



Co-funded by
the European Union



CREASSE

**PRACTICAL HANDBOOK ON “HOW TO
GUIDE COLLECTIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL FACILITATOR”**

**GUIDE TO ORGANIZE SUCCESSFUL
COMMUNITY PITCHING EVENTS
AND MARKETPLACES**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Guide to Organize Successful Community Pitching Events and Marketplaces	1
• Introduction	1
• Community Pitching Event	2
• Marketplace	4
• Event Organization	12
• Cross-cutting Approaches	20
• Additional Resources and Further Reading	22



GUIDE TO ORGANIZE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY PITCHING EVENTS AND MARKETPLACES

Introduction

The objective of this handbook is to provide a technical guide for event organization as part of the Entrepreneurship programs.

The very first step in planning an event is to establish clear goals and objectives, in other words to identify the reason that lies behind the organization of the event.

Before you continue, we recommend that you write down a list of all the goals and objectives that you would like to achieve with your event. It will help define the format of your event.

The handbook covers two types of events “Community Pitching Event” and “Marketplace”. These two types of events have been developed to be easily adaptable to the specific needs of each program and region.

- The “**Community Pitching Event**” is a one-day competition event with hands-on theme-related workshops. Awards go to the best ideas shared as elevator pitches.

- The “**Marketplace**” event is also a one-day competition event like the one above. The difference lies in the entrepreneurship trade shows presented by past participants. The goal is to inspire and motivate the new entrepreneurs who carry out their projects and submit it to the competition.



Community Pitching Event

Duration: 1 morning or 1 full day (morning and afternoon).

Event type: competition

Event format: on-site or online.

Community Pitching Event is a competition event where participants seek **to improve their business models by using an innovative methodology**. They also learn how to communicate better with their target customers. The best projects can be awarded in a series of categories to be determined by the technical team (see section *Awards*) to encourage the implementation of their entrepreneurial activities.

The Community Pitching Event will be the final step following a series of practical workshops focused on business models design and communication skills (storytelling and elevator pitch) held previously as part of the project. Networking activities will be organized to help participants connect with each other. Participants will be able to always consult the organization’s technical staff. The event can be online or onsite, private and reserved only for programs’ participants or open to anyone interested in joining. It will depend on the goals and objectives of the event.

To participate in the competition, participants must submit all the templates of the requested documents on time. Those documents include the presentation of entrepreneurial projects, usually a visual template for the business plan (PowerPoint) and a spreadsheet of the economic/financial plan (Excel).

The program participants will have the opportunity to take part in the competition and present their project with an elevator pitch (2-4 minutes for each project).

You will find below an example of event agenda:

- Welcome speech and institutional presentation
- Training workshop on communication strategies
- Break
- Presentation of finalist projects
- Parallel activities can involve:
 1. For participants: testimonials from entrepreneurs, musical time, escape room, icebreakers, stress-reducing activities etc.
 2. For the institutional jury: they will gather up in a private room to deliberate about the award-winning projects.
- Awards presentation and closing.
- Networking.

Marketplace

Duration: 1 morning or 1 full day (morning and afternoon).

Event type: competition

Event format: on-site or online.

Regarding the objectives, the marketplace event is like the Community Pitching Event. The difference lies in the fair/marketplace that **features the completed entrepreneurial projects, or the ones supported by the organizational entity that are in the final stages of the business development process.** The marketplace offers a space where projects can be approved and/or sold. The marketplace is also an inspiring example for entrepreneurs who present their ideas during the competition.

The aim of the competition is to help participants implement their business models and provide them with tools to communicate effectively to their target groups. The best presented projects can be awarded in a series of categories to be determined by the technical team (see section Awards p. 7) to encourage the implementation of their entrepreneurial activities.

Networking activities will be held to help participants connect with each other. Participants will be able to always consult the organization's technical staff.

The event can either be online or onsite, private, and reserved only for programs' participants or open to anyone interested. It will depend on the goals and objectives of the event.

To participate in the competition, participants must submit all the templates of the requested documents on time. Those documents include the presentation of entrepreneurial projects, usually a visual template for the business plan (PowerPoint) and a spreadsheet of the economic/financial plan (Excel).

Participants will have the opportunity to take part in the competition and present their project with an elevator pitch (2-4 minutes for each project).

You will find below an example of the event agenda:

- Welcome speech and institutional presentation
- Success stories of entrepreneurial projects supported by the organizational entity
- Break
- Training workshop on communication strategies
- Presentation of finalist projects
- Parallel activities can involve:
 1. For participants: testimonials from entrepreneurs, musical time, escape room, icebreakers, stress-reducing activities etc.
 2. For the institutional jury: they will gather up in a private room to deliberate about the award-winning projects
- Awards presentation and closing
- Networking

Objectives

During the design development phase, the social facilitator must **define clear and achievable objectives**. When defining the characteristics of the event (activities, event format, duration, typology, etc.) it is essential to bear in mind the main objective of the event as it will determine many aspects of the event.



Trying to make an impact in a territory by strengthening the relationship with funding entities or by increasing brand visibility is different from promoting the entrepreneurial initiatives developed by the participants in a program.

Following this step, we recommend establishing internal quantitative objectives for a results-oriented approach. **After separating men and women, follow below the 9 basic elements to keep track of:**

- Number of organized Community Pitching Events.
- Number of organized Marketplaces.
- Total number of registrations.
- Total number of participants.
- Number of implemented business plans or business models.
- Number of participating entities (during institutional welcome, closing ceremony, etc.).
- Number of people competing.
- Number of awarded projects.
- Number of collaborations generated between the projects and other community services.

Event Format

The events mentioned above can either be **online or onsite**. Onsite events can take place in spaces provided by collaborating entities or a venue rented out for the occasion if the program budget allows it.

For in-person events, bear in mind the following logistics: seating capacity, location, access to public transportation, the equipment necessary (Wi-Fi, heating, plugs, tables, projector and a flat surface for projection, working spaces), a room for jury deliberation, awards ceremony and catering, if applicable.



Organizing in-person events also means setting up the equipment so we recommend requesting early and late access to the space to streamline event equipment and material setup and pick it up afterwards.

For online events, make sure the digital platform offers the right features for each event. We highly recommend using the Microsoft Teams tool, as it allows greater control and covers the necessary basic needs (recording, access control, customization of backgrounds, creation of a separate room for jury deliberation, etc.). We recommend doing an event simulation to make sure that all the participants can connect easily to the event. Sometimes the collaborating entities do not have experience using Microsoft Teams and may encounter issues connecting. Additionally, facilitators should provide clear, step-by-step login instructions ahead of the event and offer a technical support contact. Consider the participants' varying levels of digital literacy, and provide a brief live demo or tutorial session prior to the event to improve confidence and reduce technical difficulties.

Budget

It is also essential to review the program budget and the estimate of expenditure. The business event costs may vary depending on the event format, the number of prizes to be awarded, the estimated number of participants, etc.

During the design development phase, it is important to review the available budget in every financial line onto which we estimate entering expenditure. Likewise, we recommend creating an expenditure planning, reviewing if any of the following items that may generate expenditure apply and estimating the amount to enter:

- 
- Expenditure is associated with the business event venue (rental, cleaning, etc.).
 - Complementary professional services (photography, lighting, sound, logistics, etc.)
 - Merchandising material (notepads, folders, pens, USB, cloth bag, etc.)
 - Design of visibility materials (posters, roll-ups, award checks, diplomas, photocall, etc.) and printing, if applicable.
 - Promotion and communication (paid advertising, network campaigns, etc.).
 - Cover of travel expenses for participants, if applicable.
 - Catering, if applicable.
 - Subcontracting of external professionals (speakers, experts, facilitators, etc.).
 - Per diem and travel expenses of technical team, if applicable.
 - In-kind benefits (consulting and/or outsourced professional services).

You can rely on the support of the team in charge of financial management for the budget review.

Regulations

Any event must comply with some public regulations. These regulations should be available online in PDF format and provided in the different event promotion actions. We recommend including the link to the regulations in the registration form that can be uploaded in the cloud to Google Drive, Dropbox or similar.

The regulations must collect the set of contacts involved in the event in a coherent fashion. The awards ceremony must also comply with those regulations. **The document must include the logo of the organizational entity, as well as the logos of the financing and collaborating entities, if there are.**

The regulations should include the following sections:

- Objective of the competition: start with an introduction focused on the purpose of the event and the involved financing entities.
- Dates and event format: outline the important dates and the format of the event (location or the digital platform that will be used).
- Profile of the participants and required documentation: here lay out the requirements that participants must fulfill (they must be officially registered in each program or be willing to do so).
- Phases and implementation of the competition: detail out, step by step, the different stages of the competition with dates and actions to complete to participate.
- Evaluation criteria: define the evaluation criteria in the different phases of the competition (template presentation technique and institutional project speeches), deliberation and casuistry in the event of a tie.
- Composition of the jury: outline the typology of profiles that make up the jury, no names should be given, only entities that collaborate and the organizational entity.
- Awards: define the categories of awards, equivalent amount in euros and details of whether they are in kind (in services and advice for the entrepreneurial project) or collaborations.

- Acceptance of the rules: conditions of the rules and data protection. Mention the right of the organization to revoke the awards if an activity incongruent with the object of the contest or the intention of an improper use of the prizes awarded is detected or if it is detected that not all the requirements to receive the prize have been fulfilled.

Awards

Awards are typically 'in-kind,' meaning that instead of direct cash prizes, winners receive valuable services such as consulting, mentoring, or professional support. This approach helps control expenses and provides clear financial documentation. The technical team works with winners to tailor these services effectively to their project needs.

The amount and the evaluation of the Awards may differ to better meet the reality of the winning project. The Awards of projects that do not meet the technical quality requirements will be declared void. The technical team of the organization will meet with the winning projects to specify the most appropriate services and/or advice to provide, depending on the stage of the project. They will reach an agreement with the participant on how to provide the non-monetary Award the best way possible.

The Awards can be divided into different categories, either according to the financial amount (first prize, second prize and third prize), the purpose, innovation or focus of the projects. For example, some specific Award categories may be as follows:

- 
- Award for the project with the greatest environmental focus.
 - Award for the project with the greatest gender perspective.
 - Award for the project with the greatest social impact.
 - Award for the most innovative project.
 - Award for the best technology-based project.
 - Award for the project with the greatest triple bottom line approach (economic, social and environmental).
 - Award for the best project led by women (to promote women's entrepreneurship).

The Awards and the technical and institutional evaluation criteria (see sections on Technical Project Evaluation and Institutional Project Evaluation) must always be consistent. For instance, if there is an Award for the most inclusive project, this aspect must be included in the appraisal criteria, whether it is in the technical appraisal, the institutional appraisal or both.

All Awards must indicate the amount in kind. Special Awards and runner-up Awards may also be awarded in addition to the regular Awards. They can either be smaller in-kind Awards or honorable mentions that promote the winning project for its special dedication.

Donations from collaborating entities, companies or professionals are accepted as Awards. However, the methodological team at the headquarters level must be notified during the design development phase to provide the right financial evidence from external entities.

Event Organization

The following sections provide further details about the steps to take to organize an event. Above this section, this guide provided further information about the design and planning of events. If you are currently working on the design development phase of your project, we recommend reading the previous sections beforehand.

1. PROMOTION

- The promotion of events should start **at least 1 month prior to the event**, to have enough time to carry out different communication strategies.
- The required communication materials to promote the event may include posters (digital and/or printable), roll-ups, award cheques, photocall, diplomas, accreditations or other applications for merchandising material (notebooks, folders, pens, USB, cloth bag, etc.).
- The technical team must create an online registration form for the event using Microsoft Forms or a similar tool. We recommend using a trusted URL shortener, such as <https://app.bitly.com>, to make the web address of the form more memorable and easier to copy by the participants. The shortened URL will be used for the promotion materials (posters, banners, etc.), in social network publications, in mailings to databases of collaborating entities or other promotion actions to be carried out.

2. PRE-EVENT ACTIVITIES

Pre-event group training workshops

To help participants and answer any questions regarding the event, it is recommended to organize one or more sessions prior to the event, either in person or online, to guide participants through the concepts, phases and templates of documents that they must submit to compete.

Bear in mind that it will be the first time designing a business model or business plan for a large majority of participants. We recommend walking them through it with previous sessions such as group training workshops or individual counseling sessions.

Some of the topics to tackle in the sessions prior to the event may include:

- Design of business models with Business Model Canvas.
- Sustainable value proposition.
- Economic-financial analysis.
- Marketing plan.
- Effective communication techniques.
- Explanation of the document templates to participate in the competition: a series of documents are usually requested. The documents must be provided by the technical team to homogenize the information requested from the projects and help evaluate them. The templates can either be:
 1. Canvas business model or Business plan in short and visual format (PowerPoint).
 2. Economic-financial plan, using an analysis tool.
 3. Short video presentation or live speech about the business idea.

Technical evaluation of projects

All projects correctly submitted in due time will be evaluated based on the technical criteria set by the technical team of the organization.

This evaluation will take place the days prior to the event and the templates submitted will be evaluated with a weight of this technical evaluation of 60 to 70% of the total of the competition. Therefore, the institutional evaluation will be weighed from 30 to 40% of the total of the competition.

We recommend basing technical evaluation criteria on the following:

a. Business Idea. Coherence, adjustment of the idea to the needs of the customers, adequacy of the profile of the entrepreneur to the requirements of the business (from 1 to 20 points).

b. Economic and financial viability. Capacity to carry out and start the business (from 1 to 20 points).

c. Video Presentation. Efficient communication, ability to synthesize the business model, coherence with the business idea and economic viability (from 1 to 15 points).

d. Social impact. Ideas that have a positive social impact or contemplate such measures in their different processes and activities (from 1 to 5 points).

e. Environmental impact. Circular economy ideas, circularization strategies or measures with a positive environmental impact (1 to 5 points).

f. Gender perspective. Inclusive language, promotion of equality in its structure and specific measures with a gender perspective (from 1 to 5 points).

3. EVENT ACTIVITIES

The activities listed below are a guide to carry out some event activities. Any other innovative value-added activity that is consistent with the objectives planned in the design development phase of the event is welcome.

As for the presentation of the event, a professional with a dedicated program budget or the organization's team can lead the entire event.

Welcoming and institutional presentation

What you need: a dedicated space for the opening of the event, a contextualization of the objectives, event attendance. Highlight the value of the networking of the organizational entity with funding and collaborating entities. In this activity, representatives of the financing and collaborating entities are invited, together with representatives of the organizational entity, to carry out the institutional inauguration of the event.

Group training workshops (optional)

The group training sessions aim at tackling topics related to the objectives of the event, such as business model design, value proposition, economic and financial plan, marketing plan and elevator pitch.

We recommend that the technical team of the organizational entity lead these training sessions to make sure their instructions are in line with the objectives. If external professionals lead the session, the technical team should set up prior meetings with them to define the content and the objectives.

These sessions should be hands-on to help participants work on their own project and prepare their presentation for the competition.

Marketplace of entrepreneurial projects

The Marketplace of entrepreneurial projects is a project fair site to promote entrepreneurial supported projects that are fully finalized or are in the final stages of their business creation,

The Marketplace gives a space for participating organizations to promote, sell and validate their products or services. It is also a source of inspiration for entrepreneurs who take part in the competition.

Each business has their own booth, where they showcase their solutions. We recommend that they take this opportunity to share feedback surveys and test their business ideas.

Showcase of entrepreneurship projects

The participants will showcase their entrepreneurship project with a short speech (2 to 4 minute-elevator pitch) to the institutional jury and the rest of the participants. Participants are allowed to bring products or physical material for the presentation, but we recommend not using slides to emphasize their speech and communication skills.

To maximize time-efficiency, we recommend not giving the institutional jury the option to ask questions. Should the facilitator want to dedicate time for questions, we recommend setting a time limit for the sake of equality between all the projects.

Institutional evaluation of projects

The projects will give their elevator pitch and will be evaluated by an institutional jury of experts in either entrepreneurship, representation of the organizing, collaborating and sponsoring entities of the event, or representatives of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. This jury must be a peer group with at least one person from the organizational entity's team.

The evaluation will take place in real time with paper or digital templates that include the evaluation criteria. To not influence the institutional jury, the technical team will not disclose prior information on the technical analysis of the projects or their degree of development. The weight of the institutional evaluation will weigh from 30 to 40% of the total of the competition and will be the average of the different people or entities that participate in the evaluation of each project.

We recommend applying the following evaluation criteria for the institutional evaluation of projects:

1. The ability to communicate effectively the business model (1 to 10 points).
2. The added value of the business idea. This can be related to either: gender, social and environmental impact, or innovation (1 to 10 points).
3. The originality of the presentation, amount of preparation, motivation, and confidence that the entrepreneurs project (1 to 10 points).

Institutional Jury Deliberation

This activity is to be carried out at the same time as the one explained below (see *Ice-breaker activities*).

The deliberation is a private meeting between the people who make up the institutional jury and have representation from the technical team of the organizational entity. This meeting is the opportunity to unveil the score of the technical phase in which the templates submitted by the participants were analyzed (weighing 60-70% of the total) and the average of the evaluations made by the institutional jury to each project is calculated (weighing 30-40% of the total).

For a fast calculation of the scores, it is recommended to use an Excel spreadsheet with the formulas that will help calculate the final scores.

Ice-breaker activities

The ice-breaker activities are to be carried out at the same time as the one above.

We recommend organizing ice-breaker activities to help participants unwind and have fun while the jury deliberates after their presentations.

Below are some examples of activities to organize:

- Icebreakers to release stress, teamwork, personal development, improvisation, networking, etc.
- Round table discussion of entrepreneurs who created their business with the support of the organizational entity.
- Escape room or games related to entrepreneurship or the development of entrepreneurial skills.
- A performance by an up-and-coming band, soloist or artist that emerged from our programs or who fits with the concept of the event.

Awards Ceremony

Representatives of the institutional jury, financing and collaborating entities, as well as representatives of the organizational entity can participate in the awards ceremony. The award prize can either be a cardboard check, a diploma or an online support depending on the brand image of each event.

Coffee break or farewell cocktail party

For in-person events and depending on the duration and characteristics of the venue, it is recommended to hire a catering service to offer attendees a coffee break or a farewell cocktail. To do so, first evaluate the available budget and the type of supplier company, prioritizing a company with values aligned with your organization. Consider the services offered by people who have started a business with the support of the organization in your province.

4. POST-EVENT ACTIVITIES

Obtaining feedback and satisfaction remarks

In the days following the event, remember to send to all participants an email thanking them for their participation in the event and asking them to give feedback in an anonymous online satisfaction survey.

Here we share satisfaction survey templates made in Microsoft Forms that can be duplicated and adapted for each type of event. Sending a satisfaction survey is mandatory and your answers will be analyzed later for the improvement of future events.

Here is a satisfaction survey template for online events.

Here is a satisfaction survey template for in-person events.

Acknowledgment to entities

In the days following the event we also recommend sending an email to thank the entities that have collaborated, either in the inauguration, in the institutional jury or in the organization, in the case of an in-person event. We recommend attaching a diploma of participation and photographs of the event (in the case of being in person, or screenshots, in the case of being online) to the thank-you email.

CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES

Events are powerful tools that help the organization show their real commitment to cross-cutting approaches aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. We recommend considering these approaches and integrating them to have a positive impact, both internally (with the participants), and externally (in communication and positioning with collaborating entities).

Gender approach

All events must incorporate the gender perspective in the different phases and activities planned, before, during and after the event: attention to participants, inclusive language and images used in broadcasting and audiovisual media.

Some details to be assessed:

- Consider the option of awarding a prize to the entrepreneurial woman and/or the project with the greatest gender perspective.
- Consider the possibility of holding a training workshop on entrepreneurship and gender.
- Consider providing childcare services during the event, if permitted by funders, to support participants with family responsibilities and promote equal access.

Environmental approach

According to the United Nation Environment Program, a sustainable event “is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

For the organization of a sustainable event, it is recommended to create a sustainability plan, i.e., a basic tool that focuses on the objectives and actions to organize the event in the most sustainable way possible depending on each event.

The elaboration of the plan aims to document the different actions to facilitate its follow-up, to elaborate the post-event report and the fulfillment of the plan.

In this sense, we recommend organizing sustainable events, since it acquires greater notability and presence, offering human and environmental added value where the following points stand out:

- Reduction of negative environmental impact.
- Promoting the local economy through the hiring of local suppliers and entrepreneurs from the programs of the organizing entity.
- Social awareness through education and example.
- Rooting or retention of the population in rural or depopulated areas.
- Recovery of artisanal, ancestral and traditional modes of production.
- Public attention and greater impact in the media.
- Position and improve the image of the organizing entity.
- Inspire innovation through improved management and triple bottom line.
- It shows that another way of doing things is possible.

Here are some links that may help you:

myclimate. (n.d.). Calculate the CO₂ footprint of the event – with the CO₂ calculator from myclimate.

https://co2.myclimate.org/en/event_calculators/new

Additional Resources and Further Reading

- **Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). (n.d.). Community event planner guide.** Retrieved June 3, 2025, from <https://www.lisc.org/our-resources/resource/brief-guide-community-event-planning/>
- **Silicon Couloir. (2020). Pitch Day/Start-Up Challenge Playbook[PDF].** https://wyomingbusiness.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Pitch-Day-Playbook_2020.02_Final.pdf
- **Cultivate Labs. (n.d.).** Pitch event formats. <https://www.cultivatelabs.com/support/ignite/running-a-funding-round/pitch-event-formats>
- **VentureLab. (2022).** Comprehensive pitch event planning guide. <https://venturelab.org/forms/download-pitch-event-planning-guide>



CREASSE.EU



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project number: 2024-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000256807.