



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 Innovative and resilient societies along the eastern border of EU

Short name of the project InnovateEast

Previous calls yes ☐ no ☒

Seed money support yes ☐ no ☒

2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original) Joensuun kaupunki

Name of the organisation (English) City of Joensuu in Finland

Website www.joensuu.fi

Country FI



Type of Partner	Local public authority
	municipality, etc.

Contact person 1

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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.

The city of Joensuu

Preliminary discussions with potential partners in the Baltic countries and Poland have been made. Confirmations about participations from these partners have not yet been received, but they have expressed their interest in cooperation.

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

In recent years, Europe's security landscape has undergone profound shifts due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The geopolitical tensions and emerging threats have had far-reaching consequences, challenging the resilience of individual member states and their cities, influencing their economic stability. There has been a sharp decline in business, travel, and other positive interactions across EU member states, with cities being particularly affected. Additionally, energy market fluctuations, have put pressure on national and regional economies to become energy independent. There is a clear need to find solutions to strengthen resilience, foster economic recovery, and enhance cooperation across borders. Cities play a central role in developing solutions to these challenges, as they can act as innovation hubs, economic engines, and key actors in regional cooperation.

Our concept begins by identifying the most pressing challenges faced by cities along the EU's eastern border (Finland, Estonia and Poland). Based on identified and documented challenges, we would develop a joint strategic action plan aimed at enhancing innovation, resilience, energy and economic growth in the areas that are close to the EU's eastern border. The partners will map and select solutions to be tested in the project. One possible solution is to develop and pilot a digital platform to

enable faster economic growth of the companies in the cities in the border, small and rural areas.

The target groups of the project are local authorities, public service providers, business support organisations and small and medium-sized enterprises.

5.2 Focus of the call

Our application is designed to support the cohesive development of cities that are facing significant socio-economic challenges across the Baltic Sea region. Given the shifting security landscape and economic uncertainties our initiative aims to ensure that the cities along the EU's eastern border remain competitive and resilient. Rather than risk decline, we aim to support their transformation into hubs of innovation.

Based on identified and documented challenges, we would develop a joint strategic action plan aimed at enhancing innovation, resilience, energy and economic growth in these areas that are close to the border area. This plan will be co-created with local authorities, regional actors, and cross-border partners.

6. Transnational relevance

We seek to cooperate transnationally to identify shared challenges faced by the cities in the EU's eastern border and to jointly develop solutions that enhance preparedness for both current and future risks. These challenges transcend national boundaries and are common across many border regions in the partnering countries.

Through transnational collaboration, we can exchange knowledge with cities experiencing similar issues, leverage diverse expertise, and pool resources to create more innovative, effective, and scalable solutions. Strengthening cross-border networks and fostering long-term partnerships is also essential for building resilience and ensuring the sustained competitiveness of our cities. This collaboration will lead to further cooperation initiatives.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

Our idea is to activate a network of cities in the Eastern border of EU to find better solutions to our existing and future challenges. The project will lead to a cooperation that will go past the lifetime of the project. The aim is to continue the cooperation and widen it to other areas of interests and countries.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

Our idea is to activate network of cities in Eastern border of EU to enable better solutions to our existing and future challenges. The countries already cooperate on security and defence issues, but systematic cooperation on innovation is missing.



Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

N/A

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

We learn from each others to find better and more holistic solutions to our challenges. Through the project the cities are more prepared to absorb shocks and adapt to challenges as well as to transform after them.

8. Target groups

The main target groups of the project are cities (local public authorities and public service providers) and businesses in the EU Eastern border area. The project aims to test a solution that positively influences SMEs. Business support organisations and SMEs are involved in the project through local stakeholder groups (workshops or hackathons). Higher education and research institutions are involved in planning solutions to the existing challenges.

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. Local public authority	<i>(max. 200 characters incl. spaces)</i>	Finland (Joensuu and Lappeenranta), others to be confirmed
2. Infrastructure and public service provider	<i>(max. 200 characters incl. spaces)</i>	Finland (Joensuu and Lappeenranta), others to be confirmed
3. Business support organisation	<i>(max. 200 characters incl. spaces)</i>	All countries, through local stakeholder groups
4. Small and medium enterprise	<i>(max. 200 characters incl. spaces)</i>	All countries, through local stakeholder groups
5. Higher education and research institution	<i>(max. 200 characters incl. spaces)</i>	All countries, through local stakeholder groups



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

Our partners are cities close to the EU Eastern border area:

City of Joensuu in Finland, lead partner
City of Lappeenranta in Finland

Following partners still need to be added to the partnership:

City of Rakvere in Estonia? TBC
City of Bialystok in Poland? TBC
City of Vilna in Lithuania? TBC

Discussions with the cities about the cooperation have been initiated, but they have not yet confirmed their participation in the project.

The selection of partners for the project is strategically based on their geographic location, with a particular emphasis on proximity to the eastern border of the European Union. This positioning is essential, as the project aims to address issues and opportunities specific to this border region. All selected partners are situated near or along the EU's eastern frontier, ensuring that they are directly affected by, and actively engaged with, the unique geopolitical, economic, and environmental dynamics of the area. Notably, two of the project partners are from Finland. This is a deliberate and justified, given that Finland shares the longest border with Russia among all EU member states.

11. Workplan

The main activities of the project are:



- to identify the main challenges in the cities that are caused by the current geopolitical situation
- to find solutions to the challenges (workshops and/or hackathons with stakeholders, such as businesses, research institutions and other key players in city development) - output: document summarising the solutions
- to develop and pilot a solution (e.g. a digital platform)
- to draw up a joint action plan for the cities - output: action plan

Target groups are planned to be involved in the project through workshops and local stakeholder groups.

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	Are the planned activities reasonable for a small project? Should pilots be clearly identified already at the application phase? Can all partners be cities?
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Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	<i>(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)</i>
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Any other questions	<i>(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)</i>
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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>