



UEA approached Downstream Innovation to lead the design and delivery of an exciting online “sandpit” innovation event. The event brought together social and natural scientists, commercial enterprises, start-ups, government organisations and charities to create new collaborative research and innovation projects in the challenging fields of Diet & Health, Sustainable Food Production and Food Chain Resilience.

‘Sandpit’ is a one-day competitive co-creation workshop where diverse teams from multiple organisations and a wide range of disciplines come together to solve challenges and capture new opportunities over a short period of time. Through a series of facilitated creative sessions solutions are identified, feasibility is explored and realisation plans created. The aim was to accelerate innovation and achieve weeks or even months of progress in a single day.

Downstream Innovations role covered all aspects of creating and delivering the event: designing the agenda, briefing and communications, facilitation and training, supporting technology, ensuring outcomes. The event successfully created 6 new collaborative projects that are being taken forward for funding.

---

“Matt’s meticulous attention to detail and structured approach paid dividends in ensuring that a team of novice facilitators were fully prepared, motivated and confident in their ability to deal with whatever confronted them on the day”

“Matt’s leadership was exemplary. He knew exactly when to hold the line, when to listen to the team and showed great empathy with a group that was encouraged to share ownership of the event”

“The event was fantastic – exhilarating and exhausting in equal measure and, most importantly, great fun and rewarding. We ended the day with half a dozen prototype research projects that stand every chance of progressing, which is a fantastic return on the investment, which was worth every penny”

Andrew Fearne, Professor of Value Chain Management, Norwich Business School

End