

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	Baltic Smart Village: Smart rural communities in the digital age
-------------------	--

Short name of the project	Baltic Smart Village
---------------------------	----------------------

Previous calls	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
----------------	---

Short name of the previous project	Baltic Smart Village
------------------------------------	----------------------

Seed money support	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>
--------------------	---

2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

1.2. Responsive public services

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Lokalna Grupa Działania Stowarzyszenie "Południowa Warmia"
-------------------------------------	--

Name of the organisation (English)	Local Action Group Association "South Warmia" (LAG SW)
------------------------------------	--

Website	http://www.poludniowawarmia.pl/
---------	---

Country	PL
Type of Partner	NGO
	Non-governmental organisations, such as Greenpeace, WWF, etc.
Contact person 1	
Name	Iwona Hudź
Email	lgd@poludniowawarmia.pl
Phone	+48 503 169 633
Contact person 2	
Name	Małgorzata Steckiewicz
Email	ms@projectiff.com
Phone	+48 691 930 716

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.

In the planned partnership, the following organisations are participating in an Interreg Baltic Sea Region project for the first time:

- LP Local Action Group "South Warmia", Poland

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Rural areas in the Baltic Sea Region are facing increasing challenges in maintaining vibrant communities, particularly as young people move away due to limited opportunities, lack of tailored public services and weak support ecosystems for entrepreneurship. Despite the progress made through earlier rural business incubator initiatives, many public authorities in rural areas still struggle to identify the most effective ways to support entrepreneurship.

The key challenge that Baltic Smart Village seeks to address is the persistent lack of tailored public services and the weakness of local support ecosystems for entrepreneurship in rural areas of the Baltic Sea Region.

What is the current situation in rural areas in the regions participating in the Baltic Smart Village project in terms of youth-led entrepreneurship support?

- In South Warmia Region (Poland), entrepreneurship support for entrepreneurship development is limited and poorly adapted to their needs. Existing programmes are centralised, bureaucratic and lack flexibility. Key challenges that potential entrepreneurs face include weak internet connectivity,

housing and transport issues, low awareness of available support and a lack of entrepreneurial networks. Mentorship, peer learning and digital tools are scarce, and the potential of experienced seniors remains untapped. Support often fails to respond directly to the real conditions people in rural areas face.

- In Zemgale Region (Latvia), support for entrepreneurship is fragmented and poorly coordinated. Many young people lack the funds, motivation, and knowledge to start viable businesses. The small local market and limited access to funding or guidance further hinder ambitions, especially for those aiming beyond the local context. Cooperative and digital approaches remain largely absent.
- In Central Denmark Region, there is a relatively well-developed entrepreneurship ecosystem at the national level, but rural areas lag behind in terms of youth-focused services. The infrastructure supporting rural youth in entrepreneurship is patchy and less responsive to local challenges. While some programmes and incubators exist, they tend to focus on high-tech or urban start-ups, leaving rural youth with fewer tailored options and little localised mentoring or innovation spaces.

5.2 Focus of the call

The Baltic Smart Village project directly supports the cohesive development of rural areas by addressing one of the most pressing regional challenges which is the outmigration of young people due to limited opportunities, untapped potential of seniors, untailored public services to support them because of the weakness of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

The project strengthens social and territorial cohesion by empowering local actors, particularly young people, SMEs and local authorities, to co-create inclusive, innovative and context-sensitive public services and support mechanisms for entrepreneurship. By integrating digital tools, and intergenerational collaboration, the project ensures that remote communities can access solutions. Through a network of partners from Poland, Latvia, Finland, and Denmark, the project facilitates the transnational exchange of knowledge and scalable solutions, enabling rural areas to learn from one another and implement what works in similar contexts. The development and testing of a Toolbox focused on entrepreneurship and digital service innovation will provide tangible, adaptable resources for communities to revitalize their local economies and retain talent.

6. Transnational relevance

Transnational cooperation is essential to address the challenge of lacking tailored public services and weak support ecosystems for entrepreneurship in rural areas because these issues are shared across the Baltic Sea Region. By working together, partners can exchange knowledge, test innovative solutions in diverse rural contexts and adapt successful models to different local realities. Each partner brings unique expertise, whether in entrepreneurship development, digital tools, business support or public service innovation that enriches the collective approach. This collaboration enables mutual learning, avoids duplication of efforts and accelerates the development of more effective, scalable and inclusive smart village strategies that no single country could achieve alone.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project fosters trust among rural stakeholders such as youth, SMEs, local authorities and NGOs. By engaging them in participatory processes such as intergenerational workshops, local labs and co-creation of digital public services for youth-led entrepreneurship support. By working together across borders, the partners build long-term relationships and shared understanding. It results in laying the foundation for future cooperation in areas such as smart rural development, digital inclusion and entrepreneurship support.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

Baltic Smart Village strengthens and expands existing networks focused on rural innovation by connecting municipalities, business support organisations, universities, and civil society actors across the region. Through joint activities, knowledge exchange, and peer learning, the project supports the creation of a transnational ecosystem that promotes smart village strategies and youth-led entrepreneurship throughout the BSR.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

The project puts citizens, especially rural youth, at the centre of its approach by involving them in designing public services and entrepreneurship support mechanisms that directly respond to their needs. By demonstrating how EU cooperation can bring concrete benefits to local communities, the project increases awareness of the Programme and its relevance to everyday life in rural areas.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

N/A

8. Target groups

The Baltic Smart Village project plan to address different target groups listed below. They have been selected because of their relevant complementary competences and ability to contribute to the project objective of supporting youth engagement and rural entrepreneurship.

- Interest group (youth) – young people in rural areas are a key target group, as they are disproportionately affected by the lack of tailored entrepreneurial support systems.
 - SMEs – establishing cooperation and networking between local SMEs is one of the project's core objectives, as SMEs are the backbone of rural innovation ecosystems.
 - Business support organisations – the involvement of this target group will allow the project to identify good practices and share experience.
 - Local public authorities – as the project aims to improve the capacity of municipalities to deliver more responsive and innovative public services, local public authorities are one of the primary target groups.
 - Regional public authorities – as key actors in developing and implementing smart village strategies at
-

regional level.

- NGOs – particularly those active in rural development, youth empowerment, digital inclusion and SME support.

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. Interest group	Youth active in the fields of local entrepreneurship and digital innovation.	TBD
2. Small and medium enterprise	SMEs operating across a range of rural economic sectors such as agriculture and agri-tech, tourism, handicrafts, green economy, digital services and local manufacturing.	TBD
3. Business support organisation	Organisations which provide advice and services directly to the business sector (e.g. entrepreneurs, SMEs, agro-processors, traders, community groups) in the rural areas to help them grow and innovat	TBD
4. Local public authority	Relevant local public authorities (e.g. municipalities) responsible for innovation, SMEs support (including youth-led SMEs), local business network development, public services for the private sector.	TBD

5. Regional public authority	Relevant regional level TBD public institutions responsible for innovation, SMEs support (including youth-led SMEs), local business network development, public services for the private sector.
------------------------------	---

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 Innovation

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

The structure of the Baltic Smart Village partnership consists of 4 PPs from 3 countries (Denmark, Latvia and Poland), having various backgrounds and. The partnership includes:

- LP Local Action Group "South Warmia", Poland (poludniowawarmia.pl) is responsible for entrepreneurship - including start-ups- support and development in the rural areas of the Southern Warmia region. LAG SW are of influence covers 8 municipalities and 82.000 inhabitants. The Association consists of members representing local authorities, NGOs and private sector.
- PP2 Balteus Foundation, Poland (balteus.eu) – a non-governmental organisation that focuses on innovation, digital inclusion, and community empowerment. Balteus brings valuable experience in implementing cross-sectoral rural development projects, as well as expertise in promoting youth engagement and digital capacity building in underserved areas.
- PP3 Zemgale Planning Region, Latvia (zemgale.lv/en) – An important priority for the development of the region is the populated rural areas of Zemgale, where small businesses develop and the traditional living environment is preserved.
- PP5 Aarhus University, Denmark (international.au.dk) – Denmark's largest research-based university

responsible for establishing Digital Transformation Lab Rinkoebing-Skjern which aims to add new research-based knowledge to the production industry in the municipality, so that companies join the new industrial wave, where the digital world is integrated with physical production.

Possibly, two additional partner from Baltic Sea region countries (Estonia, Finland, Lithuania or Sweden) will join the partnership.

11. Workplan

The WP1: Revitalizing rural communities by supporting public services for entrepreneurship development in Baltic rural areas will consist of 5 groups of activities:

- A.1.1 Capitalisation: Collection and analysis of solutions for supporting rural entrepreneurship

This group of activities will aim to establish the basis of the cooperation between PPs and with the stakeholders. The partners will then focus on capitalisation on their experiences with building smart villages through entrepreneurship support developed within previous initiatives such as business incubators.

- A.1.2 Building: Joint approach and strategy for public services focus on entrepreneurship development

This group of activities will focus on the establishment of working groups made up of stakeholders in each country participating in the project. The partners will organise consultations with stakeholders to discuss their expectations on support mechanisms, digital service models and community engagement strategies.

- A.1.3 Testing: Joint actions for supporting public services for entrepreneurship development

This group of activities will aim to test first version of the toolbox for rural entrepreneurship development through improved public services as a result of A.1.1 and A.1.2. These improved public services might be related to new forms of support, such as digital mentoring, peer-to-peer learning and AI-powered guidance tools that help users navigate complex public information and services.

Project partners will pilot different components of the toolbox, for example:

- Digital mentoring framework aimed at connecting young entrepreneurs with mentors from across the BSR using digital tools.
- Peer-to-peer learning module aimed at facilitating experience exchange between young entrepreneurs (e.g. online meetups, skill-sharing sessions, video storytelling formats).
- AI-guided business support assistant aimed at navigating available public services, funding schemes and entrepreneurship resources in rural areas.

- A.1.4 Improving: A set of solutions for rural entrepreneurship

This group of activities will focus on organising partner working meetings to discuss on the lessons learned during the pilots implementation. The project partners will compare the results of the pilots based on their evaluation reports and individual feedback from the organisations. Moreover, one of the steps taken in this group of activities will be to improve the toolbox.

- A.1.5 Disseminating: Territorial up-take

This group of activities will be focused on organising targeted meetings with policy makers to present project results for ensuring long-term sustainability. In addition, project partners will participate in

external events to present and disseminate project results.

The main output of the project will be joint toolbox for improved public services for rural entrepreneurship.

12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 500,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 0.00
Total budget (including preparatory costs)	EUR 500,000.00

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 *(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*

Questions related to budgeting and expenditure *(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*

Any other questions *(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)*

15. Additional information

(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)

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>

Lokalna Grupa Działania
Stowarzyszenie
"Południowa Warmia"
ul. Łąsy 3, 11-036 Giętwald
NIP 739 36 37 607, Regon 280221505
KRS 0000283938

SEKRETARZ ZARZĄDU

Iwona Hudź

PREZES ZARZĄDU

Tomasz Piłat