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	FRAMECOOL: Building Local Capacity for Outdoor Thermal Comfort Planning
Short name of the project	FRAMECOOL
Previous calls	yes ◉ no ○
Short name of the previous project	Feel the Climate
Seed money support	yes ○ no ◉

2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

1.2. Responsive public services

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Rīgas Tehniskā universitāte
Name of the organisation (English)	Riga Technical University
Website	http://www.rtu.lv/

Country	LV
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.

N/A

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

Urban areas across the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), especially in humid continental (Dfb) climate zones, are increasingly experiencing thermal discomfort in public spaces during summer heat events. Although green infrastructure is widely promoted as a climate adaptation tool, cities often lack practical methods to evaluate its effects on outdoor thermal comfort (OTC), particularly from a human-centered perspective. This limits evidence-based decision-making and weakens the public sector's ability to deliver responsive and climate-adapted urban services. The core challenge is the absence of a shared, standardised protocol to guide municipalities and planners through the full process of OTC evaluation. This includes identifying and preparing not only environmental and spatial data, but also data on vegetation (e.g., plant species and traits), ground surface materials, fasades, and urban form. Furthermore, many municipalities do not have the internal capacity to design and carry out perception surveys, run microclimate simulations, or interpret the resulting metrics in a meaningful way for planning. This project directly addresses the need for data-driven, context-specific and human-responsive adaptation strategies. It develops and tests a modular OTC assessment framework that

enables cities to evaluate the performance of public spaces from both physical and experiential perspectives. The approach combines field surveys, citizen input, in-situ measurements, and simulation tools, and ultimately supports more inclusive, locally grounded decision-making. The primary target group is local authorities who need structured tools to assess and adapt public spaces. The project also engages NGOs and interest groups through co-design and perception mapping activities. Research institutions and technical partners will support the methodological development and ensure transferability across the region.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project addresses a growing challenge to the social fabric of BSR communities: the declining liveability of public spaces during increasingly frequent summer heat events. This is particularly pressing in cities and densely built areas where spatial constraints and data gaps hinder climate adaptation. As outdoor thermal discomfort rises, it reduces equitable use of public space, particularly affecting vulnerable populations and low-income neighbourhoods. By developing and piloting an OTC evaluation framework in selected urban areas across the BSR—ranging from larger cities to peri-urban municipalities—the project supports more responsive, data-informed public space design. These pilots will reflect varying levels of planning capacity and local climate conditions, ensuring broad applicability. Though focused on urban sites, the framework is intentionally designed to be scalable and replicable in smaller towns and municipalities. Its modular approach and low-threshold data structure allow communities with limited resources to assess how their public spaces perform in relation to thermal comfort and human wellbeing. The project strengthens public sector capacity to address a new dimension of climate adaptation and contributes to more cohesive, human-centered regional development.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenge of ensuring OTC in urban public spaces is increasingly relevant across the BSR, particularly in Dfb climate zones where summer heat events are becoming more frequent. Yet, most adaptation efforts have focused on flood risks or infrastructure resilience, overlooking how people actually experience urban environments during heat. At the same time, there is no harmonised methodology in the region for assessing OTC in a way that combines environmental data, human perception, and simulation outputs. Cities across borders are therefore facing a common blind spot in their climate adaptation strategies. This project addresses a shared regional need for practical, transferable tools that support climate-responsive and people-focused public service delivery. Transnational cooperation allows partner cities and organisations to co-develop and test the framework that is sensitive to different planning cultures, data availability, and governance structures. It enables joint learning on how public spaces perform under climatic stress and how interventions such as small-scale green infrastructure affect human wellbeing. By working across borders, the project builds a shared vocabulary and comparable methodology for OTC evaluation—something that individual cities would struggle to develop alone. It also promotes regional knowledge exchange, helping smaller municipalities benefit from lessons learned in more advanced contexts. In doing so, it strengthens institutional capacity and lays the foundation for a more human-centered, climate-adaptive BSR.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives
The project facilitates trust-building by engaging municipalities, researchers, and NGOs in a transparent co-creation process. By piloting the same framework in different cities, partners must exchange technical knowledge, challenges, and practical lessons. This lays the groundwork for future cooperation on shared climate adaptation tools, citizen engagement models, and digital simulation capacity across the region.
Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR
The project brings together partners working at the intersection of urban planning, climate adaptation, and citizen wellbeing. It creates a knowledge-sharing network around OTC, a topic not yet systematised in the BSR. This network has the potential to expand as the framework is adopted by additional municipalities and linked to future regional or Interreg initiatives.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens
Citizens play an active role in this project by contributing their experience of thermal comfort through field surveys and participatory mapping. Their feedback directly influences how public spaces are evaluated and adapted. By involving residents in shaping climate-responsive solutions, the project demonstrates the Programme's tangible relevance to daily urban life.
Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges
N/A

8. Target groups

The project's primary target group is local public authorities, particularly municipal departments responsible for urban planning, climate adaptation, and public space design. These actors are directly relevant, as they are in a position to implement physical changes in the urban environment that can help improve OTC. The project offers them a ready-to-use framework that builds their capacity to evaluate thermal comfort and improve decision-making. Researchers represent another key target group. They contribute methodological expertise to the development of the framework and benefit from the opportunity to test and validate the results across diverse urban settings in the BSR. The project also engages NGOs and local interest groups. These groups are critical in supporting outreach and co-creation processes, especially during the participatory components of field testing and human perception mapping. Their involvement ensures that the framework reflects user experience. All target groups will be involved through focused pilot activities and knowledge exchange formats. Public authorities and researchers will co-develop and test the framework, while NGOs and local actors will support fieldwork and help gather user insights. This ensures the results are usable, relevant, and ready for application in real planning contexts.

	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	Urban planning, climate adaptation, public space design, municipal policy implementation	Latvia, Estonia, Poland; pilot cities and surrounding regions in the BSR
2.	Interest group	Community engagement, environmental advocacy, participatory planning, green urban initiatives	BSR: local NGOs and civic actors in Latvia, Estonia, Poland or other BSR countries
3.	NGO	Community engagement, environmental advocacy, participatory planning, green urban initiatives	BSR: local NGOs and civic actors in Latvia, Estonia, Poland or other BSR countries
4.	Higher education and research institution	Urban climate research, environmental simulation, sustainability and adaptation studies	Latvia, Estonia, Poland or other BSR countries

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 Spatial Planning
PA Health
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

The partnership so far consists of academic and municipal actors from three BSR countries, each contributing distinct expertise and regional context. The lead applicant, Riga Technical University (LV), brings knowledge in climate adaptation, OTC assessment and blue-green infrastructure. RTU leads the development of the Outdoor Thermal Comfort Evaluation Framework and coordinates testing in Riga, Latvia. Gdansk University of Technology (PL) contributes high-level expertise in low-altitude photogrammetry, remote sensing, and UAV-based environmental monitoring. Their teams conduct applied laboratory classes in digital photogrammetry and sensor automation. Gdańsk Tech also has experience in BGI-related research and public participation tools. Their contribution includes validating the OTC framework using open-access remote sensing data, field measurements, and co-creation approaches that enhance both technical and social relevance. The Municipality of Viimsi (EE) represents a peri-urban, fast-growing local context where planning capacity is more limited. Their involvement ensures the framework is tested in settings common across smaller municipalities in the region. Viimsi will help pilot perception surveys and contribute to developing practical recommendations for data readiness and thermal comfort assessments. Together, the partnership reflects the diversity of data infrastructures, climate pressures, and adaptation capabilities across the BSR. The partnership is still open to additional actors. Discussions are ongoing with potential partners from other BSR countries to ensure further regional coverage. The project also aims to involve a civic or NGO partner to support participatory components, particularly public involvement in field testing and OTC perception mapping.

11. Workplan

The project will develop and pilot a modular OTC evaluation framework to help municipalities in the BSR assess the performance of their public spaces under rising summer heat. The framework will include step-by-step guidance on required data (spatial, environmental, vegetation, surface materials), methods for collecting human perception feedback, and simulation-based evaluation using tools like ENVI-met. It will also provide instructions for interpreting results using common thermal indices (e.g. PET, ΔT). Key activities include:(1) Co-developing the OTC evaluation framework through input from academic and municipal partners; (2) Field protocol testing in two pilot sites (e.g. Riga and either Viimsi or Gdansk), involving OTC perception surveys and in-situ microclimate measurements; (3) Simulation testing of selected BGI typologies—such as linear tree rows, green walls, and vegetated strips—to explore their thermal effects in real public spaces; (4) Assessing cities' readiness to carry out OTC evaluations based on their existing data and planning capacity; (5) Publishing final outputs, including a practical guide, a technical checklist, and a perception survey template. The pilots will simulate how different nature-based interventions affect thermal comfort in typical BSR public space settings. They will also test how accessible and actionable the full assessment process is for cities with different technical capacity. Target groups are directly involved throughout the project. Local public

authorities will co-develop and test the framework. Researchers and technical experts will shape simulation inputs and ensure scientific robustness. NGOs and local interest groups will support citizen engagement. Will provide experiential input at selected test sites through structured interviews and OTC mapping exercises. The final outputs will be tailored to the needs of cities seeking to deliver more responsive and climate-adapted public services. Outputs will be shared digitally to maximise transferability.

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 0.00
Total budget (including preparatory costs)	**EUR 450,000.00**

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	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
Any other questions	Suitability of chosen project priority and objective, other general questions regarding the submitted idea.

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