



# 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	Evidence-Informed Practice Manual for School Social Workers
Short name of the project	Guide4Welfare Manual
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
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### 3. Programme objective

1.2. Responsive public services
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### 4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Turun ammattikorkeakoulu
Name of the organisation (English)	Turku University of Applied Sciences
Website	<a href="https://www.turkuamk.fi/">https://www.turkuamk.fi/</a>
Country	FI



Type of Partner	Higher education and research institution
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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.

Umeå universitet, Sweden (confirmed, partner)

Potsdam Fachhochschule, Germany; Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway (participation to be officially confirmed); pilot schools in rural municipalities in Finland, Sweden, Germany and Norway

### 5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The proposed project "Evidence-Informed Practice Manual for School Social Workers" (Guide4Welfare Manual) responds to a lack of a unified, evidence-informed, and contextually adapted framework to support school social workers (Fin. koulukuraattorit) in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany. These professionals face growing and complex challenges in supporting children and youth, such as bullying, anxiety, behavioral difficulties, and family disruptions.

To enhance professional practice, there is a pressing need for effective, research-based interventions across these countries. This project fosters international collaboration to develop a transnational perspective on improving public services for children and youth. It aims to provide practical tools tailored specifically for school social workers.

This support is particularly crucial in smaller rural areas, where established practices for addressing common European challenges—such as the integration of migrants—are less developed than in urban

centers. These disparities affect the responsiveness and effectiveness of school welfare services.

Through transnational collaboration, the project will collect, refine, and adapt approaches and methods to fit the educational and student support systems in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Germany.

## 5.2 Focus of the call

This project fosters cohesive development by improving the quality of psychosocial support for young people in schools across Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Germany. It places particular emphasis on smaller municipalities and rural areas, where access to resources and specialist services is often limited.

To promote equal access to services, the project is developing a practical, user-friendly manual of Evidence-Informed Practices. This guide will help school professionals implement effective, context-sensitive interventions tailored to their communities.

The initiative prioritizes early intervention, active collaboration with families, and a deep respect for regional and cultural diversity. Through these efforts, it aims to strengthen wellbeing and resilience within school communities. This is especially relevant in small and rural areas, where cultural diversity may be more pronounced than in urban centers and could negatively impact the well-being of migrant youth.

## 6. Transnational relevance

Cooperation with partners from other Baltic Sea countries enables mutual learning, the exchange of best practices, and the development of a regionally adapted framework. Many countries in the Baltic Sea Region face similar challenges in school-based social work due to the growing demand for youth support services. Transnational cooperation can foster innovative approaches to enhancing local public services by deepening the understanding of the specific characteristics and roles of school social work in Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Germany. For instance, it can help identify effective strategies to support youth in rural schools who face common European challenges, such as developing language skills after migration—an issue that significantly affects their well-being and social intergration.

In Finland, the profession and training of school social workers are still relatively new. Therefore, insights gained through collaboration with other European and Baltic Sea Region countries can contribute to the advancement of training programs and professional practices. Within the scope of this project proposal, a transnational approach will enhance the quality and applicability of school social work methods, including the development of a practical manual. Moreover, the collaboration will strengthen professional networks and support the creation of scalable models that can be adapted across the Baltic Sea region.



## 7. Specific aims to be addressed

### Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

There is a growing interest in evidence-informed social work among school social workers. Creating a manual for them could help increase interest in the welfare sector and encourage collaboration with our institution and others in the future.

### Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The planned project consortium will establish a valuable network within the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) in the field of Responsive Public Services, with a particular focus on expertise related to the well-being of young people.

### Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

By supporting the everyday work of school social workers, the project directly contributes to student well-being and educational equity. By working in rural and local schools, we can promote this program at the grassroots level, fostering engagement within schools and local communities.

### Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

There is growing concern about the well-being of young people in schools, and this manual can provide practical methods to support their mental health and overall welfare, also as a response to unpredictable and urgent challenges.

## 8. Target groups

### 1. School social workers / Social work and teacher training institutions

Field: Student welfare services / Educational development

Countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany

### 2. Special education professionals and school psychologists

Field: Student wellbeing and inclusive education

Countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany

### 3. Municipal education administrators

Field: Education governance and service design

Countries: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany

Additionally: Parents' associations and youth advocacy groups

Field: Family and youth support

To be agreed

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	education and well-being of youth	Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany
2. Higher education and research institution	expertise in school social work, special education and psychology and related training programs	Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany
3. Education/training centre and school	education of youth	Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany
4. Interest group	parents associations and youth advocacy groups	Finland and where applicable

## 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 Health

PA Education

PA Innovation

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



#### FINLAND

1. Turku University of Applied Sciences, coordinator: expertise in school social workers' training and requirements for professional practice, and leading innovative cross-border projects supporting public services and piloting new methods and approaches in different organizations

Discussions started about partnership, initial interest confirmed:

2. Rusko municipal educational administration, as part of The Wellbeing Services County of Southwest Finland (Varha), partner: the human resource for school social workers involved in the project
3. Rural municipal school in Rusko, associated partner: location for the target group of school social workers to test the manual with end-users (rural youth)

#### SWEDEN

4. Umeå universitet, partner: expertise in developing school social workers' practice in Sweden, contacts to local practitioners and rural schools for piloting the manual to be developed
5. Rural municipal school in Sweden, associated partner: location for the target group of school social workers to test the manual with end-users (rural youth)

#### NORWAY

6. NTNU Trondheim, partner: preliminary interest in participation, confirmation pending

#### GERMANY

7. Potsdam Fachhochschule, partner: preliminary interest in participation, confirmation pending

The partners represent a mix of municipal authorities, specialist institutions, and practitioners. Each represent local needs and characteristics in terms of school social worker training and practice, but all also share common European problematics affecting the daily work, such as migration.

## 11. Workplan

Goal: Creation of an Evidence-Informed Practice Manual for School Social Workers ('practice manual')

#### Main activities:

Needs analysis and stakeholder workshops for the development of the practice manual

Co-development of the practice manual in transnational working groups

Pilot testing of the practice manual in selected schools in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany

Evaluation and refinement of the practice manual in transnational collaboration

Dissemination of the practice manual & transnational learnings in webinars, print, and digital platforms

#### Outputs:

A digital and printable practice manual for school social workers in Baltic Sea Region

Evaluation report created in transnational collaboration

Transnational network of school social work professionals and interest groups

#### Use of outcomes:

School welfare professionals and municipalities will use the manual to guide and support their daily



practice. This is especially relevant in small rural areas, acknowledging common European problematics, such as migration and its influence in communication, well-being and collaboration with families

Training providers will eventually incorporate the material into education curricula. Note! No project funding will be directed to curriculum development, as indicated by the funder.

## 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
<b>Total budget (including preparatory costs)</b>	<b>EUR 500,000.00</b>

## 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	Role of information gathering as part of the activities (understandably, overall, research activities not funded)
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	Realistic share of budget among partners, i.e., how many of the municipal partners (versus specialist educational organizations) should have their own budget.
Any other questions	(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)

## 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>