

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	BRIDGE – Baltic Rural Innovation Areas for Development and Growth in Europe
Short name of the project	RuralInnovationAreas
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

3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities
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4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Infrastruktur, Tourismus und Arbeit Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Name of the organisation (English)	Ministry of Economy, Infrastructure, Tourism and Labour Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Website	https://www.regierung-mv.de/Landesregierung/wm/



Country	DE
Type of Partner	Regional public authority
	regional council, etc.
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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.

Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (FI)
 Malopolska Regional Development Agency (PL)

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Throughout the Baltic Sea Region's hinterland, rural communities are challenged by a lack of innovation while being confronted with the impacts of accelerating demographic change. Local public authorities in these structurally weak areas require tools and new approaches to unleash potentials for local development amid scarce financial resources. Community-based and low-threshold approaches have demonstrated their ability to trigger enhanced liveability and thus economic development.

5.2 Focus of the call

The proposed project focuses on rural areas challenged by demographic change and a lack of innovation and aims to propose to local decision-makers a tool-kit of community-based low-threshold approaches to enhance these areas' liveability. These approaches will address using endogenous social

and natural resources while requiring only low financial resources.

6. Transnational relevance

Rural areas throughout the BSR face similar economic and demographic challenges. Transnational cooperation will allow sharing community-based approaches, mutual learning and transfer of good practices through a tool-box addressed to local public authorities in these areas. The transnational project allows bundling successful approaches and the consideration of new ones that have led to successes elsewhere.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

In most rural areas of the BSR demographic change is accelerated by brain-drain of young skilled people and increasing life expectancies. To unleash a significant future potential to address these challenges and to find solutions through transnational collaboration, first steps will be taken by this and other small projects focusing on the specific challenges of rural areas.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR
n/a

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

As stressed in the call announcement note, rural areas are at present underrepresented in approved partnerships, and only a few projects specifically deal with their challenges. Most citizens in the BSR's most rural (peripheral) areas however have not yet been able to benefit from outcomes of BSR projects. The proposed project addresses decision-makers of rural towns and aims at involving their residents in select project activities.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges
n/a

8. Target groups

The aim of this Interreg project is to jointly develop low-threshold support services for target groups in small towns, especially municipalities and their partners from society and business. Together with



these target groups, the project aims to establish the understanding that rural areas are not seen as 'neglected', but as areas of development where potential can be exploited. To that aim, based on transnational exchange and active engagement of small towns' residents, a tool-box addressed to these target groups will be elaborated that focuses on community-based approaches that build on available local resources, including natural ones, while requiring only little financial resources to be implemented.

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	Local public authorities are the main addressees of the project's anticipated output as they are the key drivers of small towns' initiatives.	Indirectly involved in all four represented countries; main target group
2. Regional public authority	Regional public authorities are important relays to coordinate local development initiatives in their areas' small towns. Many regional authorities also manage different relevant financial resources.	DE, PL, LV directly involved; FI indirectly
3. NGO	In small towns with small-staffed local authorities, NGO and informal groups of residents are key partners to implement actions and to deliver change.	Target group of project activities in all four countries; secondary target group

4. Business support organisation	Business support organisations are important relays to learn about the needs of local small businesses and their abilities to provide (financial or in-kind) support for local actions.	Target group of project activities in all four countries; secondary target group
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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 Spatial Planning

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 consortium is led by the department of the regional public authority responsible for spatial planning and state development in Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania (DE), and involves institutions with similar responsibilities from Poland (Malopolska Regional Development Agency) and Latvia (Kurzeme Planning Region). The partnership is completed by the Kajaani University of Applied Sciences that works closely with the Kainuu regional council. All partners involve representatives of local public authorities in the transnational exchange and implement local activities addressed to residents and local leaders from NGO and business support groups.

11. Workplan

The planned project is divided into five activities:

1) Exchange of knowledge and challenges faced by small towns and municipalities in rural areas of the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), with topics such as healthcare, public services, social participation, and digital



tools including AI

- 2) Identification of good practices through dialogue with local residents and community leaders
- 3) Transnational Co-development of a practical toolbox, as the main project output, targeted primarily at local public authorities and secondarily at other local stakeholders. The tool-box will focus on low-cost, community-based approaches using local strengths while also exploring new technological opportunities linked to digitalisation and artificial intelligence.
- 4) Capacity-building seminars on specific topics addressed by the tool-box for representatives of local public authorities and other local leaders of the addressed territories.
- 5) Dissemination to promote the further uptake and upscaling of the tool-box and its proposed approaches.

Target groups such as local public authorities, residents, and civil society representatives will be involved in co-design workshops, feedback loops, and seminars.

The final outcomes—primarily the tool-box and capacity-building materials—will be used by municipalities, community organizations, and local leaders aiming to foster rural innovation with limited resources.

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	We would welcome the feedback and advice of the JS in regard of the proposed activities and the envisaged tool-box as main output.
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	n/a
Any other questions	<i>(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)</i>





15. Additional information

The lead partner institution is the coordinator of two core projects approved in the first call of the BSR programme (HyTruck, GreenIndustrialAreas).

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>

