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	Social innovations as a catalyst for sustainable and smart mobility in remote regions
Short name of the project	SIS2MO
Previous calls	yes ◯ no ◉
Seed money support	yes ◯ no ◉

2. Programme priority

	3. Climate-neutral societies

3. Programme objective

	3.3. Smart green mobility

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), Kėdainiai district municipality (Lithuania), Tõrva Rural Municipality (Estonia).

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

Remote regions often face major problems in terms of mobility and connectivity. Due to low population concentration and long distances between settlements, it is often not economically feasible for local public authorities to build or maintain traditional public transport infrastructure. This means that the locals experience limited access to services, the labor market, education and healthcare, which further exacerbates the socio-economic divide between regions and urban centres.

Traditional solutions - such as a regular bus service - are often neither flexible nor sustainable in such areas. Moreover, currently established transport demand assessment procedures tend to look at the movement of people on existing public transport routes without examining the underlying causes and needs of the residents' mobility. However, local public authorities often do not have the human, financial resources, expertise or working models to carry out these kind of evaluations.

Meanwhile, mobility innovations (e.g., ride-sharing services, electric micro-mobility solutions or on-demand transport) rarely reach these regions because service providers lack the economic incentive to invest in small and sparsely populated areas. There are also limited working formats among different

public authorities to support such innovation transfer from urban to rural areas.

This creates a vicious circle: limited mobility makes regions less attractive places to live, work or do business, which further reduces their vitality. This situation also poses challenges in terms of (1) social justice and (2) the environment, forcing people to use private cars, which increases pollution and the impact of climate change. NGOs (and other social initiatives) addressing the first issue are usually not involved in the development of rural mobility services even though connectivity strongly impacts the socio-economic divide. National authorities strongly concerned with the second issue also lack of cooperation with local authorities, even though better established working formats could support faster transformation of sustainable transportation.

It is therefore necessary to support local public authorities in finding mobility solutions that are people-oriented and responsive to the local context. Social innovation can be a key catalyst for sustainable, accessible and inclusive mobility that not only reduces exclusion but also adds value to communities and builds their resilience in the long term.

5.2 Focus of the call

With SIS2MO project, we aim to introduce a rural mobility lab (RuMoLab) model that supports local authorities in co-creating sustainable and smart mobility services in cooperation with local and regional social initiatives (i.e., NGOs and social enterprises). RuMoLab is aimed to be a replicable user-centric working framework that connects public authorities (service providers) with local residents (service users) through social innovation based solutions. The effectiveness and the economy of rural mobility services, that are both sustainable and smart, heavily relies on their alignment with the needs and behaviour of local residents. In RuMoLabs public authorities will be able to cooperate, co-create and experiment with social initiatives that usually act as “connectors” to local residents. Having social initiatives as one of the key co-creators in RuMoLabs will allow to develop better tailored mobility services to the users that are often neglected (e.g., seniors; people with limited mobility; people with low income, youth).

In addition, co-creation in RuMoLabs will be supported with sustainable and smart mobility experts who will support public authorities in evaluating the feasibility of developed mobility services. In rural regions, these competences are often lacking and their absence is hindering the uptake of the benefits of flexible and green mobility solutions that are widely exploited in urban areas.

6. Transnational relevance

Despite the fact that each region is unique, the mobility challenges in rural areas are believed to be quite similar regardless of the country. However, the RuMoLab model being developed in the SIS2MO project focuses on co-creation, social and mobility innovations, and the involvement of different stakeholders, which is a "living" process that can depend on different contexts. This is why transnational cooperation, where we bring together different regions with a similar problem but different contexts, opens up the possibility of creating an adaptable RuMoLab model that can be replicated not only in other regions but also adapted in the same place, for example, in the event of a

change in population demographics or socio-economic factors. This adaptability is also particularly important for national public authorities seeking to rapidly develop sustainable and intelligent transport systems and services on a larger scale. Aligned working model can support these efforts.

At the same time, each RuMoLab can generate different transport service innovations that can be replicated or learnt from in other regions. Local actors in rural areas are limited in their transnational cooperation opportunities due to resource constraints, so each initiative strongly strengthens their organisational capacity and provides networking benefits. The experience of sustainable and smart mobility innovation available in the consortium will help to ensure its dissemination across different rural regions.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives
SIS2MO project will build trust among regional and local stakeholders through structured transnational cooperation, fostering relationships that extend beyond the project's duration. By jointly implementing project activities, exchanging practical experiences, and co-developing solutions within the RuMoLabs the project will promote mutual understanding and transparency between actors from different governance levels and countries. This collaborative environment will enhance institutional confidence, reduce perceived risks of future cooperation, and demonstrate the added value of coordinated approaches to rural mobility. The inclusive and participatory processes will establish reliable networks and working methods that can be scaled or replicated. As a result, the project will lay the groundwork for sustained collaboration, creating conditions for future joint initiatives, policy alignment, and uptake of successful practices.
Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR
N/A

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens
The project will bring the Programme closer to the citizens by directly involving rural communities in the co-creation and testing of sustainable and smart mobility solutions. Through the establishment of RuMoLabs, participatory methods and inclusive engagement, the project will ensure that citizens are reflected in co-designing the solutions that address real-life challenges. Communication activities such as local events and storytelling campaigns will highlight citizen involvement and raise awareness of the Programme's role in improving everyday life in rural areas. By making EU cooperation tangible at the local level, the project will strengthen public trust in transnational initiatives and showcase the Programme's relevance to people's daily experiences and future opportunities.
Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges
N/A

8. Target groups

It is envisaged that key organisations responsible for the development of transport systems at local and national level will be directly involved in the project activities. This will ensure that the RuMoLab operational model is developed and trialled by the organisations for which it is intended. The areas of the local authorities involved in the project activities will need to have a clear regional isolation from urbanised centres. NGOs representing the mobility needs of local populations will play a key role in co-creation processes: their activities will include not only the identification of the needs of the population, but also the development of social innovations for sustainable and smart mobility, in cooperation with local and national authorities. The RuMoLab model will then be institutionalised on the basis of the project's experience, thus ensuring a strong collaboration between the project's target groups in addressing the challenges of rural-urban connectivity and improving the mobility of the rural residents.

	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 local authorities (e.g., small towns with districts or several villages).	Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia
2.	National public authority	National authorities, responsible for mobility, transportation, regional development or similar areas.	Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia
3.	NGO	Local and regional NGOs working in social inclusion, rural development, community capacity building and similar fields.	Lithuania, Latvia, 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 Transport

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 (Lithuania). Responsibilities and role: overall project coordination, mobility policy alignment, expertise provision regarding sustainable and smart mobility, contribution to RuMoLab model development and improvement.
PP02 - Kėdainiai district municipality (Lithuania). Responsibilities and role: application of RuMoLab model in practice, rural stakeholder recruitment, implementation of co-creation activities.
PP03 - Smart Energy DIH (Lithuania). Responsibilities and role: expertise provision regarding sustainable and smart mobility, support for evaluating developed mobility services in RuMoLabs and their long-term implementation.
PP04 - Ministry of Transport (Latvia). Responsibilities and role: mobility policy alignment, promotion of transferability of outcomes across different governance systems.
PP05 - Tõrva Rural Municipality (Estonia). Responsibilities and role: application of RuMoLab model in practice, rural stakeholder recruitment, implementation of co-creation activities.

This partnership ensures a mix of different governance levels, technical and service provision capacity. To strengthen transnational impact, we plan to involve additional local authority from Sweden, Finland, or Poland for diverse RuMoLab settings. To ensure inclusive, citizen-focused implementation of RuMoLab model, we plan to include NGOs from each represented country as associated partners, ensuring that target group is engage with project's topic and challenge from the start of the project.

11. Workplan

Main activities:

1. Initial RuMoLab model development. A practical model for the Rural Mobility Innovation Lab (RuMoLab) will be developed, based on existing user-centric, co-creation and living lab practices with strong emphasis on social and mobility innovations. The model will define how the labs will work, how

different stakeholders will be involved in it, and what tools will be used for co-creation processes. This will serve as a guide for all participating regions.

2. RuMoLab member identification and involvement. Each region will identify and invite key local actors—such as municipalities, NGOs, and service providers—to join the RuMoLab. All members will agree on their roles and how they will cooperate. Each region will organize one introductory workshop on co-creation methods during which RuMoLab model will be introduced to local actors.

3. Capacity building for RuMoLab members. Project partners will have two capacity building sessions on sustainable and smart mobility solutions that are currently available in the market. These sessions will support local authorities and NGOs in exploring mobility innovations and finding the most adaptable mobility services to their rural areas.

4. Experimentation within RuMoLab. Each region will work in RuMoLab model setting and identify one specific mobility need of local residents and organize an innovation challenge to find corresponding solution. The innovation challenge will connect social initiatives with sustainable and smart mobility experts towards a common goal of shaping user-centric rural mobility service model. These services will be validated by public authorities.

5. RuMoLab model refinement. After the pilot phase, all RuMoLab teams will come together to share results, challenges, and lessons learned. Based on this collective evaluation, the RuMoLab model and supporting tools will be refined and improved. The final version will include practical guidance, templates, and tested approaches that can be transferred and applied in other rural areas across the Baltic Sea Region.

6. Durability planning. Each solution, developed in RuMoLabs, will be once again evaluated by local public authorities who with support of national authorities will identify necessary resources and their sources for practical implementation of mobility services. Each region will come up with a result uptake plan.

By the end of the project, local authorities will use the RuMoLab model to co-create and implement smart, inclusive mobility solutions tailored to the needs of rural communities, while national transport authorities will apply the outcomes to inform policy development, support replication of successful approaches, and improve coordination between governance levels. NGOs, social enterprises, and community organisations will use the tools and methods to actively participate in designing and delivering local transport strengthening their role in service co-creation.

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. Based on the description of our activities, are they considered to be a pilot action? 2. Should each activity end with a tangible output (e.g., report, method, guideline or similar)? If yes, what kind of outputs are usual to capacity building activities?
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	N/A
Any other questions	N/A

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