

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	Increasing the vitality of smaller municipalities through the circular economy
Short name of the project	VITACirc
Previous calls	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
Short name of the previous project	Baltic Sea Region Circularity Booster - Regions and Cities Leading the Circular Economy Transition
Seed money support	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>

2. Programme priority

3. Climate-neutral societies

3. Programme objective

3.1. Circular economy

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Ekokumppanit Oy
Name of the organisation (English)	Ecofellows ltd
Website	https://ekokumppanit.fi/ & https://kiertotalouspirkanmaa.fi/en/



Country	FI
Type of Partner	Small and medium enterprise
	micro, small, medium enterprises
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.

Lead partner: Ecofellows ltd / Circular Pirkanmaa (Finland)

New partner for BSR programme: Peipsiääre municipality (Estonia)

New partner for BSR programme: Fredrikstad (Norway)

New partner for BSR programme: Ostfold (Norway)

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The main focus in the project will be put on small municipalities or communities, that are often overlooked and struggle with quite specific problems. These problems concern economic constraint, population decline, environmental issues and social inclusion. Limited financial resources in these areas can hinder infrastructure development and maintenance while many smaller municipalities experience aging populations and youth migration to larger cities. Also in these more rural areas pollution, waste management, and climate change impacts are significant concerns. At the same time local authorities struggle with ensuring equal access to services and opportunities for all residents.

By implementing circular economy solutions and ecosystems we can tackle these challenges by improving resource efficiency, increasing new economic opportunities while at the same time improving environmental benefits by minimizing pollution and conserving natural resources. Also by encouraging local participation and implementing circular economy in rural areas can enhance community

engagement and new economical growth.

5.2 Focus of the call

Project brings small municipalities with same kind of issues together to share problems and solutions and to help municipalities through found cooperation synergies. Project aims to increase the vitality of smaller municipalities through the circular economy.

Municipalities can implement circular economy principles through various strategies and actions. For example through city/municipality-level strategies, public procurement, urban refurbishment, managing utilities, managing civic waste or engaging community.

Through co-operation within BSR and between project partners the project will search for similar opportunities in other BSR countries and share tangible action and lessons learned. VITACirc project seeks these opportunities and potential of circular economy business in relation to regional development (in particular the built environment in Finland and new opportunities linked to it).

The project includes new project partners in the BSR project and is focused on smaller municipalities and regional actors. It is not only about enhancing cooperation, but also produces tangible outcomes, such as Circular Economy Action Plans for the municipalities involved in the project. The plans involve issues such as the built environment, sharing economy and public procurements and are developed with a co-development methods with a variety of stakeholders.

6. Transnational relevance

Transnational cooperation between municipalities in the project is crucial for developing a circular economy for several reasons. First and foremost through shared knowledge and best practices, especially many of the smaller municipalities in BSR regions feel really alone and would highly benefit from co-creation. There is a real added value when you can co-create with municipalities from other countries and find new perspectives. There are also economic and environmental benefits to be gained with joint co-operation. One of the tangible outcomes of the project is to produce circular economy action plans which lead to greater policy harmonization. Transnational collaborative efforts can lead to more efficient use of resources, reducing waste and promoting sustainability across borders.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

With the project new partners will be able to participate in BSR development and hopefully find similar co-operative models in the future in respective areas and within baltic sea region.



Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

Main aim of the project is to create new cooperation between the project partners (municipalities and regions) and also to find new important partners an cooperation within respective municipalities in the regions.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

Within produced action plans municipalities involved in the project will have a greater tool set of engaging citizens. In Policy action plans possible collaborative decision making methods are concerned.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

By implementing circular economy and circular solutions regions and municipalities can enhance their ability to adapt and develop new solutions in changing operational environment and to strengthen fragile production chains. Circular economy is one of the best tool to enhance self sufficiency and break ties of reliance from external material flows.

8. Target groups

Main target group will be the local, regional and national authorities in the respective regions and municipalities. Relevant NGOs will also be involved. Within the municipalities and regions actors such as publicly owned development companies, local businesses and communities will also be involved.

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	Build Environment, Public Procurement, Strategy development, Environmental development	Finland, Norway Estonia
2. Regional public authority	Waste Management, Strategy Development, Land Use	Finland, Norway Estonia

3. Business support organisation	Local Industry, Circular Economy, Sustainable Development	Finland, Norway Estonia
4. Small and medium enterprise	Build Environment, Local Industry, Service Sector	Finland, Norway Estonia
5. NGO	Sustainable Development, Circular Economy, Build Environment	Finland, Norway Estonia

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

PA Hazards

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 composition of the partners has been planned so, that different size and type of municipal / regional actors are involved. Circular Pirkanmaa, which is operated by Ecofellows (a publicly owned company), is a Finnish regional representative, working together with all the 23 municipalities and companies in circular economy in the Tampere region. In this project Circular Pirkanmaa will target the smaller municipalities in the area (such as Orivesi, Lempäälä, Hämeenkyrö, Sastamala, Kangasala, Pirkkala and Ylöjärvi) and develop a regional and municipal level cooperation model within region of Tampere in Finland, but also with other municipalities in the project areas/countries. Peisiääre from Estonia and Fredrikstad and Ostfold in Norway will represent smaller municipalities in the BSR areas and will also have connections to their respective regions. The cooperation between smaller

municipalities around the Baltic Sea Region is in the core of the project.

11. Workplan

In the project involving and engaging smaller surrounding municipalities for the development of circular economy will be in the core of the project. One important goal is to look for potential of circular economy solutions/themes to increase vitality of the municipalities, with a regional and municipal focus to extend the results to a larger scale (project implementors will be regional actors and cities/municipalities).

Actions:

- Creating a forum for discussion and other forms of participation for smaller municipalities / communities /other relevant local actors (engaging local and regional authorities and municipalities). This forum will also feed information from to variety of different stakeholders to the development of the Action Plans.
- Developing and supporting in the creation of concrete step by step Circular Economy Action Plans for the municipalities to support their policy and decision making.
- Engaging local businesses, publicly owned development companies and NGOs through market dialogue events in the area.
- Organizing larger meetings 2 times a year within each project area.
- Identifying synergies, benchmarking and learning from other areas through co-development and learning event hosted in each project area during the project.

12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 350,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 150,000.00
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does circular economy relate to project aims and are there any specific requirements or needs still to be fulfilled within the project - Any feedback on the project idea, especially concerning activities and outputs
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	- What is the planned schedule of application progress
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	We would like an outline/instruction on budget expenditure
Any other questions	We are still intrested if you have any ideas about intrested partners that share similar goals to us

15. Additional information

We have had preliminary discussions with the partners stated in the PIF but no final agreements have been made until the deadline of the PIF. These discussions will be excecuted by the full proposal deadline.

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>