



# 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	Boosting circular bioeconomy via rural symbiosis
Short name of the project	Rural Symbiosis
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

3. Climate-neutral societies
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### 3. Programme objective

3.1. Circular economy
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### 4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	SA Pärnumaa Arenduskeskus
Name of the organisation (English)	Pärnu County Development Centre
Website	www.arenduskeskus.eu
Country	EE



Type of Partner	Business support organisation
	chamber of commerce, chamber of trade and crafts, business incubator or innovation centre, business clusters, etc.
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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.

To be confirmed

### 5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Connected to implementation of the PA Bioeconomy action plan, a state of art review of the industrial symbiosis in the Baltic Sea Region was recently published by Norden. <https://pub.nordregio.org/r-2025-4-industrial-symbiosis/> As outlined in this publication, industrial symbiosis - valorisation of side streams - has great potential to boost circular bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea Region. Publication also offers a range of recommendations for regions and cities on how to support the development of industrial symbiosis. In Rural Symbiosis project, we hope to adopt the concept of industrial symbiosis to rural areas where there are ample biobased side streams from agrifood sector and forestry, but valorisation is challenged by distances, seasonality, lower volumes and lack of co-operation.

Rural Symbiosis idea was inspired by the BioBoosters project and is taken forward in the network of BioBoosters regions. In BioBoosters, we have organized in total six hackathons to establish innovation partnerships for valorization of side-streams from rural bioeconomy sectors. Based on the evidence, identification of partners, suitable solutions and technologies can be supported by BioBoosters hackathons. BioBoosters hackathons have also been an effective method for transferring knowhow



between countries, bridging research and business co-operation and building transnational innovation partnerships. Challenges have also been shared by many rural regions, such as in the case of apple processing side streams. We have learned that the hackathon provides a good starting point. Still, in order to address the limitations of the rural operational environment, local business and logistics co-operation models, as well as support for the piloting, commercialization and business model development are essential for taking the winning solution ideas to practice.

In Rural Symbiosis, we explore the enabling factors and practices to provide recommendations, and proven co-operation models, for the rural regions and municipalities promoting new business development from valorisation of biobased side-streams from agri-food system and forest bioeconomy. Key aspect of the success is co-operation. Finding the win-win-wins connecting the small and medium flows of biobased side streams regionally, more value can be generated from the biomass. Tailoring business, logistics and co-operation models for rural areas has possibilities to boost the circular transition of rural bioeconomy sectors.

## 5.2 Focus of the call

Rural conditions and target groups are in the focus of the project idea as elaborated in 5.1.

## 6. Transnational relevance

- 1) Transnational knowledge transfer and expertise exchange on a shared challenge.
- 2) Established impact of the inter-regional co-operation for identification of solutions and connecting innovation partnerships to address the valorisation needs of the bioeconomy companies in rural regions (the experience and evidence of the BioBoosters project).
- 3) Opportunity to build and maintain partnerships to launch further co-operation initiatives .

## 7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

Building new partnerships to boost rural symbiosis will be supported by the work plan.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

BioBoosters network is supporting this initiative and the network partners are looking to capitalize on the lessons learned on open innovation process and rural symbiosis in future projects. Dissemination



of the project results to rural bioeconomy regions is also supported by the BioBoosters communication channels and platforms.

#### Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

Bioeconomy businesses (SMEs) are beneficiaries in the project. Dissemination of the project results to rural bioeconomy businesses is supported by the BioBoosters communication channels and platforms.

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

Sustainable and competitive agriculture and forestry is central for resilient Baltic Sea Region.

## 8. Target groups

Rural symbiosis is formed as co-operation models between companies; bioeconomy SMEs. The development of rural symbiosis is facilitated and enabled by public authorities, applied research institutes and business support organisations. All the essential target groups are involved in the partnership directly as partners and associated partners.

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 municipalities	Norway, Sweden, Lithuania
2. Regional public authority	Rural regions	Estonia, Norway, Sweden
3. Small and medium enterprise	Bioeconomy companies	Estonia, Sweden, Poland
4. Business support organisation	Rural BSOs	Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Poland
5. Higher education and research institution	Bioeconomy competence centres	Finland, 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 Bio-economy

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

Rural Symbiosis project brings together a dynamic mix of actors from research institutions, SME representatives, municipalities, and development agencies across the Baltic Sea Region and Norway, ensuring the feasibility and transferability of results across rural contexts. This interdisciplinary and cross-border approach ensures both practical rural insights and scientific grounding in developing circular bioeconomy solutions, while including both rural municipalities and regional development agencies enables top-down and bottom-up engagement in innovation processes.

Lead Partner:

Pärnu County Development Center (EE)

Project coordination, lead on regional pilots, communication, and stakeholder engagement in Estonia.

Partners Involved in Preparation (roles to be confirmed):

Estonia

- Polli Horticultural Research Centre (Estonian University of Life Sciences) - Research partner with expertise in rural biomass valorization; support in pilot design and cross-regional learning;
- Seeneliha OÜ - Rural SME focused on sterile processing for mushroom cultivation; piloting of small-scale valorization and hosting demo activities.

Finland

- Jamk University of Applied Sciences - BioBoosters hackathon model creator; leads methodology transfer, mentoring, and innovation support.

Poland

- Pro Civis Foundation - NGO supporting regional sustainability; involving rural communities in piloting,



outreach and impact tracking.

- Center for Business Promotion and Entrepreneurship - SME support agency; engaging entrepreneurs, leading knowledge-sharing events.

Lithuania

- Panevėžys Development Agency - Municipality-linked innovation body; organizing stakeholder engagement and fostering industrial growth and innovation.

Sweden

- Municipalities of Torsby and Kristinehamn - Local authorities promoting rural circular economy; providing case studies and host exchanges;  
 - BioFuel Region - Bioeconomy cluster; facilitating matchmaking and disseminating pilot results.  
 - PaperProvince - Bioeconomy cluster focused on forest-based innovation; supporting business development and international collaboration.

Norway

- Skjåk in the region of Nord-Gudbrandsdal, will cooperate with the regional innovation company Skåppå, supporting rural entrepreneurship; coordinating pilots and innovation brokering.

More SMEs or cooperatives in target areas may be added as associated partners or end-users, particularly to ensure sufficient grassroots-level testing and replication of circular solutions.

## 11. Workplan

GoA1.1 Study visits (3) involving peer reviews with analyzed case of rural symbiosis (existing/potential) and recommendation on way forward-> deliverable: a (peer) review method for analyzing a rural symbiosis potential with a selection of methods/practices for boosting the development of rural symbiosis

GoA1.2 Webinars & knowledge building on co-operation opportunities for boosting rural symbiosis -> deliverable: roadmap of rural symbiosis in BSR

GoA1.3 Open innovation process (1) for rural symbiosis building

For example: Open Challenge - adapted BB hackathon process addressing shared challenges of rural SMEs from 3 countries OR addressing commonly identified rural symbiosis challenges and technology gaps -> deliverable: 4-6 high-value valorization technologies/solutions targeted for rural symbiosis development analyzed (selection), refined (mentoring), evaluated (pitching) to match solutions to rural valorization needs.

GoA1.4 Communication and stakeholder engagement -> deliverable: Series of video stories/podcasts/articles/social media content of the peer reviews, roadmap and all deliverables etc.

## 12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 450,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 50,000.00
<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

We would like to get feedback on the target groups and partnership as well as the work plan.

Questions related to budgeting and expenditure

*(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)*

Any other questions

*(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)*

## 15. Additional information



### **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>