



Interreg Baltic Sea Region First call for applications Programme priorities 1-3 Core projects

Announcement Note

Timeline: 8 February 2022 – 26 April 2022

1. Introduction

Interreg Baltic Sea Region (the Programme) is launching the first calls for applications for the priorities 1-3. The Programme is a source of EU funding for public and private players who want to shape the Baltic Sea region to become more innovative, water-smart and climate-neutral. It creates an environment for cooperation across borders to develop, test and put into practice smart solutions for the benefit of people around the Baltic Sea. Its added value is the transnational dimension of the supported actions. The Programme exploits opportunities and addresses issues which cannot sufficiently be dealt with by single countries, but require a joint response by partners from several countries in the Baltic Sea region.

The Programme area covers ten countries. It comprises eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden) and two partner countries (parts of Norway and parts of Russia). The detailed geographical coverage of the Programme is defined in the Programme Document¹ published on the Programme portal at interreg-baltic.eu.

The Programme is designed under the territorial cooperation goal of the European Union.

2. Priorities

The Programme is structured along three thematic priorities:

Priority 1 Innovative societies

Objective 1.1 Resilient economies and societies

The priority is dedicated to actions building sustainable, fair, innovative and resilient economies and communities across the Baltic Sea region. Under resilience the Programme means the ability to respond to external disturbances such as severe recessions and financial crises, downturns of particular industries

¹ The interest of Belarus to join the Programme is being clarified.



or major health crises. Resilience also refers to a society characterised by strong social cohesion and a shared system of values. Thus, the priority fosters experimentation, “thinking outside the box” and working across different sectors to find suitable solutions. It aims to help develop models adjusting ability to produce critical goods in the region. Actions may assist business in recovery, mobilise creativity in increasing societal resilience, develop coordination mechanisms for managing economic and societal challenges. Actions should untap the potential of digitalisation to increase adaptability of the region.

Objective 1.2 Responsive public authorities

Furthermore, the priority encourages actions to experiment with new ways of delivering public services using innovative, data-driven and participatory methods to improve the lives of citizens. It supports testing unconventional approaches to services that reduce costs, bureaucracy as well as make public services more effective. Actions should engage citizens in transforming public services, develop common standards among public administration, test approaches combining research and public procurement to create new business opportunities.

Priority 2 Water-smart societies

Objective 2.1 Sustainable waters

The priority supports cooperation to implement water-smart solutions improving the state of water and making its management more sustainable. These waters include the Baltic Sea, coastal waters and inland waters. Thus, the priority helps prevent and reduce water pollution across various waterways. It encourages actions to rethink planning processes for more effective water management during storms, floods, droughts and groundwater scarcity and to adapt water management practices to changing climate conditions and to use water reasonably. Actions should be cross-sectoral as water resources and catchments are shared by multiple sectors and stakeholders.

Objective 2.2 Blue economy

Furthermore, the priority strives for further advancing blue economy businesses in using fresh and sea waters and marine resources more efficiently while supporting a healthy marine environment in the whole region. It helps create new business opportunities by developing value chains for sustainable fresh water and marine-based products and services and integrate climate change mitigation measures in business development plans. Actions may introduce common environmental standards and clean, digital, eco-efficient solutions. Actions may improve management of sea and inland water traffic and introduce solutions for remote navigational support. As different sectors may use the same resources, actions should help mitigate potential conflicts among users of the sea and land space and facilitate its joint use.



Priority 3 Climate-neutral societies

Objective 3.1 Circular economy

The priority covers actions that facilitate the shift from linear to circular use of resources. This implies keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible without increasing pressure on the environment. Thus, the priority fosters development of new circular approaches and putting them to test. It provides a space to integrate circular economy policies into territorial strategies and redefine smart specialisation approaches to advance the shift towards circularity. Actions should untap the potential of digitalisation as means of achieving a resource-efficient economy in the Baltic Sea region.

Objective 3.2 Energy transition

Moreover, the priority supports the energy transition and helps develop smart solutions to move towards the decarbonisation of energy systems. Solutions to increase renewable energy production and its use should be put to test. Increased energy efficiency in industrial processes as well as in public and private building stock is encouraged. Actions may mobilise industry and citizens to apply energy solutions for climate neutrality.

Objective 3.3 Smart green mobility

Furthermore, the priority strives for green and smart mobility solutions. It supports actions that ensure the smooth movement of people and goods while saving resources by increasing efficiency, integrating different transport modes and accelerating digitalisation. It helps to introduce green and intelligent mobility solutions and test innovative technologies to reduce pollution in cities and towns and their hinterland.

The detailed description of the Programme priorities, objectives and examples of actions to be financed can be found in the Programme Document published at interreg-baltic.eu. The information is also presented at the Programme portal <https://interreg-baltic.eu/get-funding/programme-2021-2027/> and in the tutorials on the Programme objectives published under: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/>.

3. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The Programme actively supports the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its three objectives: Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity. Many of the policy areas of the EUSBSR action plan are well reflected in the thematic objectives of the Programme. The expected Programme's contribution to the EUSBSR is described in the Programme Document and on the Programme portal at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/about/eusbsr/>. The Programme encourages



applicants to get acquainted with this information as well as the action plan to the EUSBSR. More information regarding the EUSBSR is provided under <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>.

The Programme kindly asks applicants to consider the possible contribution of their projects to policy areas of the Strategy and a particular action within the policy area. The policy area coordinators of the EUSBSR (PACs) can help check whether ideas of the applicants are in line with the actions in those policy areas. PACs may give advice and support development and implementation of project ideas that help achieve the objectives of the EUSBSR action plan. PACs may also support policy dialogues in projects and help with dissemination of results. Contacts to PACs can be found at <https://balticsea-region-strategy.eu/contacts/eusbsr-actors>.

4. Main features of core projects

Core projects are the main tool to deliver the change Interreg Baltic Sea Region aims at. All core projects are requested to **prepare, pilot and transfer practical and durable solutions** to the challenges they choose to tackle. These challenges must correspond to one of the Programme objectives.

The main results of a core project are increased capacities of the target groups to deal with the defined challenges. **The target groups** are organisations that have competences to influence the challenge and are interested in the solutions. Hence, reaching out to the target groups and involving them in the preparation of the solution, piloting and transfer is crucial for the success of the core project.

Activities in a core project are **structured in three work packages** (WP): WP1 Preparing solutions; WP2 Piloting and evaluating solutions; WP3 Transferring solutions.

The duration of a core project consists of three phases: contracting phase that usually lasts three months, implementation phase that may last up to 36 months, and closure phase lasting three months.

For further details on core projects please consult the Programme Manual (chapter D) published on the Programme portal at https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/IBSR-2021-2027_Programme-Manual-v1-0.pdf

5. Project partnership

- **Geographical composition**

Project partnership has to include **at least three project partners from three different countries of the Programme area**: a lead partner and at least two project partners. At least one of the project partners has to be located in the territory of an EU Member State in the Programme area.

As a general rule, organisations located in the regions belonging to the Programme area can become project partners. **In exceptional cases** organisations located outside the Programme area can apply as project



partners for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or Norwegian funding. For more details please consult the Programme Manual (chapter C.2.3).

- **Lead partners, project partners and associated organisations**

As the project partnership is based on the **lead partner principle**, each project has to appoint a lead applicant/lead partner who is responsible for the preparation and submission of the application. The lead partner bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The lead partner is also the link between the project partners and the MA/JS.

Lead partners must be legally registered in the territory of a Member State or Norway covered by the Programme area. Where a legal entity is located in Germany or Norway (in the sense of legal registration) but outside the Programme area, it can still become a lead partner if it follows specific obligations defined in the Programme Manual (chapter C.1.2).

The Programme Manual (chapter C) specifies which legal entities can act as a **lead partner** and **project partners** as well as provides lists of their responsibilities in the project. The lead partner and all project partners have a budget and a defined role in the project's implementation.

Organisations not falling under these legal requirements may participate in the projects as **associated organisations**. Associated organisations support the project implementation from their own resources.

- **Participation of Russian organisations**

Lead applicants are encouraged to involve Russian organisations, considering the current conditions for their participation. **Russian organisations** can join project applications as **partners on hold** as specific implementing provisions for their participation are under preparation in the financing agreement (FA) on the financial contribution from the European Union and the Russian Federation. When joining project partnerships, Russian project partners on hold should prepare potential activities and a corresponding budget in the application. Once the FA is signed, Russian partners on hold will be invited to change their status and become regular project partners. If the FA is signed before the decision of the Monitoring Committee (MC) on selection of projects, the Russian partners on hold will be upgraded to regular project partners during the contracting phase. If the FA is signed after the MC decision on selection of projects, the Russian partners on hold will be upgraded to regular project partners during the implementation phase.

The guidance how to involve Russian partners on hold is provided in a separate document "Guidance on the participation of Russian organisations in the first calls for core and small project applications".

Russian organisations can also join as associated organisations, if they do not plan to apply for Programme funding.



- **Competences of project partners**

Project partners should possess major competences needed to deliver the expected project results. The partnership should also involve representatives of the target groups in order to capture their needs during the whole project. Any legal entity falling into one of the legal status categories defined by the Programme can be a partner in the project. However, the Programme particularly encourages public authorities to participate in the project partnership.

6. Programme funding available for projects

The main funding source of the Programme is the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for partners from the EU Member States. The total ERDF funding available for projects for the programming period 2021-2027 amounts to currently EUR 232.4 million. Further funding source is Norwegian funding for partners from Norway. The Norwegian funding available for projects for the programming period 2021-2027 currently amounts to EUR 4.6 million. Indicatively, in the first call for applications the Programme plans to finance 35-40 core projects.

The Programme will also include the budget from the EU Neighbourhood, Development and Internal Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and Russian funding for project partners from Russia. The exact amount available for Russian project partners will be confirmed in the financing agreement.

- **Co-financing rate**

Partners from EU Member States are entitled to receive up to 80% co-financing from ERDF. Norwegian partners will receive up to 50% co-financing from Norwegian funding. The co-financing rate for Russian partners will be maximum 80%. Project partners have to provide their own contribution to receive Programme funding.

- **Reimbursement of preparation costs**

Projects can apply for reimbursement of costs related to the preparation of the project proposal. Only projects selected by the Monitoring Committee can have their preparation costs reimbursed. The reimbursement of preparation costs is a lump sum. It amounts to EUR 24,000 total eligible expenditure, which corresponds to EUR 19,200 of the Programme funding. Projects that have received any other EU funds specifically designed to the development of the respective project application will not receive a reimbursement of preparation costs. For further details please consult the Programme Manual (Chapter D.3.5).



7. Application procedure

Projects are selected for funding in a **one-step application procedure**. A lead applicant must **complete and submit a project application in** the electronic data exchange system **BAMOS+** (ba.bamos.eu). The application form contains guiding questions how to fill it in. In addition to the online application, there are further documents and forms that need to be submitted via BAMOS+ (partner declarations, contact information, bank information). The project application and all further documents and forms **must be submitted by the deadline of 26 April 2022 16:00 CEST**.

The MA/JS provides lead applicants the access to BAMOS+ **upon receiving a project idea form (PIF) and signed request for log-in**.

Lead applicants **must complete and submit** to the MA/JS a project idea form. In the PIF lead applicants briefly describe the challenge, partnership, draft work plan, and planned budget. The completed PIF must be sent to idea@interreg-baltic.eu any time but **no later than 15 March 2022**. The MA/JS provides feedback to applicants via consultations based on the submitted PIFs. The MA/JS aims to provide a consultation to all applicants who wish to have one. An early submission of the PIF will support the MA/JS to fulfil this aim.

PIFs submitted to the MA/JS will be available for the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. Upon applicants' consent, PIFs will also be shared with the policy area coordinators (PACs) of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The Monitoring Committee members and PACs may contact the lead applicants and provide guidance on further development of the project ideas. The MA/JS will not receive information about the guidance provided by the Monitoring Committee members or PACs. It is up to the project partnership to consider how to take the guidance into account.

Any information in the project idea form, including the MA/JS feedback, will not influence the quality assessment. The quality assessment of the project applications will be carried out based on the information in the submitted applications only.

The table below summarises the process of the application procedure. **All documents and forms are submitted in the digital format in BAMOS+ only.**

What?	How?	When?
Project idea form	A lead applicant submits to e-mail: idea@interreg-baltic.eu (PDF template available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/consultations/)	No later than 15 March 2022



Project application	<p>A lead applicant applies for log-in to BAMOS+ via e-mail: account@bamos.eu (template available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/bamos-account/)</p> <p>The access to BAMOS+ is granted by the MA/JS once the call is launched.</p> <p>A lead applicant submits in BAMOS+.</p>	<p>No later than 26 April 2022 16:00 CEST</p>
Partner declaration , signed by each project partner, including a lead applicant	<p>Uploaded to BAMOS+ in the Document Center either as a document with the advanced or qualified electronic signature, or a scanned copy with the handwritten signature.</p> <p>(template available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/calls/)</p>	
Contact information for each project partner, including a lead applicant, and each associated organisation	<p>Completed in the contact & bank information section of BAMOS+ and submitted by a lead applicant after having submitted the application.</p>	
Bank information of the lead applicant bank account		

The MA/JS is responsible for the verification of completeness and correctness of all submitted documents and forms (admissibility check) as well as for the quality assessment of the applications. The admissibility and assessment criteria are described in the Programme Manual, chapter D.2. The Monitoring Committee of the Programme is responsible for the final selection of applications. The selection is planned to take place in September 2022.

8. Further information and assistance

The official language of the Programme is English. Therefore, all communication between applicants and the MA/JS is held in English. Information in project idea forms, application forms and official correspondence must be in English.

The official Programme documents are available on the Programme portal at interreg-baltic.eu and include:

- Programme Document;



- Programme Manual;
- Application package

The MA/JS offers the following assistance to applicant:

- Gateway for applicants at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/>
- Matchmaking platform at <https://matchmaking.interreg-baltic.eu/landingpage/>
- Online tutorials published at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/>
- Webinars
- Individual consultations (after submission of PIF)
- BAMOS+ helpdesk at helpdesk@bamos.eu
- General advice at info@interreg-baltic.eu

Disclaimer:

Please note that the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme Document is subject to adoption by the European Commission. During this process the Programme content might be revised. Timeline of the calls is dependent on the duration of the adoption process.

All documents related to this call for applications are also subject to approval by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. The Monitoring Committee will be constituted after adoption of the Programme by the European Commission. The Monitoring Committee might potentially change conditions of the call.

When submitting the applications, the applicants shall accept the above risks. The programme and the participating Member States cannot be held responsible or liable in any way for any claims, damages, losses, expenses, or costs.