



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 Culture for Resilience of Local Communities at the EU External Border

Short name of the project CULTU-RE-SILIENCE

Previous calls yes ☐ no ☒

Seed money support yes ☐ no ☒

2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original) Latgales Plānošanas reģions

Name of the organisation (English) Latgale Planning Region

Website <https://lpr.gov.lv/en/>

Country LV



Type of Partner	Regional public authority
	regional council, 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.

All partners have been previously involved in the projects funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme.

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The project will aim to improve social and cultural resilience of communities residing in the regions located along the EU external border with Russia and Belarus, encouraging strong social cohesion and shared system of European values.

The invasion of Russia into Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has not only completely changed the geopolitical situation in Europe “defining” Russia and Belarus as aggressor countries, but also made the local communities that reside near the border with these countries especially vulnerable and perplexed. The long built relationship and connections with the neighbours across the border have collapsed turning “friends” into “enemies” and cutting the long rooted cooperation ties that has left these communities confused.

The new situation has strongly influenced local economies and trade that has been developed for these border areas over the years, especially since many goods and services have been cheaper across the border and have been a vital survival aspect for these comparatively not so well-off remote communities. Many of the border crossing points has been either closed or the movement across the

border eliminated, thus causing frustration.

It also questioned social and cultural belonging of these communities causing an identity crisis for many people, as they still have their family members and friends across the border. Also, many, especially the Russian speaking population still feel strong ties with Russia and Belarus and “live” in the cultural and media space of the aggressor countries. These aspects and nostalgia in certain groups of local communities of the border areas are actively cultivated and used by Russia and Belarus in their propaganda. Also the increasing hybrid-war through, e.g., attacks to the EU external border and purposely organised illegal migrant flows, development of the network of their allies in the EU or the so-called “fifth column”, recruiting people to organise acts of sabotage, etc. puts a lot of social and psychological pressure on the local communities and causes overall vulnerability of the EU external border.

Thus, the project will work with these local rural communities making them more resilient and strengthen their identity based on common European values, thus improving their ability to respond to any unexpected shocks and potential external disturbances from the aggressor countries.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project will use the language of culture to actualise the challenges of living close to the EU external border with the aggressor countries through improving social and cultural resilience of the local communities residing in four regions along the physical border with Russia and Belarus – Latgale region in Latvia, Utena region in Lithuania, Võru County in Estonia and Etelä-Karjala (South Karelia) region in Finland.

Culture has a unique ability to strengthen resilience of people and local communities - especially in the border areas where social and political changes can affect the daily lives of residents. Culture can help local communities to deal with the reality around them, create a sense of community and find new ways to adapt to changes, such as

- Sharing stories and strengthening identities highlight the experiences, cultural heritage and history of local people, giving people a deeper connection to their environment and helping them understand their role in a changing world.
- Dealing with trauma and change by using art as a form of therapy help individuals and communities to deal with the challenges of border areas, such as insecurity, and social and political tensions.
- Creating new perspectives and innovations encourage creative thinking and open dialogue helping local communities in the border regions to develop new ways of adapting and thriving in challenging circumstances.

6. Transnational relevance

All 4 regions share a common EU external border with Russia and Belarus and face similar social, cultural and economic challenges, yet each of them have their own experiences in dealing with them. For building a strong northern part of the EU external border and resilient local communities residing in these border areas, the individual experiences of the project partners would need to be combined and these communities united. Joint arts and culture projects is a powerful tool for bringing local



communities from different regions together, strengthen their sense of belonging and help to address common challenges. Cross-border cooperation offers an opportunity to better understand and experience the culture of local communities in another country that face similar challenges, and it strengthens the feeling of belonging to a larger EU family.

Based on previous experience of the partners from the border regions of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, the project intends to develop common approaches and models on how to use culture for strengthening the resilience of local communities, and involve local cultural actors in addressing specific challenges that living at the EU external border with the aggressor countries put on the local communities.

The transnational cooperation will allow developing and exploring a wider range of possible cultural activities and create the network of “actors” that can contribute to strengthening the resilience of local communities. The cooperation will also allow for testing different approaches and models through pilot actions involving communities at different locations of the EU external border through, i. e., creative laboratories on generating innovative ideas for organising local cultural life in remote border areas, community-based experimental residencies to promote regional resilience, use of art therapy to release socio-political tension, and more active involvement of creative entrepreneurs in fostering a sense of community.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

N/A

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The project intends to bring together different types of cultural organisations, enterprises and actors that are located along the external EU border with Russia and Belarus thus creating a new network that through cooperation and cultural activities would strengthen the resilience of the northern part of the EU border with the aggressor countries. The members of the network will be offered capacity building activities on how to speak about the topics relevant for small communities located in the border areas through culture and art, and organise local cultural activities in remote and rural areas.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

As part of testing and piloting the developed approaches and models, the project will organise different types of cultural activities that “speak” about the topics that are relevant for the local communities in the border areas touching such themes as the feeling of insecurity, social and political tensions, cultural identity, sense of belonging to the community, media literacy in the era of propaganda, practical challenges of living next to the border with the aggressor countries, etc.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

N/A

8. Target groups

The main target group of the project will be cultural institutions and local culture providers in the border areas of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, such as cultural institutions including local cultural houses, museums, etc., cultural enterprises, and individual artists, craftsmen, managers of cultural activities, etc. These actors will form a new network of cultural institutions located at the EU external border and will be prepared by the project to “speak” about the topics of social and cultural resilience of local communities in the border areas using the “language of culture” and organise pilot activities for their local communities.

The indirect target group will be wider public, namely, local communities including those residing in remote, small rural areas near the EU external border that will be involved in and benefit from the cultural activities that will be organised in the respective border areas as part of the project’s pilot activities.

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 cultural institutions, i.e., cultural departments of local authorities, cultural houses, museums, etc.	Latgale region in Latvia, Utena region in Lithuania, Võru County in Estonia and Etelä-Karjala (South Karelia) region in Finland
2. Interest group	Local culture providers, such as individual artists, craftsmen, managers of cultural activities, etc.	Latgale region in Latvia, Utena region in Lithuania, Võru County in Estonia and Etelä-Karjala (South Karelia) region in Finland

3. Small and medium enterprise	Enterprises of creative industries involved in provision of local cultural activities and services, i.e., in craftsmanship, digital art, etc.	Latgale region in Latvia, Utena region in Lithuania, Võru County in Estonia and Etelä-Karjala (South Karelia) region in 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 Culture

PA Safe

PA Secure

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 partnership is composed of 4 partner institutions from 4 BSR countries – each representing a different region of the northern part of the physical EU external border with Russia and Belarus and a specific field of expertise that will all be combined for implementation of the project activities:

(1) Latgale Planning Region in Latvia (Lead partner) having borders with both – Russia and Belarus, is an umbrella organisation representing 9 municipalities of Latgale region and supporting development activities in different sectors through various CBC projects with the neighbouring, as well as other EU countries. It specialises in establishment of joint networks to improve the public services and helps public institutions and entities at local and regional level, in rural areas and cities to solve similar challenges caused by different external challenges.

(2) Anykščiai Art Incubator - Art Studio in Lithuania, located in Anykščiai of Utena Region that borders Belarus, promotes creative business and ecosystems, mobilises different types of art and craft makers, and investigates various levels of complex interactions between local society and art society in Utena

region.

(3) LAB University of Applied Sciences, Institute of Design and Fine Arts in Finland, located in Lappeenranta of the region of Etelä-Karjala in Finland has 1343.6 kilometres long border with Russia on both - land and maritime. The University focuses on innovation, business and industry and depicts an active approach where different people and experts create something new together with business enterprises. With over 8 500 students, it is the 6th largest university of applied sciences in Finland.

(4) Development Centre of Võru County in Estonia having a border with Russia is formed by 5 local governments of the county. It ensures comprehensive and systematic development of the county and entrepreneurship by supporting private, public and third sector organisations and individuals with various services.

All project partners will be actively involved and contribute to the joint project activities – development of joint approach for cultural activities on resilience and the programme for capacity building, as well as organise project activities at their locations – capacity building for local cultural actors and pilot activities for local communities. All partners will also contribute to development of the action plan for future cultural activities, project management and communication.

11. Workplan

The project will be organised around the following set of activities:

(1) Development of approach and models on how to use culture for strengthening the resilience of local communities, and more active involvement of local cultural institutions. This will be organised through joint partner workshops and experience exchange trips, where the project partners will jointly discuss the issues of global/European approach to local culture, crisis management and innovative environmentally-friendly solutions and how these could be integrated in local cultural activities contributing to strengthening the well-being and the European identity of local communities residing at the EU external border. Through mutual cooperation, the partners will develop different approaches and models for local cultural activities that will be piloted at each partner location through involvement of local culture providers.

(2) Capacity building activities for cultural institutions and local culture providers through trainings, exchange visits to project partners, etc. The project partners will develop and implement a capacity building and mentoring programme for local culture providers - cultural institutions and individual artists, craftsmen, managers of cultural activities, etc. who will be prepared for piloting the developed approaches and models for local cultural activities - a different model for each partner location (e.g., creative laboratories and symposiums in Latvia, art residencies in Finland, creative workshops mixing craftsmanship and art therapy in Lithuania, and more active involvement of creative entrepreneurs in Estonia).

(3) Pilot activities in project partner regions to test these developed solutions on how different cultural activities could contribute to more resilient local communities and strengthen their identity based on common European values, culture and heritage. These activities (e.g., creative laboratories and symposiums in Latvia, art residencies in Finland, creative workshops mixing craftsmanship and art



therapy in Lithuania, activities involving creative entrepreneurs in fostering a sense of community in Estonia) will involve local cultural institutions/ culture providers and local communities, as well as cooperation aspects with the project partners.

(4) Elaboration of guidelines and action plan for continuation of cultural activities in strengthening the resilience of remote local communities located at the EU external border that are organised by local cultural institutions/providers. The guidelines will document the implementation process and results from piloting different cultural activities at each partner location and draw conclusions and recommendations for further work with local communities by strengthening their identity through different cultural activities.

(5) Communication and promotion of project activities.

(6) Project management with coordination of work through project partner meetings and regular communication.

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	1) Is the project focus appropriate in relation to the call and programme priorities, is it clear?
	2) Is the proposed set-up of the work plan adequately designed and what is the expected level of details describing each activity in the full proposal?
	3) The set project target groups do not exactly correspond to the list of target groups from the drop-down menu, for example, it does not include wider society / citizens. Please advise.

Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	4) What is an overall impression of the initial project idea - any comments/suggestions would be very welcomed. Taking into account the simple set-up of the budget for small projects, please advise on how to better plan all the other costs for the project activities that are not staff costs.
Any other questions	Any other feedback and recommendations on how to improve the overall project design that corresponds to the BSR programme priorities and expectations would be very welcomed.

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>