of a strong education and incubation programme led by WaterCampus in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. This incubation program is an inspiration for other ecosystems across Europe to make students and (young) researchers aware of the possibility of starting their own company in a strong ecosystem. An important first step in the development of start-ups. The whole incubation programme led by WaterCampus is described in the Water4All report on entrepreneurship training program.

Part of the incubation programme at WaterCamus is the WaterCampus Business Challenge (WCBC). The WCBC was organised for the first time in 2009. It is a 5-day training for existing and future entrepreneurs, focusing on how to build good innovative technology and services into a successful international business. Together with various experts and experienced entrepreneurs, an inspiring broad and high- quality program is offered to the participants. The program is already open for everyone who has an (idea for an) exciting business proposition for the water industry, and wants to learn more about how to become successful in this sector.

Water4All incubation and education programme

The European Water Incubator is a pivotal step in the broader Water4All initiative, supporting the acceleration of innovation within the water sector. By fostering a dynamic ecosystem of start-ups, the challenge contributes to the project's long-term goal of enhancing water security through innovative solutions. The skills and connections gained during the European Water Incubator will enable start-ups to scale their operations, attract further funding, and implement their technologies on a larger scale, thereby driving sustainable growth and technological advancement in the water industry.

¹ Water4All report on entrepreneurship training program, 2023.

https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/sites/www.water4all-partnership.eu/files/2023-10/Water4All_Entrepreneurship%20training%20program_2023.pdf

The results described in the previous mentioned report (Deliverable 3.2) published in 2023 already showed that there is a huge variety of different start-up support programmes across Europe and that the conditions to participate vary per program. For the majority of the start-ups, the regional start-up support programmes offer sufficient support. Especially when they are improved with best practices from other regions. It is therefore not necessary to set-up a one-size fits all European Water Incubator across Europe. For a selected group of ‘high potential’ start-ups (to be determined) a European Wide incubation program can and will create a European wide coverage for these start-ups, especially in the scale-up/ growth phase. The ambition is to create this European incubator/ accelerator during the next period of implementation of Water4All activities, from June 2024 onwards (see also chapter 4).

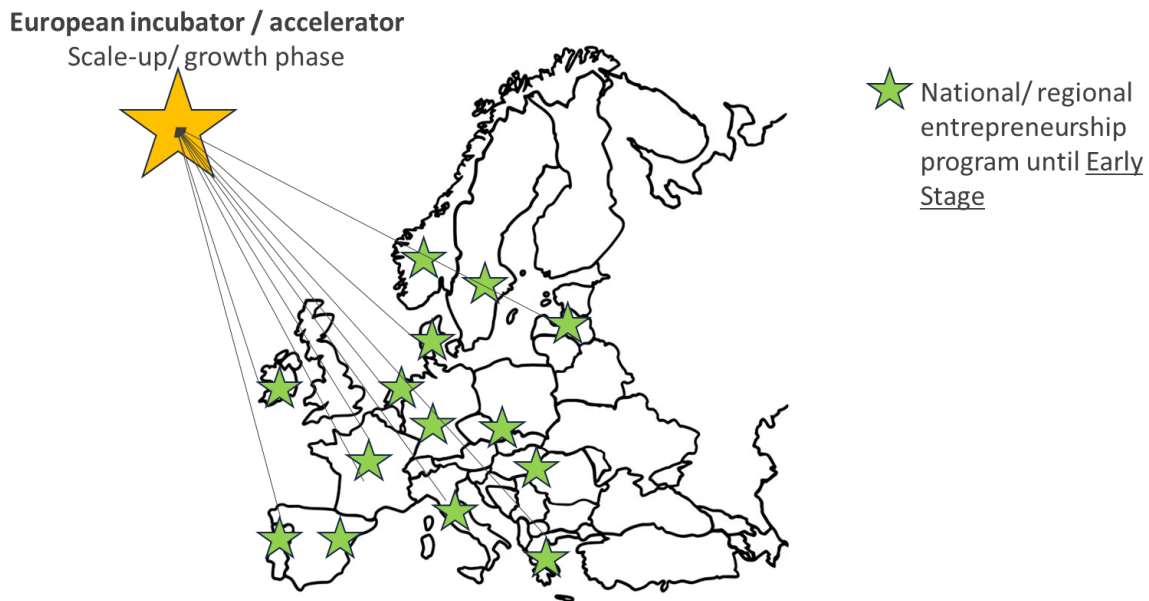


Figure 1: from strong regional start-up support programs towards a European Water Incubator

In November 2023, Water4All partners involved in Pillar C Task C2 selected the WCBC as a best practice for Water4All. The WCBC was selected because it is a relatively short program (5 days), it is already open for everyone to participate and it is a program in the start of the incubation funnel. Therefore, it can be the starting point for a Water Incubator.

The first step for the start of a European Water Incubator was to jointly organise the 2024 edition of the WCBC, this as an integral part of the Water4All partnership activities and strategy. The European WCBC 2024 exemplified the success of the existing program hosted by WaterCampus, with a high satisfaction rate among participants and tangible progress in their business development journeys. The challenge continues to be a cornerstone of the Water4All partnership, embodying the synergy between science, policy, and economic sectors necessary for impactful innovation.

In this report, the set-up of the week is described, as well as a script on how to organise a challenge like the WCBC. The outcomes of the European WaterCampus Business Challenge 2024 are presented (Chapter 2) and the strategy for the the successful organisation of a WaterCampus Business Challenge (as part of a European Water Incubator) is detailed (Chapter 3). The last part of the report summarizes the future steps towards the development of a Water Incubator for European entrepreneurs and early stage start-ups (Chapter 4).

2. EUROPEAN WATERCAMPUS BUSINESS CHALLENGE 2024

About the WaterCampus Business Challenge

The WaterCampus Business Challenge (WCBC) is designed to incubate start-ups within the water technology sector, offering a robust platform for innovation and commercialization.

The WCBC is a five-day intensive training program held annually since 2009. The challenge encompasses a series of workshops, presentations, and networking events led by industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and key stakeholders. Participants are provided with the tools and knowledge needed to transform innovative ideas into viable business models, focusing on both the technical and commercial aspects of water technology.

The primary value of the WCBC lies in its holistic approach to start-up incubation. By integrating scientific research with practical business strategies, the program bridges the gap between innovation and market application. Participants benefit from direct interactions with over 60 experts, including CEOs (Chief Executive Officers), investors, and potential clients, which enhances their understanding of the market dynamics and customer needs. This exposure is invaluable for refining their business propositions and improving their chances of success in a competitive market.

The WCBC aims to achieve several key outcomes:

- **Enhanced Business Models:** Participants will develop or refine their business models using tools like the Business Model Canvas and Lean Canvas, ensuring they address real market needs.
- **Investor Readiness:** Through pitch training and feedback sessions, start-ups will be better prepared to attract investment and articulate their value propositions clearly.
- **Strategic Networking:** The challenge facilitates connections with potential partners, clients, and mentors, fostering collaborations that can lead to business growth.
- **Knowledge Transfer:** Insights gained from experts and peers will help start-ups navigate the complexities of the water technology sector, from regulatory requirements to IP protection.

The WCBC as part of Water4All

The 2024 edition of the WCBC was organised as part of Water4All activities. With the WCBC there is a starting point for a joint European Water Incubator. For the 2024 edition, it was not the intention to add any novelties since the program is optimised over the past decade. The intention was to organise the WCBC for start-ups from different ecosystems across Europe and create a manual so that other organisations can also organize a WCBC kind of activity. After all, outcomes of the 2023 report showed that there are almost no programs like the WCBC in other parts of Europe, while a (pre-)incubation is crucial for the development of start-ups.

In November 2023, the Task C2 partners jointly decided to organize the WCBC as best practice and all committed to select a start-up from their ecosystem to participate in the challenge. By selecting a start-up in the different ecosystems, references are created to organise locally future events of the European WCBC. All Water4All partners were also contacted with the support of the Partnership Coordination Team and invited to nominate a start-up from their network to participate in the challenge. Despite these efforts, only few partners involved in Water4All were able to actually nominate a start-up for the challenge. One reason for this could be that many partners in Water4All are research-focused funders or ministries and research performing organisations. Most Water4All partners fund research and especially public entities like universities or

research performing organisations. This means that most partners may not have a large network of start-ups. The Water4All composition is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Composition of the Water4All consortium as of June 2022 (Phase 1) and June 2024 (Phase 2)

Type of organisation	WATER4ALL PHASE 1	WATER4ALL PHASE 2
R&I MINISTRIES / AGENCIES	31	35
SECTORAL MINISTRIES / AGENCIES	10	15
LOCAL AUTHORITIES	3	3
EUROPEAN-SCALE NETWORKS	3	3
NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND REGIONAL CLUSTERS (CONNECTING TO THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL R&I COMMUNITIES AND MARKET ACTORS)	9	10
RESEARCH PERFORMING ORGANISATIONS	18	24

Participants

In total, 15 participants representing 12 start-ups (or pre-start-ups) attended the training session. Selection was done on the bases of an (online) interview with the candidates and based on the challenge they would like to solve in the WCBC. The participants represented eight different countries from Europe and beyond. 5 start- flew in for the challenge (Spectromarine, Scubic, Nitrogen Sensing, Aavalor and Leaklink Solutions), representing the following countries: India, Latvia, Portugal (2), and United Kingdom. All the other start-ups were based in the Netherlands.

- **DualSoil** (Vania C.) (Bolivia/ Netherlands)
- **EcoRefineSolutions** (Sanjay P.) (India/ Netherlands)
- **Spectromarine** (Girts O.) (Latvia)
- **Aquapreneurs** (Pim de L.) (Netherlands)
- **Scubic** (Bruno A.) (Portugal)
- **Nitrogen Sensing** (Gabriela A.) (Portugal)
- **Aavalor** (Aryan A.) (India/ Netherlands)
- **Geo Insight** (Mathis van der V. & Iris van Z.) (Netherlands)
- **Leaklink Solutions** (Charlie W.) (United Kingdom)
- Ruixuan Q. (South Africa), Liang-Shin W. (China) (Netherlands)
- Femke K. & Elle R. (Netherlands)
- **Forever Analytical Solutions** (Cor D.) (Netherlands)

One start-up with link to a Water4All partner (besides Water Alliance) participated in the training programme (Scubic via LIS-Water). Nitrogen Sensing participated via another European project (Enterprise Europe Network) in which Water Alliance is participating. The rest of the start-ups originate from the network of Water Alliance / WaterCampus.

Other start-ups suggested by Water4all partners (e.g., PTKA and ISPRA) never replied to the invitation or decided not to participate. The main reason for declining the invitation was that the WCBC is of real added-value in the incubation stage of a start-up. These suggested start-ups were already more mature.

Training session

The Business Challenge encompasses a series of workshops, presentations, and networking events led by industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and key stakeholders. Participants are provided with the tools and knowledge needed to transform innovative ideas into viable business models, focusing on both the technical and commercial aspects of water technology. See appendix 1 for the program of the 2024 edition of the WCBC that was organised from May 13 – 17, 2024 in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

Over 60 different experts, technicians and CEO's supported the program. Cor D. from the start-up **Forever Analytical** was awarded as the winner of the business challenge. Forever Analytical is an innovative environmental start-up dedicated to developing cutting-edge methods for total-PFAS detection. The jury believed that his company is really going to make a difference in PFAS-measurement.

Some photos from the week to give an impression.



Visit to the facilities @WaterCampus



Intervision between participants



Online interviews with relevant stakeholders



Deliverable D3.9 – Incubator Strategy Development



Lectures from experts and entrepreneurs



Diner with CEO's



Pitch training and pitching for important stakeholders



And the winner is...

Satisfaction survey: evaluation of the 2024 WCBC

After the 2024 edition of the WCBC, all participants were asked to fill-in an evaluation of the European Incubator training programme hosted by WaterCampus. The evaluation was online (Google forms) and shared with the participants after the program, before they left.

See appendix 2 for the complete evaluation results and all the feedback collected from attendees. Two important questions that were asked in the evaluation are:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend a watertech researcher/start-up to participate in future editions of the business challenge?
- Finally, can you give an overall mark for the European WaterCampus Business Challenge?

On these questions, the European WCBC 2024 scored respectively a **9.4** and a **9.3**.

The 2024 edition of the European Business Challenge hosted by WaterCampus was a huge success. Looking at the final evaluation with a 9.3 on a scale from 1 to 10, all the 15 participants were able to set an important step in the development of their company. During the week, they learned about setting-up a business case, had interviews with important stakeholders, got inspired by CEO's from research institutes, potential clients, technology companies and investors. Outcomes of the European WCBC were published and promoted in Water4All newsletter².

² European Water Campus Business Challenge, 2024. <https://www.water4all-partnership.eu/news/european-water-campus-business-challenge-ewcbc>

3. HOW TO IMPLEMENT AND ORGANISE A BUSINESS CHALLENGE?

The European Water Incubator is a pivotal step in the broader Water4All initiative, supporting the acceleration of innovation within the water sector. Currently there is a wide variety of start-up support programs in Europe. It is therefore not necessary to develop a completely new Water Incubator. It is smarter to use the experiences that are already there. In 2024, Water4All partners jointly organised this new edition of the WCBC as first best practice and starting point of a European Water Incubator, and with the idea to roll it out over the rest of Europe. This chapter describes how a Business Challenge can be organised.

<p>Objective</p>	<p>The WCBC is a 5-day incubation program for early stage start-ups. During the week the participants get the opportunity to connect with peers, engage with innovative companies, and present pitches to potential investors, launching customers, and technology partners. At the end of the week the participants developed a well-thought-through business case, strengthened their network and now what will be the next steps they have to take.</p>
<p>Methodological approach</p>	<p><u>Prior to the training programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a date for the event. Minimum of 6 months away (preferably 9 months); • Start organising the venues for the event. Preferably not the same venue for the whole week (9 months before the event); • Find potential participants for example by using newsletters, searching on LinkedIn, asking people in your network, etc. (9 – 4 months before the event); • Schedule 1:1 meetings with potential participants to get to know them and the business case they work on (6 – 3 months before the event); • Start inviting speakers for the program. Follow the program presented in Appendix 1 (5 – 3 months before the event); • After a speaker agreed, send him/her an agenda invitation; • Start inviting CEO’s for the CEO-diner (4 - 3 months before the event). Think of CEO’s from potential customers, watertech companies, knowledge institutes, investors. Send the CEO’s an agenda invitation with logistical details (venue, parking, etc); • Ask participants what kind of organisations they would like to meet during the event (4 – 2 months before the event); • Schedule 1:1 interviews for the participants (3 - 1 months before the event); • Send the draft program to the participants (4 weeks before the event); • Arrange presents for all the speakers (2 weeks before the event) • Send the final program to the participants and speakers (1 week before the event). <p><u>During the 5-day training programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the table setting for the CEO-diner. Normally the CEO’s are divided over the tables and the participants move around each course; • Be available for the participants during the day and try to arrange everything they need; • Make the program for the pitch event; • Continuously work on the logistics to make sure everything goes smoothly; • Ask the participants to fill-in the evaluation, and make changes if needed.

	<p><u>After the training programme</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate through social media, newsletter, etc about the event and the winner; • Connect with the participants and ask if they need further support. Normally you send them an email and, if they prefer, set-up a call.
Results	<p>The WCBC was organised for 13 editions since 2009. In total around 200 young entrepreneurs were supported. The majority that started a company is still active. Some became really successful. Organizing an event like the WCBC is also a great way to show the facilities you offer to start-ups from across Europe.</p>
Impact	<p>In general participants are extremely enthusiastic about the organised event. Mainly because of the network possibilities and the clearness they have on the steps to take the coming months.</p>
Success factors	<p>There are no specific conditions for successful implementation of the program although a broad network is really helpful.</p>
Constraints	<p>You need sufficient participants and a broad network with external experts that are willing to support.</p>
More information	<p>Ronald Wielinga (Water Alliance), Water4All partner leading the development of the training programme for a European Water Incubator</p>
Contact details	<p>r.wielinga@watercampus.nl</p>

4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusions

The Water4All initiative, specifically under Pillar C, emphasizes the acceleration of research and innovation (R&I) uptake by economic sectors. A primary objective is to support the sustainable development of start-ups and SMEs within the water sector, ensuring that innovative solutions reach the market efficiently. The task C2 under this Pillar focuses on bridging the gap between different regional start-up support programs across Europe, aiming to create a more integrated and comprehensive European Water Incubator.

The WCBC, a well-established five-day intensive training program, has been identified as a best practice and starting point for the European Water Incubator. The program is designed to help early-stage start-ups in the water technology sector develop viable business models, enhance their investor readiness, and build strategic networks.

The 2024 edition of the WCBC, organized by WaterCampus, was integrated into the Water4All initiative as a pivotal step toward establishing a European-wide incubator. The success of this challenge underscores the importance of such initiatives in fostering innovation within the water sector.

Although the WCBC was recognized as an exemplary model for incubation, the participation from Water4All partners was limited. Many partners struggled to nominate start-ups, possibly due to their primary focus on research rather than start-up support. This indicates a challenge and an important point of attention for the second phase of the partnership in which Water4All partners want to scale the WCBC model and other best practices, across Europe. This will require stronger collaboration and involvement from all Water4All partners, especially those with extensive networks in the start-up ecosystem.

Next steps

The first period of activities implemented as part of Water4All Pillar C and Task C2 (Phase 1 - 2022-2024) had the focus on identifying start-up support programs across Europe and running the first best practice. Based on the outcomes and the lessons learned in Phase 1, the next steps for Water4All and the development of a European Water Incubator during the second phase will be:

Challenge	Action in Phase 2
<p>The limited participation from Water4All partners in the WCBC indicates a gap in engagement, particularly in nominating start-ups and supporting business-oriented activities</p>	<p>In Phase 2 we will enhance collaboration by actively involving all Water4All partners, especially those with robust networks in the start-up ecosystem. For this we will develop and execute a communication/ dissemination plan. Think of activities such as organizing regular workshops and meetings focused on the importance of incubating start-ups, thereby aligning research-focused partners with the broader business objectives of the initiative and promoting more widely the program and target EU start-up support organisations and start-ups.</p> <p>During the Executive Board meeting of the Partnership (September 10, 2024 in Paris), the strategy towards a European wide incubator was presented (see also figure 1). To get more involvement, the Executive Board suggested not only to focus on start-ups but also on valorising the outcomes of the Water4All funded projects (Pillar B) and connect with the identified water-oriented living labs (Pillar D). Both suggestions will be implemented in the next work programme of the Partnership.</p>

Deliverable D3.9 – Incubator Strategy Development

<p>The WCBC has been identified as a best practice, but its one-size-fits-all approach of the WCBC and other best practices that will be selected may not suit the diverse needs of start-ups across different European regions.</p>	<p>We will investigate if it is needed to develop a more flexible incubation model that can be adapted to regional specificities. This could for example involve creating modular programs within the European Water Incubator that cater to varying stages of start-up development and the unique challenges of different markets.</p>
<p>In Phase 1, the partners identified the need to bridge the gap between different regional start-up support programs.</p>	<p>In Phase 1 the Task C2 partners already mapped out existing (regional) incubation programs. In Phase 2, the partners will identify in more detail areas where collaboration can be deepened. By creating a network of interconnected incubators (see figure 1), Water4All can provide start-ups with access to a broader range of resources, mentors, and market opportunities across Europe. That is how you create a successful European Water Incubator.</p>
<p>Building credibility and attracting more start-ups to the incubator requires visible success stories.</p>	<p>Actively promote the achievements of start-ups that have benefited from the WCBC and other incubation programs. Case studies, media coverage, and success stories can serve as powerful tools to inspire more participation and attract additional resources and partnerships.</p>
<p>The limited focus on valorisation and start-ups may hinder the success of Water4All.</p>	<p>In Phase 1, Task C2 partners learned that it is absolutely not easy to get start-ups from the different ecosystems connected to the Water4All partnership. Simply because the majority of the partners do not have a network with (pre-) start-ups and no experience with incubation. Therefore, we will develop a train-the-trainer program to support enthusiastic and ambitious partners in developing incubation activities and also focus on the valorisation from through Water4All funded projects (Pillar B).</p>

APPENDIX 1: Program WaterCampus Business Challenge

WaterCampus Business Challenge 2024

From knowledge to business

May 13 - 17, 2024

FINAL

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1. Program overview

Below the overview of the WaterCampus Business Challenge. Please see the next chapters for a more detailed description per day.

Day 1 (May 13, 2024): Acquaintance & Business model generation

Location: Johannes de Doper Business Centre, Agora 4, Leeuwarden (Red Room, WaterCampus)

Start	End	Description
Welcome & acquaintance		
12:00	13:00	Welcome & lunch
13:00	13:30	WaterCampus & Entrepreneurship
13:30	14:30	Tour Lab Facilities of Wetsus and Water Application Centre
Business model generation		
14:30	14:45	Introduction and overlook of the program
14:45	15:00	Introducing pitches participants
15:00	15:15	Break
15:15	15:45	Experienced entrepreneur: from science to business
15:45	16:15	Introducing the Business Model Canvas & Lean Canvas
16:15	17:30	Time to work on your business case / 1-1 support
17:30	17:45	Transfer to hotel (Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden) & check-in (by bike)
19:00	21:00	Dinner @ Hotel

Day 2 (May 14, 2024): value proposition & market analyses

Location: Notiz Hotel Leeuwarden, Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
Value proposition & IP		
09:00	09:30	Overlook of day 2 and value proposition canvas
09:30	10:00	IP – to protect or not to protect
10:00	10:45	Experienced entrepreneur: value creation
10:45	11:00	Break
11:00	11:45	How to talk to customers?
11:45	12:15	Time to work on your value proposition / 1-1 support
12:15	13:15	Lunch
Market Analyses		
13:15	14:00	How to find the right market and customers?
14:00	15:30	Workshop: market research & interview preparation (peer review)
15:30	18:00	Interviews

Location: Indian restaurant Jamuna (Weerd 26 – 28, Leeuwarden)

Start	End	Description
19:00	21:00	Dinner in city centre of Leeuwarden

Day 3 (May 15, 2024): pitching

Location: de KANSELARIJ - Turfmarkt 11, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
Pitch training		
09:30	09:45	Introduction and overlook of day 3
09:45	10:45	Selling your product in 10 min or less
10:45	11:00	Break
11:00	12:00	Workshop: preparing your pitches for the CEO's
12:00	13:00	Try out: pitches of the participants
13:00	14:30	Lunch & completing your pitches
Business strategy		
14:30	15:15	Investors view: it's all about the money
15:15	16:00	Experienced entrepreneur: business strategy
16:00	16:30	Q&A – 1:1 support
16:30	16:45	Back to hotel

Location: Restaurant de Koperen Tuin, Prinsentuin 1, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
CEO-diner		
18:00	18:30	Arrival of the CEO's and networking
18:30	18:35	Welcome by Abel Reitsma (municipality of Leeuwarden)
18:35	19:00	Pitches of participants
19:00	21:00	CEO-diner

Day 4 (May 16, 2024): end-users perspective and marketing

Location: Notiz Hotel Leeuwarden, Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
End-users perspective & IP-protection		
09:00	09:15	Introduction and overlook of day 4
09:15	10:15	Marketing: how to convince the end-user?
10:15	10:30	Break
10:30	11:15	Vision of the end-user
11:15	12:00	Working on your pitch
12:00	13:00	Lunch
Finalizing your business case / free time		
13:00	17:00	Free time / interviews / finalizing your pitch for tomorrow
19:00	21:00	Dinner @ Hotel

Day 5 (May 17, 2024): Business plan presentation and award

Location: Wetsus, Oostergoweg 9, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
End-users perspective & IP-protection		
09:45	10:00	Welcome
10:00	11:30	Pitches round 1
11:30	11:45	Break
11:45	13:15	Pitches round 2
13:15	14:00	Lunch & jury deliberations
14:00	14:30	Award for the best proposition including group photo
14:30	14:45	Goodbye

Trainer

Ronald Wielinga is director of Entrepreneurship for WaterCampus and operational director of Water Alliance. WaterCampus is the largest innovation ecosystem in the field of water technology in Europe, connecting over 300 companies and 25 research institutes. Ronald is mentoring (watertech) start-ups from all over Europe on a daily basis. During this week Ronald will guide you through the program.



2. Day 1: Acquaintance and Business Model Generation

After arrival of and acquaintance with the other participants we will start with a tour at WaterCampus. The aim of the afternoon session is to (further) develop your business case.

Location: Johannes de Doper Business Centre, Agora 4, Leeuwarden (Red Room, WaterCampus)

Start	End	Description
Welcome & acquaintance		
12:00	13:00	Welcome & Lunch
13:00	13:30	WaterCampus & Entrepreneurship <i>Johannes B., Managing Director Wetsus</i>
13:30	14:30	Tour Lab Facilities of Wetsus and Water Application Centre (WAC) <i>Doekle Y., Scientific Program Manager Wetsus</i>
Business model generation		
14:30	14:45	Introduction and overlook of the program <i>Ronald Wielinga, director of entrepreneurship WaterCampus</i>
14:45	15:00	Introducing pitches participants <i>Participants</i>
15:00	15:15	Break
15:15	15:45	Experienced entrepreneur: from science to business <i>Jan P. – Aqua Battery</i>
15:45	16:15	Introducing Business Model Canvas & Lean Canvas <i>Ronald Wielinga – WaterCampus</i>
16:15	17:30	Afternoon workshop & coaching <i>Ronald Wielinga – WaterCampus</i> <i>Paula G.</i>
17:30	17:45	Transfer to hotel (by bike) & check-in

Location: Notiz Hotel Leeuwarden, Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden

19:00	21:00	Dinner @ Hotel
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Welcome & acquaintance

Johannes B., managing director of Wetsus, will give you an introduction to WaterCampus. After the lunch, Doekle Y. will guide you through the premises at WaterCampus. During this tour you will be visiting the Wetsus laboratory and the Water Application Centre.

Business model generation

The afternoon session will start with a 2-minute pitch from all participants. Next on the agenda is a presentation of Jan P.. Jan is program director of Wetsus but also one of the founders of Aqua Battery. He will share his experience as an entrepreneur with special focus on the valorisation of knowledge (from science to business).

The remainder of the afternoon will be focused on (further) developing your business case. We will be using the business model canvas³ or the lean canvas as a tool for this. This BMC is a template used for developing

³ The business model canvas was developed by Alexander Osterwalder based on his PhD work in 2005.

new business models offering a visual chart with elements (“building blocks”) describing among others the value proposition that your product delivers to your customers. The Lean Canvas is defined as an adaptation of the traditional BMC that is optimized to consolidate a plan focused on maximizing user value. After a short interactive introduction, you will be working on your own business model canvas the rest of the afternoon. Paula G., former managing director of Paques in Europe, will be available for 1-1 sessions.

The day will end with a dinner in the hotel.

3. Day 2: value proposition and market analysis

The aim of this day is to work on your value proposition and the market analysis. We will be working on questions like:

- How to find your market and customers?
- For whom are you creating value?
- Who are your most important customers?
- What added value will your product deliver to the customers?
- Which one of your customers problems are you solving?
- Which customer needs are you satisfying?
- Who are you competitors and what makes your proposition unique?

Location: Notiz Hotel Leeuwarden, Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
Value proposition & IP		
09:00	09:30	Overlook of day 2 and value proposition canvas <i>Ronald Wielinga</i>
09:30	10:00	IP – to protect or not to protect <i>Gijs van H. – RvO</i>
10:00	10:45	Experienced entrepreneur: value creation <i>Rose S. – SeaO2</i>
10:45	11:00	Break
11:00	11:45	How to talk to customers? <i>Ronald Wielinga</i>
11:45	12:15	Time to work on your value proposition / 1-1 support
12:15	13:15	Lunch
Market Analyses		
13:15	14:00	How to find the right market and customers? <i>Ioanna L. – Isle Utilities</i>
14:00	15:30	Workshop: market research & interview preparation (peer review)
15:30	18:00	Interviews

Location: Indian restaurant Jamuna (Weerd 26 – 28, Leeuwarden)

Start	End	Description
19:00	21:00	Dinner in city centre of Leeuwarden

Value proposition

We will start this day with the introduction of the value proposition canvas followed by a presentation from Gijs van H.. Gijs will guide you through the IP-landscape and explain you why it is (or isn't) wise to protect your IP. Rose S., founder and CTO of SeaO2, will share her experience as an entrepreneur. She will focus on value creation. After that Ronald will share his experience on collecting market information via customer interviews. We will use the final part of the morning for working on your value proposition and market analyses.

Market Analyses

The afternoon session will start with a presentation of Ioanna L. Ioanna is managing director Northern Europe for Isle Utilities. She will teach us how to find the right market and customers for the business cases. After a workshop with also peer-to-peer sessions and the possibility to prepare interviews, there will be time for one or more interviews. We will try to set-up an interview with an important stakeholder for all participants.

4. Day 3: pitching, business strategy and CEO's

Today will be intense. We will spend the morning and the beginning of the afternoon preparing the pitches for the CEO's. The remainder of the afternoon will be focused on business strategy. After changing clothes, we will prepare ourselves for the diner with the CEO's.

Location: de KANSELARIJ - Turfmarkt 11, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
Pitch training		
09:30	09:45	Introduction and overlook of day 3 <i>Ronald Wielinga</i>
09:45	10:45	Selling your product in 2 minutes or less <i>Jornt de B., program manager future founders</i>
10:45	11:00	Break
11:00	12:00	Workshop: preparing your pitches for the ceo's
12:00	13:00	Try out: pitches of the participants
13:00	14:00	Lunch & completing your pitches
Business strategy		
14:30	15:15	Investors view: it's all about the money <i>Nic P., managing partner PureTerra Ventures</i>
15:15	16:00	Experienced entrepreneur: business strategy <i>Erwin D.</i>
16:00	16:30	Q&A – 1:1 support
16:30	16:45	Back to hotel

Location: Restaurant de Koperen Tuin, Prinsentuin 1, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
CEO-diner		
18:00	18:30	Arrival of the CEO's and networking
18:30	18:35	Welcome by Abel R. (municipality of Leeuwarden)
18:35	19:00	Pitches of participants
19:00	21:00	CEO-diner

Pitch training

You have a great idea. But how do you convince customers, investors and other stakeholders? Being able to 'sell' your product is crucial. During this morning session Jornt de B., program manager future founders at Founded in the North will help you:

- Learn to understand the content and delivery needed for an effective pitch;
- Be exposed to several successful pitches to visualize a good pitch;
- Articulate your concept in a manner that is quickly and clearly understood;
- Communicate the problem being solved, your solution and other important aspects taking into account your audience;
- Understand the importance of a call-to-action at the closing of your pitch;

During this part of the program you will develop and practice a 2-minute pitch for the CEO-diner later today.

Business Strategy

The afternoon is all about business strategy. Are you going to produce your product from A to Z? And also sell it worldwide yourself? Or are you connecting with partners? And why do you choose this strategy? Nic P., managing partner of PureTerra takes a daily look behind the scenes at a wide variety of watertech start-ups. He will share his experience as an investor with you. Second speaker is Erwin D.. Erwin is entrepreneur and investor. Erwin made the family business flourish and becoming a worldwide player.

CEO-diner

Please see annex 1 for an overview of CEO's that will attend the diner. During the diner you will get the opportunity to talk to a broad selection of these CEO's and pitch your business case and more important collect feedback.

5. Day 4: end-user perspective and IP-protection

Location: Notiz Hotel Leeuwarden, Rengerslaan 8, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
End-users perspective & IP-protection		
09:00	09:15	Introduction and overlook of day 4
09:15	10:15	Marketing: how to convince the end-user? <i>Kevin V. - Wettermerk</i>
10:15	10:30	Break
10:30	11:15	Vision of the end-user <i>Sybren G. – Wetterskip Fryslân</i>
11:15	12:00	Working on your pitch
12:00	13:00	Lunch
Finalizing your business case / free time		
13:00	17:00	Free time / interviews / finalizing your pitch for tomorrow
19:00	21:00	Dinner @ Hotel

End-user protection and IP-protection

In many cases, the launching customers in the international water sector are risk averse. It is their job to deliver clean and safe water 24/7 and 365 days per year. How to convince them to implement your innovation? Marketing is crucial. Kevin V. is marketing expert with specialisation in watertech. After the break Sybren G., innovator for Wetterskip Fryslân, will share with you how he works with new technologies on a daily basis.

Finalizing your business case (or free time)

In the afternoon you will be having free time to finalise your pitch for tomorrow, visit the city centre. There will also be some interviews with important stakeholders (the ones that where not available on Tuesday).

6. Day 5: pitch event

During this session you will be presenting your business case in front of a jury. It is all about the learning experience of really pitching your case in a short timeframe. There is a maximum of 5 minutes for your pitch. After the pitch the jury will have a maximum of 8 minutes for asking questions. After that there will be 2 minutes to switch to the next pitch.

The jury will judge the pitches on the following aspects:

- Market attractiveness (market demand, uniqueness of innovation, scalability and replicability, strength of the business model)
- Feasibility/ ability to implement (capital efficiency, regulatory feasibility, technical feasibility)
- (Climate) impact & co-benefits (co-benefits are secondary benefits)
- Elevator pitch (quality of the pitch)
- Presentation (quality of the slides)
- Response to questions (quality of responses to questions from the jury)

Location: Wetsus, Oostergoweg 9, Leeuwarden

Start	End	Description
09:45	10:00	Welcome
10:00	10:15	Sanjay P. (Wetsus)
10:15	10:30	Vania C. (Dual Soil)
10:30	10:45	Girts O. (Spectomarine)
10:45	11:00	Gabriela A. (Nitrogen Sensing)
11:00	11:15	Mathis van der V. & Iris van Z. (Geo Insight)
11:15	11:30	Femke K. & Elle R.
11:30	11:45	Break + group picture
11:45	12:00	Charlie W. (CDT-Wire)
12:00	12:15	Bruno A. (Scubic)
12:15	12:30	Cor D. (Forever Analytical Solutions)
12:30	12:45	Aryan A. (Aavalor)
12:45	13:00	Pim de L. (Aquapreneurs)
13:00	13:15	Ruixuan Q., Liang-Shin W., Chiara S. (Wetsus/RUG)
13:15	14:00	Lunch & jury deliberations
14:00	14:30	Award for the best proposition including group photo
14:30	14:45	Goodbye

The jury consists of:

- Paula G. (former managing director Paques)
- Evert van de W. (serial entrepreneur)
- Klaas K. (investment manager FOM)

Appendix 1: CEO-dinner

The following CEO's confirmed their participation:

Company	Name
Acquaint	Christine van der V.
CE-Line	Wilco D.
CEW	Jeroen R.
DEXSS	Hans M.
FOM	Sybo Z.
Global Environmental Solutions	Erwin D.
HDM Pipelines	Elles P.
Hulo.ai	Robbert L.
Municipality of Leeuwarden	Abel R.
Municipality of Leeuwarden	Evelien W.
North Water	Mark S.
NX Filtration	Jeroen P.
	Paula G.
Pagell	Rieks de R.
Paques Biomaterials	Joost P.
PureTerra Ventures	Nic P.
Pure Water Group	Pieter H.
Redstack	Evert van de W.
Royal HaskoningDHV	Sigrid S.
RUG Ventures	Ignacio F.
Vitens-Evides International	Toine R.
Water Application Centre	Koos O.
Water board Vechtstromen	Piet van E.
Water board Zuiderzeeland	Wouter S.
Water board Vallei & Veluwe	Coert P.
Water board Rijn & IJssel	Maarten S.
WaterCampus	Ronald Wielinga
Watercompany Groningen	Eveline C.
Wetsus	Jan P.
Wetsus	Cees B.
Wetsus	Johannes B.
Wetsus	Roel M.
WLN	Hilde P.
WMD	Roald L.

Annex 2: business cases participants

DualSoil (Vania C.)

DualSoil mission is to restore and improve soil quality by proposing and developing new technological solutions inspired by the complex soil processes and the needs of a developing circular economy.

EcoRefineSolutions (Sanjay P.)

One of the major hurdles before the widespread commercialization of Polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA) biopolymers derived from either municipal waste or other streams could be the availability of volatile fatty acids (VFAs) to meet the production demand. Synthesis of VFAs for the production of PHA biopolymers may compete with the food sector. Therefore, I would like to develop an alternative route for the production of VFAs from post-consumer waste plastics via state-of-the-art pyrolysis techniques. The prospect of transforming postconsumer plastic into valuable products has garnered significant attention in the 21st century. However, traditional methods have shown promising results, but often they lack selectivity and are energy-intensive processes as well. Currently, research is going on employing suitable catalysis to enhance the process economics and selectivity, thereby unlocking the full potential of waste plastic conversion. The pyrolysis technique is a versatile technique, which may also be applied to other materials such as wood, husk residue, and biomass.

Spectromarine (Girts O.)

Spectromarine is an optical real-time water quality monitoring sensor and early warning system for pollution detection, exploiting unique patent-pending microspectrometry technology. It is applicable to both fresh and salt-water. It can detect both biological and chemical substances in the water, is fully autonomous and requires very minimal maintenance. It has been developed in the Institute of Solid State Physics, University of Latvia (currently at TRL-6 - a working prototype with first field tests concluded) within an EU-funded R&I project as part of the "Mission Sea 2030" regional initiative. At least 3 different applications for Spectromarine sensor have been identified with confirmed interest from potential end-users. These include: urban water monitoring for water utility companies; sea-water pollution monitoring for fish farms/ shellfish farms in aquaculture; sea-water quality monitoring at intake at the desalination plants. The project team seeks the best business development strategy, product road to market and support for technology commercialisation through a spin-off company.

Aquapreneurs (Pim de L.)

Aquapreneurs aims to address global water scarcity with its innovative Mobile Desalination Unit, designed to provide sustainable access to clean water in regions facing scarcity challenges. Powered entirely by solar energy and equipped with advanced filtration technology, it can effectively treat various water sources, including polluted surface water, saline brackish water wells, and contaminated groundwater. Its mobility allows deployment in remote areas where traditional water infrastructure is impractical.

The innovative approach involves communities collectively sharing the cost of the filtration unit, enabling multiple villages or rural areas to benefit. This cost-sharing model ensures equitable access to clean water solutions that may have been financially unattainable otherwise. Aquapreneurs' Mobile Desalination Unit delivers immediate relief in emergencies and provides long-term solutions for communities in need.

Scubic (Bruno A.)

The innovative smart platform from Scubic helps water utilities to create real-time insights to meet sustainability goals while optimizing operations and reducing costs.

Nitrogen Sensing (Gabriela A.)

Nitrogen Sensing Solutions (NS2) is a deep-tech start-up specializing in digital biosensing systems for smart water testing of nitrogen-based nutrients like ammonium, nitrite, and nitrate, at the point of use. Our

flagship product, NOxAqua, comprises disposable sensing strips and a user-friendly handheld reader. Real-time data is delivered to the customer's smart device or control system. Unique in the market for its application of biosensing technology, NOxAqua offers unrivaled specificity in nitrogen monitoring, setting a new standard in the management of aquatic ecosystems.

Aavalor (Aryan A.)

Aavalor Greentech B.V. is an early-stage deep-tech hardware company building a patent-pending graphene membrane that will save 33% energy and 55% more water for wastewater companies.

Geo Insight (Mathis van der V. & Iris van Z.)

Geo Insights is an innovative start-up at the intersection of technology and sustainability, focusing on the vital challenge of urban flood risk prediction and the implementation of green infrastructure solutions. Leveraging advanced spatial analysis and AI technologies, Geo Insights aims to equip municipalities and urban planners with insightful data, facilitating informed decision-making for resilient and livable city development. Our business case is focused on initiating a pilot project within the province of South Holland, a region recognized for its high flood risk due to extensive areas lying below sea level and its significant urbanization. This initiative not only addresses the immediate need for enhanced flood protection but also underscores our commitment to contributing positively to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). As we prepare for the upcoming business challenge in May, we look forward to sharing our vision, discussing potential collaborations, and exploring innovative solutions that advance urban sustainability and resilience.

Leaklink Solutions (Charlie W.)

Charlie and his teammate Sam Nyarko became the winner of the Business Development Course 2024 for the CDT-Wire program. The team developed a sensor that is able to detect leakage in pipelines very accurate and fast.

Md Atual G.

Dredging is necessary to increase the depth of rivers and remove unwanted deposits so boats and ships can pass safely. It is even more desirable in the case of large rivers with geomorphic complexity, i.e., the presence of different kinds of landforms such as bars, islands, dry channels, unvegetated banks and water depressions, which hinder water flow and navigation. There is a considerable knowledge gap in implementing dredging projects considering river health. River engineers suggested dredging for most floodplain rivers to continue river flow and flood protection. Still, they don't consider or be aware of the impact of removing bars, which can increase nutrient pollution in the downstream estuaries, even on the coast. Sustainable dredging works can be done for river management considering the minimum influence on river geomorphology and less effect on nitrogen retention mechanisms and export scenarios to the seas. Our study found that the size, shape and position of the bars are important for nutrient retention. By modelling, we can show which bars or other landforms occurring parts in the river channel are necessarily significant contributors to nutrient retention or export. So, the individuals or companies responsible for dredging can perform works by knowing that which portion of the sediment unit removal will have less impact on nutrient retention/export. Considering this approach will minimise the adverse effect on river health and, thus, the loss of ecosystem services. This initiative can support sustainable river management programs. Also, it can be said to be an initiative of a nature-based river nutrient restoration and management solution.

Ruixuan Q., Liang-Shin W., Chiara S.

The team of Ruixuan, Liang-Shin (both Wetsus) and Chiara (RUG) became the winner of the Business Development Course 2024 (Wetsus). They are working on a business case for a sensor that can detect leakage in membrane skids.

Femke K. & Elle R.

The wastewater is polluted with pharmaceuticals to such an extent that these can hardly be filtered out, posing a threat to the water chain. We made toilet paper that absorbs the pharmaceutical residues so they will be filtered out with the toilet paper and found that it makes a significant impact.

Forever Analytical Solutions (Cor D.)

Forever Analytical Solutions is a deep-tech start-up that provides services and products to measure the total PFAS concentration in water. We use a technique called Particle-induced Gamma-ray Emission. The measurement takes a few minutes, is very simple to perform and can be conducted both in but also outside a laboratory environment. The technique has been evaluated by the EPA and identified as a very promising method for total PFAS measurement. Currently, we are offering a service where the customer can order a sampling kit, perform a simple filtration process and send the filter back for analysis. The result is reported back within days. The analysis is non-destructive and samples can, if needed, be used for detailed analysis on the individual PFAS molecules. In the future Forever Analytical Solutions will also provide real-time PFAS scanning devices that can be used to monitor the PFAS levels at regular intervals.

Annex 3: interviews

Participant	Date // time	Organisation	Interviewee
Pim de L.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Amref Kenia	Anne M.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	(former) Water Health Ghana	Samuel A.
Sanjay P.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Pyrolyze	Peter K.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	BYK / Altana	Jeroen C. & Hendrik L.
Vania S.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Zonnapark service Nederland	Eelco H.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	DGB Group	Anubhav M. Fabrizio V.
Girts O.	May 13 // 16:30 – 17:00	Microlan	Joep A.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Burnt Island Investment	Wayne B.
	May 16 // 13:00 – 13:30	Shift Invest	Bart B.
Bruno A.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Spatial Insight	Ignaz W.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Oasen	Toin P.
	May 16 // 13:00 – 13:30	Orbia (Wavin)	Marcel J.
Gabriela A.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Burnt Island Investment	Wayne B.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Royal Eijkelpark	Elsa M.
	May 14 // 16:30 – 17:00	Rubiconsult Water Quality Services	Henk K.
	May 16 // 13:30 – 14:00	Easy Measure	Mateo M.
Aryan A.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	SNN	Joep H.
	May 16 // 13:30 – 14:00	Shift Invest	Bart B.
Matthis van der V. & Iris van Z.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	RHDHV	Arnold W.
	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Deltares	Chris B.
	May 14 // 16:30 – 17:00	Nelen & Schuurmans	Fons N.
Elle R.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	RIVM	Melvin F.
	May 16 // 13:00 – 13:30	Kimberley Clark	Allowin A.
Md Atual G.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Deltares	Chris B.
	May 14 // 17:00 – 17:30	Nelen & Schuurmans	Fons N.
Charlie W.	May 14 // 15:30 – 16:00	Watercompany Groningen	Jeroen K.
	May 16 // 13:00 – 13:30	Easy Measure	Mateo M.
	May 16 // 13:30 – 14:00	Orbia (Wavin)	Marcel J.
Ruixuan Q., Liang-Shin W. & Chiara S.	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Brabant Water	Tico M.
	May 15 // 13:30 – 14:00	WE-Consult	Peter W.
	May 16 // 13:00 – 13:30	Water Alliance	Andre M.
Cor D.	May 14 // 16:00 – 16:30	Rubiconsult Water Quality Services	Henk K.
	May 14 // 17:00 – 17:30	Burnt Island Investment	Wayne B.

APPENDIX 2: Evaluation results of the 2024 WCBC

Part 1 – Rating per part of the programme (average score of the participants)

Day 1:

- Welcome by Johannes B. (Wetsus) (Monday May 13): **8.3**
- Guided tour Wetsus and Water Application Centre with Doekle Y. (Monday May 13): **8.5**
- Experience entrepreneur: from science to business with Jan P., Aqua Battery (Monday May 13): **7.9**
- Workshop working on the business model canvas with Paula G. / Ronald Wielinga (Monday May 13): **8.1**
- Dinner in Notiz Hotel: **8.8**
- Overall rating day 1: **8.5**

Day 2:

- IP – to protect or not to protect with Gijs van H. (RVO) (Tuesday May 14): **8.1**
- Experienced entrepreneur: value creation with Rose S. (SeaO2) (Tuesday May 14): **8.6**
- How to talk to customers with Ronald Wielinga (Tuesday May 14): **8.7**
- How to find the right market and customers with Ioanna L. (Isle Utilities) (Tuesday May 14): **8.1**
- The different (online) interviews with stakeholders (during the week): **9.4**
- Diner at Restaurant Jamuna (city centre) (Tuesday May 14): **9.1**
- Overall rating day 2: **8.7**

Day 3:

- Selling your product in 2 minutes or less with Jornt de B. (Wednesday May 15): **8.8**
- Investors view: it's all about the money with Nic P. (Pure Terra Ventures) (Wednesday May 15): **8.4**
- Experienced entrepreneur: business strategy with Erwin Dirkse (Wednesday May 15): **8.4**
- CEO-diner (Wednesday May 15): **9.3**
- Overall rating day 3: **8.8**

Day 4:

- Marketing: how to convince the end-user with Kevin V. (Wettermerk)(Thursday May 16): **8.4**
- Vision of the end-user with Sybren G. (Wetterskip Fryslan)(Thursday May 16): **7.9**
- Dinner at Notiz Hotel (Thursday May 16): **8.4**
- Overall rating day 4: **8.3**

Day 5:

- Pitch event: **8.7**

Part 2 - Open questions

What do you think about the overall quality of the European WaterCampus Business Challenge?

- The program is well organized, and with very interesting/knowledge people and talks.

- Very useful, was much more fun and helpful than I had expected before. Everything was very well arranged. In addition, there was much flexibility in relation to my sleeping disorder which I really appreciated. Overall had a great week and met a lot of kind and strategic people. The pitch training, ceo-dinner and interviews were my highlight.
- I think it's very helpful for early stage start-ups, especially the interviews and pitching training. The food was amazing and the hotel so luxurious :)
- I think its if not top notch then at the very high level.
- Excellent
- I think it is organized in a very nice way. Informative, constructive, and highly recommended
- Very good
- It's a good opportunity.
- It was a real good opportunity to get in contact with people working in the water sector. Learning from their experience and motivating at the same time. The accommodation was really nice and the overall structure of the day was put together very well.
- Amazing! Everything was very well organized, a lot of different topics were discussed with experienced people.
- It has been an amazing experience. I learned a lot from the exchange with other entrepreneurs and more experienced speakers.
- I think it was great quality. Amazing speakers, relevant talks and great opportunities for networking.
- Very Good
- I find quality of the program very good.

What do you think of the content of the European WaterCampus Business Challenge?

- It covers all the major topics that early stage start-ups need to take into attention.
- Useful and diverse! I really liked the mix of passive and active activities.
- The only thing I would recommend is making more time to prepare for the CEO dinner pitch
- I think it had a very balanced blend between teaching and interaction, and self-work and also interviews and matchmaking which are most crucial parts and the biggest value in such programmes.
- Useful and exceeded my expectations
- I got really inspired. All the information that was shared during the event are really useful. Also completely filled up with all the new knowledge.
- Good
- It's nice
- Every participant was on a different life stage with their business. The content of the WCBC gave everyone an overview from start-up to scale up, making it useful for everyone. Experienced entrepreneurs shared their story which was very interesting, and experienced speakers gave their expert information from IP to marketing.
- Everyday there were several interesting presentations, fitting the program of the day. These were all experienced people with a lot of knowledge, which allowed us to get good answers to our questions.
- I think it was very complete. It would have been interesting though to have a list of books that could help us in this process. I liked the presentation of Erwin, he gave us several additional sources of knowledge as book recommendations.
- Great, very relevant most of the time. IP, pitching, business planning etc.
- The content covers the most relevant topics for those starting their businesses in watertech market.
- I find content of the European Water Campus Business Challenge Interesting and Insightful.

What do you think of the network possibilities of the European WaterCampus Business Challenge?

- It was good, but we should have more time with CEO, partners and investors

- Sufficient and well chosen people. (Really liked the CEO-dinner)
- I gained some very valuable insights from the interviews and gained connections that could help me further directly
- I would always like to have more networking. I suggest to organise a matchmaking side event with selected experts via an online mobile platform so participants have more chances to find the right expertise, partner, investor, end-user.
- Very high
- "I think it's really nice that we are able to network between different entrepreneurs. Really an eye-opening to meet some many people with different stage of their start-ups.
- The interviews and CEO dinner also help us to further deepen our idea."
- Very good, the reason for joining.
- It's good
- Ronald connected me with people working in Kenia by using his network. This meeting was very valuable for me.
- I think this is one of the best parts! The interviews as well as the CEO diner were very helpful. The people we could do the interview with were carefully choosen and it worked out good for us.
- They were good but I was hoping to know more about matchmaking platforms to get in contact to possible partners.
- Great, the CEO dinner was full of senior managers/CEOs and that's a great opportunity to network. But also the peer to peer networking was very valuable I think.
- The network possibilities are great. I had the chance to talk with stakeholders with a strong experience and knowledge on the market segments that we're targeting.
- Huge networking chance

What did you like the best of the program?

- The talks, getting to now water campus and wetsus, and the interviews.
- Pitch training (because I don't like pitching so I really needed that) and the CEO-dinner.
- Interviews
- Interviews of the experts. Ability to think about and work on my business case and pitch deck. The hotel- super quiet, and fancy. And really great food. I don't want to eat food at home anymore. :)
- Business interviews
- CEO dinner
- CEO dinner
- CEO Dinner
- I think the online interviews that were planned on Tuesday were the most valuable for me. Also the session with Jort about pitching and the session from with Erwin about business strategy were very interesting.
- Be able to connect with so many new people. I think the ceo diner was a very nice part of the program.
- The possibility of talking with more experienced people, CEOs, companies members and other entrepreneurs. I personally feel unsure about my skills and it is encouraging to hear the stories of struggle of other people and how they dealt with those challenges.
- Meeting other entrepreneurs and hearing about their ideas and approach.
- The interviews and networking possibilities.
- Opportunity to see through a different perspective

What did you like the least of the program?

- "We should have a pitch training day, where everyone pitch for the mentors before the final day;

- In the final pitch day we should have an audience on CEO, Investors, partners and not only for the jury."
- So many presentations in a row (but I'm quickly tired so i might not be the most representative person to ask this).
- Lean canvas, but because I had done it so much already
- Most likely the IP topic since this is what I know best, it was too general for me. And in the CEO dinner there might be rules next time for each person on the table to introduce him/her in 5 minutes so everyone has the chance to tell about themselves and more chances to find a common ground. Some of the interview participants where not clear what is the purpose or aim of the interview- so a better briefing might be needed.
- I cannot think of anything that I didn't like
- Couldn't really come up with one.
- Nothing
- Final evaluation of winner.
- "If i have to be honest, the first speaker from aqua battery took me a bit bye surprise. I initially felt somebody would come in and share their success story, bye becoming an entrepreneur giving us a boost to start the week. But the whole session felt a bit sad really.
- He was constantly sharing what went wrong (which I do appreciate) but in the end he shared that he didn't held any shares in the company that he started. It felt like he wasn't really happy with the path he took.
- Again, I do appreciate sharing stories that are not all positive. These can be the most insightful, but for the first speaker to start the program it felt a bit out of place.
- "
- There were a lot of presentations, generally very informative but sometimes there were just a few duplicate things in it.
- The presentation about investor's view lack a bit of structure.
- "It's hard to say, I feel it was all very good. The time to prepare for the pitch was very short, however this may not be a bad thing teaching us to work under pressure...
- The two talks on the last day (end user) were not very relevant in my opinion, however that's a personal opinion. I didn't understand how 'vision of the end user' connected in with the talk itself."
- Nothing to declare.
- Long extensive program

Is there anything you missed in the program?

- A visit to the Leeuwarden water utility so we can see first hand the infrastructures.
- A little bit more free time in the evening (so dinner could be a little bit earlier/shorter) or maybe an option before entering the program which offers the dinner but not included in the program as a default.
- Nothing comes to mind
- Entertainment programme maybe :) just maybe 1 extra day with the group, or maybe more chances to work peer-to-peer to help each other. Also more time for discussion with experts. More such experts, end-users, investor interviews. At least 2 interviews per day or a whole day for interviews would be ideal.
- Maybe some more hands on guidance with business strategy
- No
- -
- I would have liked to have a practise round for our last 5 min pitch and get some feedback from the group in advance.
- I would have like to know more about the perspective of the investors.

- No
- Sessions on water policies and market size.
- Information on subsidy schemes run by government for start-ups in their early phase development.

Did this event meet your expectations? And why (not)?

- Yes. Our company is a little bit more developed than the others ones but it was nice to go back and think again about everything.
- Yes, because we are very early stage so I did not know we would learn a lot still.
- It exceeded them, I'm used to just looking at lean canvasses and writing a business plan from school
- Yes, it met completely. Because in my case the need was to figure out and put on the paper the first business case and pitchdeck and I did it. Additional expectation was to get feedback from industry experts, it was partly satisfied, as more interviews with a sensor people would be interesting. Thirdly ultimate achievement would be to find investor, but I know that it does not work like that, so at least we have put some foot in the doors and have to work hard to followup with investor to demonstrate our progress and traction.
- Yes
- Better than I expected.
- Yes.
- It's all good.
- Yes definitely, but maybe it would also be interesting to have more interactive sessions. Like spending more time with experienced people looking at the participants business case.
- Definitely! Expected to learn a lot about entrepreneurship and all the things that need to be taken into account when starting a business, which is exactly what I learned and even way more.
- Yes
- Yes, the speakers and topics were all a very high quality. It was also a pleasure to meet the other start-ups at various phases in their journey. I think the breadth of TRLs was a very good thing.
- Yes. I was looking forward to speaking with entrepreneurs with experience in the water quality space.
- Yes, I got the essence of procedure to embark on start-up.

What do you think of the organisation of this event?

- perfect, very well organized.
- Extremely well! Very nice we had bikes!
- Spotless, everything was handled and clear
- I think it was perfect. Kudos to Ronald.
- Very organised
- I think the timeline and the schedule is quite nice.
- Very good, I liked the different locations and the bikes.
- Very supportive
- It was very well organised, from start to finish!
- Amazing. I didn't really know what to expect, but I couldn't have wished for a better organisation. Very clear schedule and everything was well put together.
- It was very good.
- Amazing. Everything seemed to run very smoothly.
- Perfect.
- well organized

What is your opinion about the accommodation?

- it's impossible to get better.
- Way above my expectations, felt really welcome and well taken care of.
- Insane
- Perfect, one of the best hotels I have stayed in. Large rooms, modern, quiet, nice service, good location. Don't change it.
- Very good, different from standard hotels.
- It was great.
- Very nice, best hotel I stayed in probably.
- The accommodation looked very good.
- NA
- Fantastic.
- Perfect.
- I did not availed the accommodation.

What would you recommend the organization for their future business challenges?

- More time with one-to-one with the mentors, CEO and investors.
- Maybe give options in the program between two presentations. So imagine two different presentations given at the same time and beforehand choosing which presentation you will visit so there is more free time to revise things or go into the city.
- More time for pitch preparation before the CEO dinner
- Try to first find the right people for interviews to maximise the value for each participant.
- Of course
- None
- Include prize money for the pitching contest ;-)
- CEO dinner is the biggest highlights. More of such events is better for contacting the industry leaders.
- Maybe what i mentioned above, a bit more interactive sessions with experienced people.
- Keep it up! It was a very inspiring week.
- More suggestions on youtube channels and books. Also, maybe more information about how to start making budgets.
- Absolutely.
- Discussion on European frameworks regarding water policies.
- Nothing

On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that you would recommend a watertech researcher/start-up to participate in future editions of the business challenge?

- 9
- 10
- 10
- 9
- 10
- 10
- 10
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

- 10
- 9
- 10
- **Average: 9,4**

Finally, can you give an overall mark for the European WaterCampus Business Challenge?

- 9
- 10
- 10
- 9
- 10
- 9
- 9
- 8
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 10
- 9
- 10
- **Average: 9,3**



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