

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	Harnessing sustainable inland waterways to boost socio-economic benefits in remote regions
Short name of the project	INWATER
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

2. Water-smart societies

3. Programme objective

2.1. Sustainable waters

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Lietuvos Respublikos susisiekimo ministerija
Name of the organisation (English)	Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania
Website	www.sumin.lrv.lt/en
Country	LT



Type of Partner	National public authority
	ministry, 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.

Smart Energy DIH (Lithuania), Birštonas municipality (Lithuania), Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland (Lithuania). We are engaged in finding more Interreg BSR newcomers as project partners.

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The inland waters of the Baltic Sea region - rivers, canals and lakes - have a significant but still under-exploited potential to contribute to the development of sustainable tourism and enhance local mobility. Many of these water bodies are strategically located close to cities, towns and places of interest, but their integration into transport and tourism infrastructure remains fragmented and underdeveloped.

Inland waterway transport is an environmentally friendly alternative with lower carbon emissions than car or even some rail solutions, and inland waterway electro-mobility options are growing. However, this potential for sustainable mobility remains untapped, not only due to limited infrastructure, underinvestment and limited public and private sector attention, but also due to a lack of information and coordination. One of the key challenges for local authorities is the integration of inland waterway transport into multimodal transport systems. For example, there are no well-developed interchanges between waterborne transport and rail or urban public transport, which makes transport journeys inconvenient, long or simply impractical for the user.

Inland waterway transport is relatively slow compared to the speed of cars or trains. Although this may be disadvantageous for daily transport, this feature can be seen as an advantage for the development of slow tourism and recreation. Slow travel through scenic areas can offer a unique experience, but it requires a targeted concept, marketing and infrastructure.

There is currently a lack of a coordinated strategic approach to integrating inland waterways into regional development plans, resulting in fragmented policies, underinvestment in water-based infrastructure, and missed opportunities to use inland water transport as a sustainable alternative in regional mobility systems. This limits the ability of national public authorities to align transport, tourism, and environmental goals, especially in remote or rural areas.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project aims to analyse best practices in inland waterway mobility promotion and to develop an interactive platform with demonstration examples, including:

- An interactive tourism and connectivity map showing possible routes, attractions and service providers along the inland water bodies;
- A trip planning tool allowing users to choose the most appropriate waterborne means of transport (e. g. kayak, motorboat, passenger ferry) according to the desired destination, duration or type of activity (recreation, transport, sightseeing or green tourism);
- A database of best practices, presenting successful examples of inland waterway use from the Baltic Sea Region.

The aim of this platform is to support rural public authorities in finding the ways on how to promote the inland waterway mobility that would (1) improve the quality of life and recreation of local residents (2) attract tourism (3) contribute to local economic and social development (4) act as a sustainable traveling alternative.

The project will be focusing on rural regions that are remote to urban centers and lack of capacity to introduce sustainable inland water mobility solutions. These areas have the biggest potential to make a positive change towards their local communities, as the untapped opportunities are diverse.

6. Transnational relevance

Baltic sea region is rich in water resources and many regions are able to exploit this natural resource to achieve socio-economic benefits. However, these practices are not widespread in all rural areas due to limited knowledge and best practice transfer, as well as lack of cooperation and institutional capacities. Therefore, addressing the challenge of sustainable inland waterway management in rural areas requires transnational cooperation. As this project is strongly focusing on good practices' analysis and their tailoring to different rural settings, cooperation among countries ensures a wider access to knowledge pool and expertise.

The project also focuses on enhancing the attractiveness of rural regions by promoting tourism, which can be more effectively promoted through transnational networks and partnerships.



7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project will build trust by involving partners in co-creating tools and sharing real data from the start. Joint work on maps, planning tools, and best practices will ensure transparency and shared results. Regular exchanges will deepen understanding and show the value of collaboration. By spotlighting local success stories, the project will create a solid base for future cross-border initiatives driven by tested work formats.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

INWATER will build a practical network of public authorities from Baltic Sea regions to promote sustainable inland waterway use in remote areas. Partners will jointly develop digital tools and explore concrete best practices, enabling efficient knowledge transfer and replication. A shared platform, regular exchanges, and targeted workshops will keep the network active and focused on real implementation needs. The project lays the groundwork for future joint actions, reinforcing regional connectivity and low-emission transport in underserved areas.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

INWATER will connect the Programme to citizens by delivering tools they can use: an interactive map and a trip planner. It will promote local inland waterway travel, highlight regional assets, and support eco-friendly tourism. With active communication and access to practical tools, the project will make BSR cooperation visible, useful, and relevant in everyday life—especially for residents in remote areas.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

N/A

8. Target groups

The project targets local and national public authorities responsible for regional development, transport, tourism, infrastructure, and environmental planning. These actors are directly affected by the challenge of limited connectivity and underused inland waterways in remote regions. They have the mandate and capacity to influence local mobility strategies, tourism infrastructure, and sustainable transport policies. Through active participation in mapping, developing tools, and sharing best practices, these authorities will shape project outcomes and ensure their integration into long-term planning. Their involvement guarantees that the solutions respond to real territorial needs and can be scaled or replicated beyond the project area.

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	Rural-centric and remote local authorities (e.g., small towns with districts or several villages).	Lithuania, Latvia, Poland
2. National public authority	National authorities, responsible for mobility, transportation, tourism, regional development or similar areas.	Lithuania, Latvia, Poland

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 Transport

PA Tourism

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

LP01 - Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania (LT). Lead Partner. Responsible for overall project coordination, platform concept development (A4), and leading the policy integration activity (A7). The Ministry will ensure alignment with national transport strategies and support upscaling of project outcomes.

PP02 - Birštonas Municipality (LT). Regional implementation partner. The municipality will leads the



local-level analysis and testing of mobility solutions (A1), contribute tourism and service data for the platform (A5), and hosts local workshops. As a riverside municipality, Birštonas represents smaller towns with untapped inland waterway potential.

PP03 - Smart Energy DIH (LT). Innovation and capacity-building partner. The DIH will lead the collection of best practices (A2) and deliver capacity-building workshops (A3). Their expertise in green technologies and digital innovation ensures technical quality and relevance in mobility and energy integration.

PP04 - Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland (PL). Policy partner. The Ministry will support cross-border knowledge transfer and contribute to the development of policy guidelines (A7). It will provide insights into regional policy coordination and represent broader interests of Polish regions seeking sustainable rural mobility solutions.

We are planning to involve at least two municipalities as partners, one from Latvia, and one from Poland. As associated partners, we plan to include local tourism and information centres, as well as municipalities in other BSR countries, and networks of municipalities. All municipalities will be remote and have significant inland waters in their areas.

11. Workplan

Foreseen activities:

A1. Situation analysis. Each partner region will assess local inland waterways' characteristics—navigable stretches, existing transport routes, port and dock infrastructure, intermodal links, and residents' mobility needs. Using these data and examples gathered in A2, partners will model viable waterway routes during two local workshops per region and one transnational workshop.

A2. Best practice collection. PP will identify, structure, and analyze successful cases of inland waterway use for local mobility in the Baltic Sea Region. These concrete examples will guide route modeling in A1 and be integrated into the interactive platform, providing authoritative references for other authorities and development organizations.

A3. Capacity building. PP will organize two workshops for all partners to deepen their expertise in sustainable transport solutions—covering electric and low-emission watercraft, intermodal integration, and data-driven planning. This shared knowledge ensures partners can apply modeled routes and contribute effectively to platform design.

A4. Platform concept development. LP will convene a dedicated workshop to define the interactive platform's scope—clarifying required functionality, data architecture, user experience, and technical approach (web portal, mobile app, or both). Decisions will build on insights from the situational analysis and capacity-building sessions.

A5. Content development. Each region will compile geospatial and tourism data—mapping routes, service providers, and attractions—to populate the tourism map and trip-planning tool. PP will draft concise best practice descriptions. All partners will produce visual assets (illustrations, videos) to ensure consistent branding and user engagement across the platform.

A6. Communication and sustainability. PP will manage dissemination—sharing platform access and promotional materials with local and national authorities, stakeholder networks, and relevant NGOs. Ongoing engagement activities will encourage continued platform use after project closure.

A7. Policy integration. Drawing on the platform, best practices, and lessons learned from joint activities, LP—together with all partners—will draft policy guidelines. These guidelines will advise local

and national authorities on promoting sustainable inland waterway use to stimulate economic growth and reduce transport emissions.

Local and national public authorities will be directly involved in all activities—from providing data and best practices to shaping the platform and participating in workshops. Their input ensures that project outputs meet real planning needs and are integrated into mobility strategies.

INWATER will deliver an interactive platform with a tourism map, trip planner, and best practice database, supporting local authorities in developing inland waterway mobility. National authorities will gain policy guidelines to align regional practices with with sustainable transport goals.

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	<p>Is provided partnership structure rationale clear?</p> <p>What is expected from the final result? Should we develop a fully functional interactive platform or can we create a platform mockup and instead allocate more resource for co-designing activities and methods?</p>
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	<p>What is the adequate proportion of external service costs in the project budget?</p>
Any other questions	<p>We are planning to submit two projects with the same LP but under different priorities. Does this give any disadvantages in the selection procedure?</p> <p>Can project duration be shorter than 24 months, e.g., 18 months?</p> <p>What proportion of Interreg BSR newcomers is desired? Will you give more advantage to proposals that have a higher amount of them?</p>

15. Additional information

N/A

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>