

Task Force Meeting Preparatory Document: Programme countries' perspectives on the third call for core and/or small projects

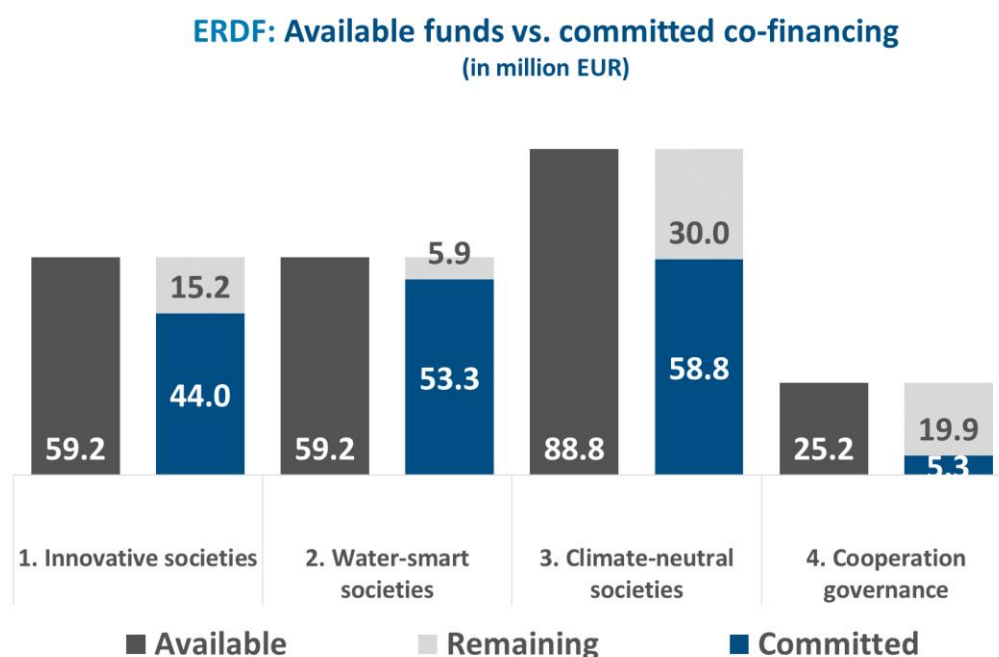
Background information

In preparation for the Task Force meeting scheduled for 4 October, the MA/JS seeks input from the Monitoring Committee members regarding the viewpoints of the Programme countries on the third call for applications for core and/or small projects. The MA/JS prepared this document as a preparatory guide to facilitate this process. The document is composed of three parts:

- Facts and figures on the progress of the Programme implementation,
- Questions to the Monitoring Committee,
- Annex 1 Survey with Policy Area Coordinators of the EUSBSR.

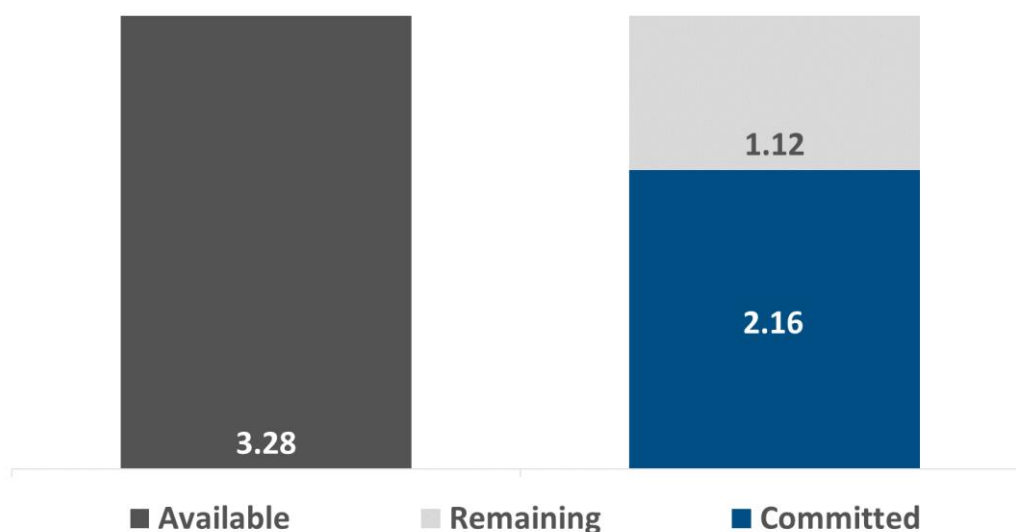
1. Facts and figures on the progress of the Programme implementation

A. Available funds after the first and second calls for small and core projects





Norway: Available funds vs. committed co-financing (in million EUR)



Note: Please be aware that the currently available ERDF funds of 5.9 million euro in Priority 2 and up to 0.2 million euro Norwegian funds have been specifically designated for the targeted call aimed at supporting core projects that address the issue of hazardous submerged objects and dumped munitions in the Baltic Sea.



B. Contribution to the climate change and biodiversity objectives of the EU in Priority 2 and 3

The following tables present the Programme's contribution towards the climate and biodiversity objectives of the EU. The calculation is based on the intervention fields with climate markers that are specified for the Programme objectives of Priorities 2 and 3 in the Programme Document. The Programme is obliged to allocate a minimum of 30.77% of its ERDF funds, equivalent to 71.5 million euros, to projects that contribute to these climate objectives. Additionally, it aims to dedicate at least 7.32%, equivalent to 17 million euros, towards the biodiversity objectives.

| Climate targets | In million euro (ERDF)s |
|---|-------------------------|
| Planned in the Programme Document | 71.5 |
| Achieved in the first and second call | 50.3 |
| To be fulfilled in the remaining calls for applications | 21.2 |

| Biodiversity targets | In million euro (ERDF)s |
|---|-------------------------|
| Planned in the Programme Document | 17.0 |
| Achieved in the first and second call | 14.6 |
| To be fulfilled in the remaining calls for applications | 2.4 |

Considering the earmarked ERDF funds and planned scope of the call for core projects tackling the challenge of hazardous submerged objects and dumped munition in the Baltic Sea, it is highly probable that the Programme will successfully meet its biodiversity targets by selecting suitable applications within this call.

In order to fulfil the Programme's commitment to the EU's climate change objectives, it is crucial to allocate a minimum of 21.2 million euros to climate-focused projects in the upcoming calls under priorities 2 and 3. Only by allocating this specific amount the Programme can fulfil its commitment to the EU's climate change objectives.



C. Further thematic considerations

The project portfolio analysis that the MA/JS conducted for the 4th MC meeting in Stockholm concluded on topics covered by the projects in the first two calls. It also highlighted the missing topics. In addition to the need to fulfil the Programme's commitment to the EU's climate and biodiversity objectives, there is potential to explore the following topics across various objectives:

- Comprehensive approaches to **planning processes**,
- Working with **administrative and legal barriers**,
- Providing **support to businesses undergoing transition** or **addressing sectors of importance** like blue bio-economy,

Furthermore, there is a strong need to strengthen the promotion of **digital technologies**, particularly in terms of **establishing common standards** across different Baltic Sea region countries.

To receive the multistakeholder view on the needs in the Baltic Sea region the MA/JS conducted a survey with Policy Area Coordinators of the EUSBSR (PACs) during the spring 2023. The PACs answered the following question: Are there any specific topics in your policy area that you would like to see addressed with new calls in Interreg Baltic Sea Region? The MA/JS received answers from ten out of 14 PACs (Bioeconomy, Culture, Innovation, Nutri, Safe, Secure, Ship, Spatial Planning, Tourism, Transport). The summary of the answers is annexed to this document.



2. Questions to the MC

To ensure a productive discussion during the Task Force meeting in Riga and to align the upcoming call(s) with the obligations of the Programme and the strategic interests of the Programme countries, we kindly request your input on the following questions:

1. Which climate-related topics could be addressed in Priorities 2 and/or 3 of the Programme to meet the targets set for the Programme in terms of contributing to the climate objectives of the EU?
2. Considering that there may be limited or no funding remaining in Priority 2 after the call for core projects tackling the challenge of hazardous submerged objects and dumped munition in the Baltic Sea, would you support the reallocation of funds from Priority 3 to Priority 2 to allow addressing the climate targets through projects in both priorities?
3. What should the thematic focus of the third call(s) in Priority 1 be?
4. Should the third call(s) be open for both core and small projects? Or only for one type? Do you see a specific role for both or one of these project types?
5. Do you have any further suggestions or recommendations for the upcoming call(s)?



Annex 1 Survey with Policy Area Coordinators of the EUSBSR

Annex 1 provides a concise overview of the survey findings from the Policy Area Coordinators (PACs) of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The summary focuses on the topics suggested by the PACs, specifically highlighting those that align with the Programme objectives but are not adequately addressed by the projects chosen in the two previous calls.

Programme priority 1 Innovative societies:

- Digital innovations and transformation
- Societal security and disaster reduction, involving civil society
- Social and economic responses in peripheral areas to recent geo-political challenges
- Creative entrepreneurship and creative and cultural sector (CCS) as one of the drivers of the economy
- Citizen engagement in establishing green and liveable spaces

Programme priority 2 Water-smart societies:

- Innovative climate solutions and adaptation to climate change (urban, rural, coastal areas)
- Clean transition of maritime sector
- Development of green maritime corridors
- Coastal development in view of new demands for space and climate neutrality (wind parks vs other interests and environmental protection)

Programme priority 3 Climate-neutral societies:

- Citizen engagement in actions that aim for climate neutrality
- Renewable energy planning
- Green mobility
- Connections between peripheral areas and regional centres
- Innovative climate solutions and adaptation to climate change in urban and rural areas