

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	City Hub: Revitalising Small Urban Communities through Culture and Co-creation
Short name of the project	City Hub
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)	Hobro Byforum
Name of the organisation (English)	Hobro City Hub
Website	www.hobro-byforum.dk
Country	DK



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.

Hobro Byforum (Denmark);
 Utopia (Germany);
 mosaïque (Germany);

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Across the Baltic Sea Region, small towns and semi-rural urban communities face a shared set of structural challenges: weakening social cohesion, eroding local identity, disengaged youth, and declining vitality of public life and town centres. In towns like Hobro (DK), Lüneburg (DE) these issues manifest in physical and social disconnection—between residents, across generations, and within the spaces that once served as natural gathering points. Young people, newcomers, and marginalised groups often feel excluded from shaping their town’s future and cultural story.

The “City Hub” project addresses these pressing cohesion and liveability challenges by using culture as a strategic tool for place-making, civic inclusion, and identity-building. Rather than treating culture as a standalone sector, City Hub integrates it into broader community development. It activates local assets through participatory approaches that involve citizens—particularly youth—in shaping shared public spaces and local narratives.

Hobro Byforum has already piloted several promising local initiatives, including:
 Public space art installations (e.g., Midgårdssormen);



Adaptive reuse of industrial sites for cultural use (e.g., Gasværket);
Mentorship and facilitation for young cultural innovators (Young Culture Pilots).

These initiatives show strong potential for restoring a sense of ownership and relevance among citizens. However, approaches remain isolated and untested across borders. City Hub aims to transfer and adapt these grassroots experiences into a coherent, transnational model that smaller towns across the Baltic Sea Region can apply. Through co-development, testing, and scaling, the project will systematise methods for cultural co-creation, urban storytelling, youth activation, and civic innovation tailored to the realities of small and mid-sized communities.

Our primary target groups—youth, cultural actors, civic organisations, and local authorities—need accessible, creative, and sustainable tools to collaborate on shaping the physical and social fabric of their towns. City Hub will directly contribute to the Interreg BSR Programme’s goal of unlocking the potential of smaller and struggling places, making them more attractive, inclusive, and resilient places to live and work for all generations. By fostering transnational cooperation, City Hub not only shares solutions but also amplifies community voices that are too often overlooked.

5.2 Focus of the call

City Hub directly supports the call’s focus by using culture as a practical and participatory tool to strengthen cohesion and identity in smaller cities. Our approach is anchored in real-world pilot actions that combine creative placemaking, civic storytelling, and youth-led cultural programming.

The project will test, develop and establish City Hubs in Hobro (DK), Lüneburg (DE) and Latvia—each adapted to local conditions, but all working from the same core principle: that meaningful social bonds are built through shared narratives, common experiences, and co-created spaces. Each hub activates public space through cultural methods—such as temporary installations, artistic interventions, history walks, micro-events and collaborative campaigns.

The project builds on tested models from Hobro, including the transformation of Gasværket into a cultural commons, the deployment of a youth culture pilot, and landmark events like the Midgårdsmødet project, which engaged over 400 volunteers in producing a unifying cultural experience. City Hub expands this by systematising the approach, documenting methods, and creating a “City Hub Playbook” to ensure results are shareable and sustainable.

We believe that culture, when participatory and locally anchored, is a vital tool for building stronger, more inclusive communities that are proud of their identity and connected across the region.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenges that City Hub seeks to address—disconnected youth, fragmented civic identity, underused public space, and declining participation—are shared by smaller cities throughout the Baltic Sea Region. While economic and demographic trends vary, the social consequences of isolation, passivity and weakened local narratives are remarkably similar. Yet these cities often lack structured



opportunities to exchange approaches and learn from one another.

City Hub creates transnational value by allowing partners to test a shared framework for local cohesion through culture, tailored to the specific context of each participating city. The concept is not based on copying, but on mutual inspiration. Cities will explore how to work with citizens, youth, and creatives in activating urban space and co-producing new narratives of belonging and identity. In doing so, we build a shared knowledge base around how small cities can remain vibrant, inclusive and proud—despite societal shifts and external pressures.

The cooperation allows for the development of common tools, comparable pilot models, and transferable practices. Through physical exchange and joint online workshops, partners will learn to adapt the City Hub methodology to their own cultural-political ecosystem. This process will strengthen local capacity, and at the same time contribute to a broader European conversation about social innovation and identity-based development in smaller urban contexts. Transnational cooperation ensures relevance, credibility and resonance both within and beyond local contexts.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

City Hub builds trust through structured co-creation between stakeholders who rarely collaborate—citizens, youth groups, municipalities, creatives, and civic organisations. Trust is created when people feel heard and empowered to shape their environment. Each pilot involves trust-building activities such as open workshops, shared urban interventions, and collaborative decision-making around content and space. At the heart of our transnational value is the concept: bringing people together from different social, cultural, and generational “bubbles” to foster understanding, trust, and a stronger sense of belonging.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

City Hub creates a living network of small rural cities, cultural actors and civic innovators across the Baltic Sea Region. This network will be formalised through a “City Hub Alliance”, meeting regularly (digitally and physically) during the project and beyond. Participants will share methods, outcomes, and failures, allowing for collective intelligence to grow over time. By focusing on cohesion and identity as unifying challenges, the network bridges national, sectoral, and demographic divides. It will include youth, artists, urbanists and civil society actors.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

City Hub is rooted in citizen involvement. The programme becomes visible and relevant through actions that matter locally—pop-up exhibitions, co-curated festivals, digital storytelling, and temporary interventions that turn underused places into shared cultural spaces. Citizens are not just audiences but co-creators. Each partner city will use inclusive outreach strategies to involve youth, newcomers, and underrepresented groups. Through local labs, citizens will shape how their city is represented and experienced—making the programme part of daily life.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

N/A



8. Target groups

City Hub targets groups that are key to shaping, owning, and sustaining urban cohesion in small cities. They are actively involved in implementation and co-creation, not just beneficiaries. At the heart of our transnational value is the concept: bringing people together from different social, cultural, and generational “bubbles” to foster understanding, trust, and a stronger sense

1. Youth and young adults (field: civic engagement, culture, education)

BSR cities struggle to retain and activate youth. In Hobro, youth have been co-drivers in placemaking and narrative work. Through City Hub, youth will engage in creative processes—story design, art actions, digital media, and events. They help rethink public space and lead the identity-shaping process.

2. Cultural professionals and institutions (field: heritage, arts, museums)

Culture workers are anchors of local identity. City Hub involves them as curators, facilitators, and educators in collaborative programming. They help bridge tradition and innovation, turning local stories into shared experiences across borders.

3. Civic organisations and community leaders (field: social cohesion, volunteerism)

These actors ensure inclusivity and local anchoring. Their networks and know-how make it possible to reach diverse groups—newcomers, elderly, or marginalised residents. They play a key role in mobilisation, dialogue and outreach.

4. SMEs and local entrepreneurs (field: creative industries, tourism, retail)

City Hub demonstrates how urban identity benefits business. Local entrepreneurs co-host events, sponsor creative acts, or help shape city branding through storytelling, connecting commerce with cultural value.

5. Municipalities and planners (field: public administration, urban planning)

Urban professionals use City Hub outputs to rethink policy and space. The pilots offer real-time feedback on public life, citizen needs, and identity tensions—generating insight for longer-term planning strategies.

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. Small and medium enterprise	Creative industries: Local entrepreneurs engaged to generate local experiences	Hobro, Denmark; Latvia; Luneburg, Germany,
2. NGO	Youth organisations, cultural organisations, civic organisations	Hobro, Denmark; Latvia; Luneburg, Germany,
3. Local public authority	Local public administrations in urban planning and development will be engaged to re-think city space for more citizens related activities.	Hobro, Denmark; Latvia; Luneburg, Germany,

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 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 lead partner is Hobro Byforum (DK), an urban innovation NGO that bridges civic, municipal and creative actors. Hobro will coordinate and pilot the concept based on existing infrastructure and experience.

We aim to include:

Utopia Lüneburg is a social entrepreneurship Hub and Co-Working Space in Lüneburg, Northern Germany. It serves as a collaborative coworking, networking and event space where changemakers, entrepreneurs, and creatives come together to build a more sustainable and just future. It offers a platform for inspiration, connection, and impact-driven projects. From 2025 to 2027, the Utopia

launches the Utopia Academy in which sustainable and social startups can participate in workshops to bring their ideas to life. Utopia is part of a big social entrepreneurship ecosystem (university, city, companies).

Mosaïque (DE) – House of Cultures is an open, inclusive space that celebrates diversity and brings people from all walks of life together. Through music, art, language, and shared meals, mosaïque creates a welcoming environment for intercultural dialogue, solidarity, and community engagement. It is a non profit organization, located in Lüneburg, Germany with over 150 volunteers from all over the world and from all societal backgrounds.

- We are In dialogue with:

1. Mötesplats Steneby (SE) - <https://motesplatssteneby.se/>
2. The cittaslow association Poland (PL)
3. Socialinių inovacijų fondas | Social Innovation Fund (LT) - SIF: www.lpf.lt - <https://lpf.lt/en>
4. One other Baltic partner city (we are in dialogue with partner city from Latvia, Cesis), with strong civic and cultural actors.

- Associated partners: a municipality department within urban planning sector, university or innovation centre, and a youth-led organisation from each of the piloting cities (DK, DE, LV)

Each partner will pilot a local City Hub, adapting the framework to local needs. This ensures diversity in methods while creating cohesion in learning and results.

The partnership is built on complementarity—some cities have strong bottom-up engagement; others bring institutional capacity. This balance ensures wide learning and high replicability.

We are finalising contacts and expressions of interest and are open to expanding the consortium to include NGOs or SME actors with strong roots in civic placemaking or urban cultural innovation.

11. Workplan

City Hub is structured around parallel pilot actions in three cities. Each city develops a City Hub—either as a physical node, a project office, or a civic platform—through which activities and engagement are coordinated.

Main activities:

- Kick-off and partner workshop to refine the City Hub model.
- Local co-design processes (with youth, creatives, civic actors) to define narrative themes and space activation strategies.
- Pilot actions: micro-events, participatory art, heritage storytelling, urban interventions.

Cultural Hubs piloted in three rural cities. Each Hub will pilot formats such as public concerts, open-air exhibitions, “Streets of Civil Society” festivals (NGO showcases), youth events, and collaborative storytelling walks. While tailored to each city’s needs, all pilots follow a common methodology focused on inclusion, participation, and local identity.

- Inclusive methods developed and shared across the BSR Drawing on real-world experience from initiatives such as Gasværket (cultural transformation of an industrial site), the Midgårdssormen art project, and Lüneburg’s mosaïque centre, the project will compile a transferrable “City Hub Playbook”. This guide will offer step-by-step approaches for small cities to co-create cultural spaces, involve marginalised groups, and build intergenerational dialogue.

Collaborative knowledge exchange and co-creation workshops: Partners will host mutual learning events to test, evaluate, and refine methods. Activities will include collaborative prototyping of micro-events and shared evaluation of what works in different socio-cultural contexts. Capacity building for youth and civic actors.

Cooperation between youth, local NGOs, SMEs (via partners like Utopia), and public authorities — responding to a common regional need for more integrated community development.

- Final round of pilot activities and joint dissemination: creation of a City Hub Playbook, digital toolkit, and local exhibitions.

Outputs:

- 3 functional City Hubs with public visibility and long-term anchoring potential.
- A tested method for participatory cohesion-building.
- A digital and physical toolkit for replication.
- Increased local engagement from youth and underrepresented citizens.

Target groups are engaged from day one: each city recruits youth co-creators, forms a local cultural board, and integrates existing civil society actors. Municipalities and planners are consulted and invited to use the pilot outcomes in future public strategies.

Final outcomes will be used by cultural institutions, planning departments, educators, and NGOs in each city—and shared with wider audiences through EU-level policy briefings and regional networks.

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 XXX
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	Should we narrow the target to specific sub-groups (e.g. "rural youth aged 16–25," or "migrant-led civic initiatives") to ensure more focused impact and measurable outcomes?
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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>