

# Project idea form - small projects

Version 2.1

Registration no. (filled in by MA/JS only) \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Idea Form

Date of submission 03/06/2025

### 1. Project idea identification

Project idea name	Building resilient and inclusive local communities through diversity in volunteering
Short name of the project	ReDi
Previous calls	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Seed money support	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>

### 2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies
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### 3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities
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### 4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Suomen Punainen Risti
Name of the organisation (English)	Finnish Red Cross
Website	www.redcross.fi
Country	FI



Type of Partner	NGO
	Non-governmental organisations, such as Greenpeace, WWF, etc.

#### Contact person 1

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#### Contact person 2

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Which organisation(s) in the planned partnership take part in a project within the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for the first time? Please list the respective partners.

Project is planned to be implemented together with Red Cross National Societies from the Baltic Sea region.

### 5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Diversity and inclusion in local communities should be strengthened to make communities more resilient. This can be done through the development of volunteer activities. The more diverse the group we have assessing risks and planning preparedness, the better prepared we are when crises occur. When the network of volunteers is diverse and inclusive, we understand better the needs and vulnerabilities of different people.

A rapidly diversifying society requires emergency preparedness organizations to also diversify, reflect the structure of the surrounding society, reach all the population groups and understand their challenges. Measures are needed to increase awareness, support local planning and facilitate practical measures to diversify volunteer activities.

The main target group of the project are minorities and groups that are underrepresented in volunteer activities. There will be a specific focus on migrants and people of diverse backgrounds, whose participation in volunteer activities is less frequent.

Research indicates that migrants are clearly underrepresented in volunteer activities. For example, between 2018 and 2024, about 7 percent of those who registered for volunteer activities with the Finnish Red Cross spoke a language other than country's official languages as their mother tongue. However, not all of them have been able to participate in the activities and many report that for different reasons they didn't manage to start volunteering. Possible barriers to migrants' volunteerism include their own perception that their language skills, competence, or education are somehow insufficient. Additionally, they may have limited access to information about volunteer opportunities and may not necessarily recognize the benefits of volunteering. From the perspective of the local volunteering organisers, barriers to enabling participation may include concerns that guiding and supporting migrants would require more time, or that language barriers would pose challenges to the activities. The skills and experience of migrants are not always recognised or they are not seen as potential volunteers, but there may also be a reluctance to change old established practices. The barriers to participation involve many prejudices and assumptions that are important to identify and acknowledge to dismantle them. Even where there is a good understanding of the importance of diversity in volunteering, there is a need for more tools and methods to implement it.

## 5.2 Focus of the call

Diversity helps communities solve problems better and share resources. It makes communities more creative, adaptable, and prepared for crises. For this, trust is needed, and trust is most effectively promoted through meaningful actions. Diverse groups are better at identifying and addressing the needs of all community members. They bring together individuals with varied perspectives and experiences, leading to more inclusive and innovative solutions to challenges. This increases the community's ability to respond to crises and to reach out to all its members.

In line with the focus of the call, this project strengthens local communities' ability to be better prepared, adapt swiftly, respond effectively and recover quickly. In local communities, especially in rural areas, the role of volunteers is crucial in situations of disruption and emergency. Volunteers have knowledge of local infrastructure and extensive networks – they are there already and they know the people. Other assistance may be far away and there can be significant delays in delivering support from elsewhere. For communities to be resilient, everyone must be involved, everyone's need for assistance must be known, and everyone must be reached. This, in turn, requires that local communities and their volunteer activities must be diverse and inclusive, ensuring that all the people and their needs are recognised. The better people know each other, the better prepared they are when crises occur.

## 6. Transnational relevance

The challenges addressed at the local level are cross-border and common throughout the entire Baltic Sea region, and these have also been identified in previous cooperation networks and projects.

Many of the threats faced are common and do not respect national borders, such as extreme weather, cross-border health emergencies and geopolitical tensions. Joint efforts are required as they allow for



a more coordinated and effective response to crises.

As a disaster preparedness organisation Red Cross supports and complements the work of the authorities when sudden emergencies occur. Red Cross National Societies (RCNS), their districts and local branches are present in every part of their country. Movement's trained volunteers are ready to help around the clock, every day of the year, providing an efficient network of preparedness with local knowledge and national reach throughout the BSR region.

Each national society also brings their own experiences, innovations, and lessons learned. Collaborating enables the development of shared tools and training models that benefit all participating countries. Collaboration also motivates the volunteers and staff, who are able to connect with their peers in other countries and mutually learn from each other.

## 7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

N/A

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

N/A

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

N/A

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

This project will apply an innovative approach and aim to demonstrate how diversity in volunteering can strengthen local communities' resilience. The focus will be on rural areas. Long distances and limited infrastructure in rural areas pose challenges, that require a swift local response. In emergencies, such as extreme weather events, forest fires, or health crises, delays in response can have severe consequences. Many rural areas lack immediate access to services and support. A response system by local volunteers helps bridge this gap, ensuring that residents receive timely first assistance regardless of their location. Ensuring that rural populations receive the same level of protection and support as urban areas, promotes equity and helps citizens, regardless of location, receive timely and effective assistance. Volunteers who reflect the diversity of each location

can communicate more effectively, build trust, and ensure that no one is left behind during emergencies.

## 8. Target groups

The main target group of the project are minorities and groups that are underrepresented in volunteer activities. There will be a specific focus on migrants and people of diverse backgrounds, whose participation in volunteer activities is often less frequent, according to data collected by Red Cross National Societies. Another target group is the Red Cross local branches in rural areas, that organize volunteer activities.

Target groups will be actively involved throughout the project in planning, testing, implementing, evaluating and embedding the activities and tools both during and after the project. Volunteers in local branches and staff will participate in training and pilot testing. Volunteers from diverse backgrounds (e.g. migrants, linguistic minorities) will share their experiences and participate in development of the materials. Involving target groups in all phases aims at ensuring that the tools and materials are relevant, inclusive, and grounded in real-world needs.

Please use the drop-down list to define up to five target groups that you will involve through your project's activities.	Please define a field of responsibility or an economic sector of the selected target group	Specify the countries and regions that the representatives of this target group come from.
1. NGO	Target group is the Red Cross local branches and their volunteers in rural areas, organizing volunteer activities.	Red Cross National societies representing the eligible countries or regions of the programme area (tbc)
2. Local public authority	Red Cross supports authorities when sudden emergencies occur. Role is based on national law, regulation and cooperation agreements with authorities. Project builds on this existing cooperation.	Based on participating Red Cross National societies (tbc)

3. Regional public authority	Red Cross supports authorities when sudden emergencies occur. Role is based on national law, regulation and cooperation agreements with authorities. Project builds on this existing cooperation.	Based on participating Red Cross National societies (tbc)
4. National public authority	Red Cross supports authorities when sudden emergencies occur. Role is based on national law, regulation and cooperation agreements with authorities. Project builds on this existing cooperation.	Based on participating Red Cross National societies (tbc)

## 9. Contribution to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Please indicate if your project idea has the potential to contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (<https://eusbsr.eu/implementation/>).

yes ☒ no ☐

Please select which policy area(s) of the EUSBSR your project idea contributes to most.

PA Safe

The MA/JS may share your project idea form with the respective policy area coordinator(s) of the EUSBSR. You can find contacts of PACs at the EUSBSR website (<https://eusbsr.eu/contact-us/>).

☐ If you disagree, please tick here.

## 10. Partnership

Planned partnership: Project will be implemented together with Red Cross National Societies from the Baltic Sea region. Red Cross National Societies are disaster preparedness organizations that support and complement the work of public authorities in sudden accidents and disruptions. In the event of a crisis, help is provided to those in need by trained local volunteers, supported by staff. Volunteers are



recruited and trained to prepare for crises, and they are present practically in all parts of the countries. Tasks are based on national law and regulation. Cooperation agreements between the Red Cross and public authorities are in place both on the national and local level. These agreements outline roles, responsibilities and expectations during emergencies. Cooperation includes for example planning, training and joint exercises.

The Red Cross Societies have a long history of working with social inclusion in various aspects of society, including activities targeted at refugees and migrants. All National Societies have considerable but also varying experiences with these issues. It has been recognized by Red Cross National Societies in Nordic cooperation, that the composition of Red Cross staff and volunteers should be as diverse as each one of the societies – but currently it is not. It is an important objective as this contributes to enhanced legitimacy and increased trust among minorities, and an expanded potential volunteer base.

Collaboration with partners will include development of tools and training models and sharing good practice. One of the objectives is to enable the connection of volunteers and staff in these countries, to enable mutual learning and expand understanding of common challenges and solutions to them.

## 11. Workplan

The project will focus on two interconnected groups of activities: 1) Awareness raising and development of practical tools and 2) Capacity building and training.

The first group of activities, focusing on awareness raising and tools for volunteers and partners, will centre on design and implementation of material, including data and materials for communication, such as real-life stories from diverse volunteers to promote visibility and representation. A digital tool, based on previous development work of digital tools in the Finnish Red Cross, will be developed to provide practical skills for increasing inclusion in volunteer activities. These and other materials together will comprise a toolbox on diversity and inclusion for volunteers. Toolbox responds to the need for practical tools and methods and will be suited to the national context and the local needs of each country, combining and making use of previously developed materials in participating National Societies. Toolbox contents will be shared for use in volunteer activities in all the partner National Societies.

Under the second group of activities, capacity building and training for staff and volunteers will be organised. These will make use of the material developed under the first group of activities, and pilot workshops will be organized for volunteers, to collect feedback for further improvement of tools. Best practice exchange will be facilitated through webinars and peer learning sessions to introduce methods and tools, that will be compiled and shared with partners.

Outputs of the first component will include a toolbox on diversity and inclusion for volunteers. There will be a set of material for awareness raising in each country, including communication materials, a digital tool to promote inclusion, and documented best practices from all participating countries. Outputs of the second component will be training for staff and volunteers, pilot workshops for volunteers, webinars for best practice exchange and peer learning sessions for volunteers. The project



will include pilot implementations in selected rural areas in each participating country, to test the effectiveness of the new training packages as well as the impact of the digital tool and communication materials in real volunteer activities. Feedback will be used to refine the materials and tools before wider distribution.

Target groups will be actively involved throughout the project in planning, testing, implementing, evaluating and embedding the activities and tools. Volunteers in local branches and staff will participate in training and pilot testing. Volunteers from diverse backgrounds (e.g. migrants, linguistic minorities) will share their experiences and participate in the development of the materials. A key goal of the project is to embed its practices into existing structures to ensure long-term impact.

## 12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 480,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 0.00
<b>Total budget (including preparatory costs)</b>	<b>EUR 480,000.00</b>

## 13. Project consultation

Please indicate if you wish to have a consultation (online meeting) with the MA/JS to discuss your project idea

yes ☒ no ☐

## 14. Questions to the MA/JS

Questions related to the content of the planned project	According to the call document, the small project instrument supports, in particular, cooperation between the public authorities and/ or NGOs. We would like to discuss whether our approach is sufficient: as described in this PIF, Red Cross is a disaster preparedness organisation that supports and complements the work of the authorities when sudden emergencies occur. Tasks are based on national law and regulation as well as on cooperation agreements with authorities. The suggested project would be implemented by the Red Cross National Societies and would focus on developing diversity in volunteering to make local communities more resilient. Achieving this goal would support also cooperation with authorities, as a key goal of the project is to embed its practices into existing structures to ensure long-term impact. Is the role of public authorities sufficient or should they have a stronger role in the concrete project activities or in the partnership?
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	N/A







Any other questions      N/A

## 15. Additional information

N/A

### **Your account in BAMOS+**

Please remember that to officially submit your application you need to access our electronic data exchange system BAMOS+. More information about the process of applying for your account in BAMOS+ you will find here:

<https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/bamos-account>

