



Project idea form - small projects

Version 2.1

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

Project Idea Form

Date of submission 04/06/2025

1. Project idea identification

Project idea name	DINO - Digital Incubation for Non-governmental Organizations
Short name of the project	DINO
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)	Biedrība Impact Hub
Name of the organisation (English)	Association Impact Hub
Website	http://liepaja.impacthub.net/
Country	LV



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

Contact person 1

Name	Zane Feldmane
Email	zane.feldmane@impacthub.net
Phone	+37122494616

Contact person 2

Name	Vilis Brūveris
Email	vilis.bruveris@impacthub.net
Phone	+37126132223

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.

Impact Hub Stockholm (Sweden)
Solved (Finland)

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Civil society across the Baltic Sea Region is highly concentrated in urban areas. In Latvia, 44% of all NGOs are registered in Riga; in Estonia, 64% are based in cities. Similar trends are observed in Lithuania, Sweden, and Finland, where the majority of funding, services, and civic activity are clustered in metropolitan regions. This urban dominance leaves rural communities underrepresented and with limited access to locally active civil society organisations. Regional NGOs – especially in small towns and remote areas – often lack the resources to respond to local challenges, despite playing a vital role in community life. Rural areas face growing needs with shrinking capacity. Depopulation, ageing populations, and social exclusion affect many small communities across the BSR. Vulnerable groups—such as elderly people, migrants, and persons with disabilities—rely increasingly on community-level support, but local NGOs often lack stable funding and professional development opportunities. While these organisations provide essential services and promote inclusion, they remain underfunded and disconnected from support ecosystems. Small regional NGOs are essential actors for inclusive development. They bring participatory practices into decision-making, ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups, and adapt broader strategies—such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals—to local realities. Empowering these grassroots organisations means enabling bottom-up innovation

and improving social resilience across the region. This project addresses three core challenges: Unequal support for regional NGOs – most support systems are city-focused, leaving rural NGOs without access to mentoring, funding, and networks. Low digital capacity and limited access to innovation tools – many small NGOs cannot fully engage in online training, services, or transnational collaboration. Fragmentation and isolation in NGO ecosystems – rural organisations often operate alone, limiting their visibility, learning potential, and long-term growth

5.2 Focus of the call

The project directly responds to the call's focus on strengthening the social and economic fabric of small and rural places in the Baltic Sea Region. It addresses the limited availability of support mechanisms for NGOs and civil society actors working in peripheral and under-resourced areas. By developing and piloting a transnational digital incubation programme, the project ensures that NGOs in remote communities have equal access to capacity-building tools, mentoring, and collaboration networks. These tools are tailored to the realities of rural actors, taking into account digital infrastructure, limited human resources, and geographic isolation. Through three pilot rounds in different regions, the project creates real-life opportunities for small-place NGOs to innovate, grow, and develop services that respond to local needs – such as social inclusion, community resilience, or youth engagement. By empowering grassroots actors and enabling knowledge transfer between countries, the project supports cohesive development and helps bridge the urban–rural gap in civil society capacity across the BSR.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenges faced by civil society organisations in rural and remote areas are shared across the Baltic Sea Region. While the specific contexts may differ – from depopulated inland municipalities in Latvia to sparsely populated coastal regions in Finland or isolated communities in Sweden – the structural gap in support, innovation access and connectivity remains a common obstacle. Transnational cooperation is essential to: Compare rural realities across countries and understand how CSOs operate in different geographic, digital and policy contexts. Co-create a scalable NGO incubation model that is flexible enough to be adapted locally, but grounded in shared regional knowledge. Pilot the programme in different national settings to validate its relevance and transferability beyond one single territory. Foster peer-learning and exchange among rural NGOs from different countries, helping them to grow through collaboration and not isolation. Impact Hub Stockholm brings strong expertise in community-based innovation and social entrepreneurship, especially in urban–rural bridging models. Solved (FI) offers digital platform experience and insight into how tech-based engagement tools can benefit civic organisations, even in sparsely populated areas. Impact Hub Liepāja contributes with proven NVO incubation practice in regional Latvia. Together, we will not only develop a jointly owned and tested solution but will also build a regional support network for rural NGOs, empowering them to co-create and transfer knowledge across borders. Transnational collaboration ensures that the project goes beyond local improvement – it builds a replicable, resilient support framework that is applicable across the entire BSR.



7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project promotes trust-building among civil society actors and support organisations in different countries through practical co-creation and mutual learning. By piloting a shared NGO incubation programme and engaging directly with local organisations in rural communities, partners build long-term relationships based on real cooperation. The project creates the foundation for future collaboration by testing a common approach and establishing shared values and working methods that can be transferred into future initiatives in the BSR.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The project supports the creation of a cross-border network of organisations engaged in NGO capacity building, rural development and digital innovation. The Digital Rural NGO Incubator will not only serve participating NGOs, but also act as a platform to maintain long-term connections among support actors in different countries. Through peer exchange and continued interaction during and after the project, we help sustain a transnational ecosystem that strengthens civic resilience in the Baltic Sea Region.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

By directly involving NGOs and community-based actors in small and remote places, the project translates the Programme's aims into local, visible action. The incubation programme will help grassroots organisations deliver services and initiatives that improve quality of life for citizens, strengthen participation and foster innovation. This increases public understanding and appreciation of the added value brought by European cooperation and Interreg support in daily life.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

The capacity of local NGOs enables them to actively engage and act as key players in addressing various challenges, including community resilience and security – issues that are especially relevant in the Baltic Sea Region today

8. Target groups

The project primarily targets non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based initiatives operating in rural, remote, or small municipalities across the Baltic Sea Region. These actors are directly affected by the challenge of limited access to professional support structures, innovation resources, and transnational cooperation opportunities. They often work under resource constraints and have limited capacity to access training or mentoring programmes that are typically designed for urban contexts. The target NGOs are: Grassroots initiatives or registered associations providing local services (e.g. youth work, culture, environment, social inclusion) Civic organisations seeking to improve their operational capacity, digital skills and engagement with communities Emerging or early-stage organisations aiming to establish sustainable structures or partnerships These NGOs will be actively involved in the testing of the digital incubation programme, receiving tailored support and co-creating solutions that match their realities. Their feedback and experience will be used to improve the programme throughout the three pilot cycles. They will also participate in networking activities and

regional exchanges to share good practices and develop cross-border cooperation skills. In addition, the project targets NGO support organisations, municipal-level stakeholders (e.g. community development officers), and regional innovation intermediaries who can play a key role in ensuring that the project outputs are sustained and scaled after the project ends. These actors will be involved in co-design processes and policy discussions, helping to embed the incubation model into local and regional ecosystems. Together, these target groups have the competence, motivation and local knowledge to positively influence civic resilience and innovation capacity in small places across the BSR – and will directly benefit from the project’s practical outcomes.

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	Municipalities and local government bodies responsible for community development, civil society engagement, and supporting local service delivery in rural and remote areas.	Latvia (Kurzeme), Sweden (rural municipalities), Finland (regional authorities in South Karelia)
2. Business support organisation	Incubators, innovation hubs or intermediaries supporting NGO development, entrepreneurship, and capacity-building in community-driven or social innovation contexts.	Latvia (Impact Hub Liepāja), Sweden (Impact Hub Stockholm), Finland (Solved, Helsinki area)
3. Sectoral agency	Regional or national-level development agencies supporting civic infrastructure, rural innovation, NGO cooperation, or regional community-based development strategies	Latvia (regional development agency), Finland (Funding Agency for Innovation), Sweden (Agency for Youth and Civil Society)

4. NGO	Grassroots civil society actors working in rural communities to provide local services, promote social inclusion, civic participation, and respond to local community needs.	Latvia (Kurzeme), Sweden (Stockholm region, Västernorrland), Finland (Southern and Eastern Finland)
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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 Education
PA Innovation
PA Culture

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 project builds a complementary, cross-sectoral partnership of experienced organisations working in NGO support, digital innovation and rural development across the Baltic Sea Region. Confirmed partners: Impact Hub Liepāja (Latvia) – Lead Partner. An NGO support organisation with experience in community-building, youth innovation, and NGO incubation in Latvia. Responsible for overall coordination and pilot implementation in Kurzeme. Impact Hub Stockholm (Sweden) – Brings expertise in designing and facilitating incubation programmes, with strong links to both urban and rural civic actors. Leads programme design and peer-learning activities. Solved – The CleanTech Company (Finland) – Digital collaboration platform developer and innovation intermediary. Leads on digital infrastructure, co-creation tools and evaluation support. These partners represent three programme countries and bring together urban-rural experience, strong networks, and complementary skills (capacity building, digital solutions, evaluation). Why this partnership: Combines practical experience with NGO incubation (LV), co-design and innovation facilitation (SE), and digital engagement tools (FI).

Covers diverse geographic realities (Baltic coast, central Sweden, eastern Finland), ensuring the incubation model is tested in different contexts. All partners are active in rural resilience, civil society empowerment, or digital innovation – making them well-positioned to co-create and pilot a transnational support model.

11. Workplan

The project will design, implement and evaluate a digital NGO incubation programme tailored for civil society organisations (CSOs) in rural and remote communities. The incubation programme will be developed and tested transnationally through three pilot cycles in different partner countries. The workplan is structured in four work packages:

WP1: Project Management and Coordination. Ensures smooth implementation, partner coordination, financial monitoring and quality assurance. Includes four partner meetings (kick-off, mid-term, learning exchange, and final event).

WP2: Programme Development and Piloting. We will first conduct a needs assessment and best practice mapping to understand the real challenges and opportunities for rural NGOs across partner regions. Based on this, we will co-create a modular digital incubation programme consisting of:

Online training sessions;

Mentoring and networking;

Practical assignments for local engagement;

Tools for organisational development and service design;

Three pilot cycles (each 6 months): Cycle 1 (M6–M11): First version tested in Latvia, Sweden, and Finland

Cycle 2 (M13–M18): Improved version with new rural NGO participants

Cycle 3 (M20–M22): Final round to validate transferability and scalability. After each cycle, feedback will be collected and improvements made.

WP3: Evaluation, Learning and Capacity Building. Includes data collection after each pilot, international peer-learning sessions and structured reflection among partners and participants. Outputs will include a final “digital NGO incubation platform” and policy recommendations for sustainability and wider use.

WP4: Communication and Dissemination. Ensures visibility throughout the project. A communication plan will guide targeted outreach via social media, local press and partner networks. A public final event will showcase results and share outputs with broader audiences.

Target group involvement: Rural NGOs will be directly involved in all pilot cycles. They will participate in co-creation sessions, test the programme, provide feedback, and contribute to the final toolkit. Local authorities and support organisations will also be engaged as facilitators, mentors or multipliers, ensuring relevance and ownership.

Final outputs will be used by: Rural NGOs – to improve their capacity and service models. Local public authorities – to support civil society locally. NGO support organisations and incubators – to replicate or embed the model. Policy makers and funding bodies – to understand what works in rural NGO support and to inform future initiatives. The digital format ensures accessibility, transferability and long-term usability beyond the project lifetime.

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 XXX
Total budget (including preparatory costs)	EUR 480,000.00

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	<p>We would appreciate clarification on the following aspects:</p> <p>What level of digital platform development is considered appropriate in a small project – do we need build new modular tools or can we use existing platforms?</p> <p>Is it eligible to provide financial compensation (e.g. small grants or support packages) to NGOs participating in pilots to cover engagement costs?</p> <p>To what extent can mentoring or advisory services be outsourced to experts outside the partnership?</p> <p>Are local public authorities considered eligible target groups if they act more as facilitators or supporters, rather than direct beneficiaries?</p> <p>Are there recommended formats or examples of how to structure the final Toolkit output?</p>
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	<p>We would appreciate guidance on the following financial aspects:</p> <p>Can staff costs cover internal mentors/trainers delivering incubation sessions, or should these be classified under external expertise?</p> <p>Are platform hosting, maintenance or licensing fees for digital tools considered eligible costs?</p> <p>What level of detail is required in budget planning for travel and accommodation if partner meetings are held in rural areas?</p> <p>Is it possible to budget for translation or interpretation costs during pilot implementation, especially when involving local NGOs with limited English proficiency?</p>
Any other questions	(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)

15. Additional information

The project idea builds on the lead partner's extensive experience in civil society capacity building. Initially developed as a local NGO incubation programme in Liepāja, the model has since been scaled and is now being implemented at national level in Latvia, coordinated with support from the Ministry of Culture. This practical, field-tested experience provides a solid foundation for adapting the approach transnationally.

We believe the proposed digital incubation model has strong potential to become a transferable and lasting solution for rural NGO empowerment across the Baltic Sea Region – and could lay the groundwork for future Interreg core project development.

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>