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	A transnational initiative to measure boat noise, raise awareness, and develop recommendations for more sustainable boating practices.
Short name of the project	TRIMAR Baltic
Previous calls	yes ◯ no ◉
Seed money support	yes ◯ no ◉

2. Programme priority

	2. Water-smart societies

3. Programme objective

	2.2. Blue economy

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover
Name of the organisation (English)	University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover
Website	www.tiho-hannover.de
Country	DE

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.

Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover (University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover)
Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland e.V. (Friends of the Earth Germany)
Coalition Clean Baltic
Tallinna Tehnikaülikool (Tallinn University of Technology)

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

The TRIMAR Baltic project addresses the growing challenge of underwater noise pollution from recreational boats in coastal areas of the Baltic Sea. Many aquatic species rely on sound for communication, foraging and navigation. Elevated noise levels can disrupt these behaviours, leading to ecological stress and habitat degradation. This in turn affects local communities that depend economically, socially, and culturally on healthy marine ecosystems. In areas with intense maritime activity near ecologically important zones – particularly bays and marinas – this may also lead to conflicts between sea space users such as recreational boaters, fishers, and conservation interests.

Although underwater noise is widely recognised as an environmental threat, there is currently a lack of data on noise emissions from recreational boats under different operating conditions such as speed, engine type, water depth, and hull design. This data gap limits the ability of local authorities and planners to develop effective regulations and spatial guidelines to reduce the acoustic impact of recreational boats and preserve ecosystem health. It also hampers awareness among boat users, marina operators and tourism actors, many of whom are unaware of their acoustic footprint.

TRIMAR Baltic addresses this knowledge gap to enhance coastal community resilience and promote the sustainable use of marine resources in the Baltic Sea region. By collecting acoustic data under real-world conditions and generating statistical noise maps for small vessels without AIS, the project enables evidence-based planning and regulation that balances economic activity with ecosystem protection. It supports a more sustainable maritime leisure sector by equipping recreational boat owners and local stakeholders with knowledge and practical guidance to reduce their noise emissions.

The data will further support research institutes in modelling environmental impacts and developing evidence-based policy advice aligned with the goals of a resilient, sustainable blue economy. Further target groups include local authorities and coastal spatial planners, who need data for effective regulation and marine space management; recreational boat owners and rental operators, who can reduce their environmental impact; and local communities, who are directly affected by biodiversity loss and potential user conflicts.

5.2 Focus of the call

TRIMAR Baltic supports the cohesive development of small coastal communities by addressing the pressing ecological and socio-economic challenge of underwater noise pollution from recreational boats. Bays and marinas in tourism-dependent areas with high boat traffic face increasing pressure on local ecosystems. These ecosystems are the foundation for sustainable fisheries, tourism, and community well-being. Yet, local authorities often lack the data needed to implement effective protection measures or manage competing uses of sea space.

By targeting these pressures, the project directly contributes to the EUSBSR sub-objective "Healthy wildlife" under Policy Area Hazards, promoting the protection of marine biodiversity across the region. TRIMAR Baltic generates sound emission data that enable local actors to manage noise impacts and balance competing uses of shared sea space. This helps prevent and mitigate conflicts between stakeholders, while supporting resilient ecosystems that sustain livelihoods for future generations.

By raising awareness and fostering cooperation among local authorities, boat users, and tourism actors, TRIMAR Baltic strengthens regional capacity to align environmental protection with economic development. It contributes to the long-term liveability and resilience of coastal areas by delivering practical, biodiversity-based recommendations tailored to local needs.

6. Transnational relevance

Transnational cooperation is essential to address underwater noise pollution in the Baltic Sea, a shared marine environment where water, species, and noise cross national borders. Marine animals affected by noise migrate across regions, making effective mitigation possible only through coordinated approaches among partner countries across the Baltic Sea region. By involving partners from multiple states, the project facilitates the exchange of diverse expertise, regulatory frameworks, and technological know-how.

Sharing data, methods, and communication strategies enhances the project's impact and ensures that findings are comparable and applicable across the region. The cooperation fosters mutual learning and

supports the development of adaptable guidelines that reflect both ecological realities and national implementation contexts. The partners' combined knowledge strengthens scientific output as well as the practical application of solutions to reduce underwater noise that encourages behavioural change at sea.

Germany, Sweden and Estonia represent three distinct but connected coastal contexts within the Baltic Sea region. Germany brings experience from densely used coastal areas with intense recreational boating and strong environmental regulation. Sweden contributes advanced technical expertise in environmental monitoring and long-standing research on underwater acoustics. Estonia represents the eastern Baltic, shaped by growing maritime tourism and evolving spatial planning frameworks. Combining these perspectives ensures that project outcomes are scientifically robust, locally grounded, and regionally transferable. The cooperation reflects the diversity of conditions across the Baltic Sea and supports the creation of solutions that can be adapted to various environmental, economic, and governance conditions across the region.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives
TRIMAR Baltic builds trust through practical cooperation in joint measurements, shared methodologies and coordinated communication across borders. By bringing together local authorities, research institutes, and local stakeholders, TRIMAR Baltic creates a shared understanding of underwater noise challenges and solutions. This cooperation strengthens future collaboration not only among scientific partners but also between local authorities and local actors, paving the way for follow-up initiatives in marine protection, data sharing, and sustainable coastal development.
Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR
By jointly addressing underwater noise pollution and uniting expertise from different disciplines, TRIMAR Baltic fosters lasting transnational and cross-sector cooperation across BSR countries. Local actors such as authorities, marina operators and tourism stakeholders engage directly with research institutions, building trust and laying the groundwork for sustained cooperation. Shared data, joint events and communication materials tailored to the ecological and socio-economic context of the BSR strengthen mutual learning and regional cohesion. The resulting network is designed to persist beyond the project's duration, enabling long-term knowledge transfer and supporting future initiatives for sustainable sea use and marine ecosystem protection in the Baltic Sea region.
Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens
Science communication is a key part of TRIMAR Baltic to ensure lasting impact. Protecting ecosystems close to bays and marinas from underwater noise requires the support of local boat owners and citizens. To build trust and understanding, the project includes dialogue events in the selected communities, where findings are shared and local concerns are heard. These meetings promote mutual learning and create ownership of the proposed measures, such as speed limits in certain areas. Through accessible formats (website, flyers, factsheets) and close collaboration with local actors, TRIMAR Baltic strengthens public awareness and builds the basis for long-term behavioural change.
Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges
N/A

8. Target groups

The TRIMAR Baltic project involves target groups that are directly affected by underwater noise pollution and can actively contribute to its mitigation.

Local authorities and spatial planners are key actors, as they implement regulations such as speed limits and boating guidelines. Their involvement ensures that the project's outputs - such as sound emission data and recommended measures - can be translated into effective local action and long-term spatial planning strategies.

Small and medium enterprises in the recreational boating and eco-tourism sectors, including boat rental companies, marinas, and wildlife tour providers, play a crucial role in both contributing to and reducing underwater noise. They will support data collection and communication activities directly. Their engagement supports behaviour change through increased awareness of their acoustic footprint and the adoption of more sustainable boating practices.

Research organisations lead the project's technical implementation. They generate and analyse the collected data to model environmental impacts and develop evidence-based recommendations. As underwater noise from recreational boats remains under-researched, the project contributes to closing a critical knowledge gap relevant for science and policymaking in the BSR.

Local interest groups, such as coastal residents, recreational sea users, and small-scale fishers, are directly affected by biodiversity loss and sea-use conflicts. While many fishers operate as micro-enterprises, they also represent deep-routed community ties and ecological dependence. Their participation in local dialogue and awareness-raising is essential for public support and real-life relevance of proposed solutions.

Environmental NGOs act as key intermediaries between science, policy, and the public. Their experience in marine conservation and local outreach makes them valuable partners in promoting acceptance and scaling results beyond pilot areas.

	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 environmental governance, maritime spatial planning, regulation implementation	Germany: Schleswig-Holstein Sweden: Stockholm County Estonia: Harju County
2. Small and medium enterprise	Maritime leisure sector, recreational boating, eco-tourism services	Germany, Sweden, Estonia: Recreational boat rental companies, marinas, and eco-tourism operators located at the selected bays and marinas
3. Higher education and research institution	Marine sciences, environmental acoustics, biodiversity modelling, policy advisory	Germany: University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (Hannover) Sweden: IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute (Stockholm) Estonia: Tallinn University of Technology (Tallinn)
4. Interest group	Coastal community interests, ecosystem-dependent livelihoods, civil society participation, small-scale fisheries	Germany, Sweden, Estonia: local fishing communities, coastal residents, and recreational sea users in and around the selected bays and marinas
5. NGO	Marine conservation, environmental advocacy, public awareness and stakeholder engagement	Germany: Friends of the Earth Germany Sweden: Coalition Clean Baltic Estonia: Baltic Environmental Forum 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 Ship
PA Tourism
PA Spatial Planning

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 University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover (TiHo) will act as lead partner for TRIMAR Baltic. TiHo will coordinate the project and contribute scientific expertise on the impact of underwater noise on aquatic species. In Germany, the national oriented Marine Protection Office and the regional office in Schleswig-Holstein from Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) will participate as an environmental NGO partner with long-standing experience in citizen outreach and biodiversity protection. BUND will support communication activities with local stakeholders and help raise awareness. Both German partners will ensure that scientific findings are relevant and applicable within the German policy and regulatory context.
In Sweden, the IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute will contribute advanced expertise in environmental acoustics and monitoring technology. With a strong background in marine data collection, IVL will co-develop the scientific methodology for underwater sound measurements and ensure that data and recommendations can be integrated into Swedish marine planning processes. Additionally, the Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), a regional NGO network based in Sweden, will facilitate stakeholder engagement and cross-border communication, linking local actors with broader Baltic policy dialogues.
From Estonia, Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech) will join as a research partner, contributing expertise in marine spatial planning and sustainable coastal development. TalTech will support technical analysis of collected data and ensure its relevance to Estonia's national coastal management. TRIMAR Baltic brings together research institutes, NGOs, and national and local actors from Germany, Sweden and Estonia, combining geographic diversity with interdisciplinary expertise. Research institutions play a central role in the project by providing the scientific foundation for data collection, analysis, and interpretation of underwater noise. Their involvement ensures credibility and applicability of project outcomes, which are designed to support policymaking, spatial planning, and

behavioural change in the BSR.
Local public authorities in all three countries will be engaged prior to project launch to ensure the implementation dimension is represented. In addition, we aim to involve marina operators and small boating businesses as active target group contacts to strengthen the link between science, regulation, and real-world practice.

11. Workplan

TRIMAR Baltic follows a structured workplan with four main activity groups, each contributing to concrete deliverables and strategic outputs.
Activity 1 focuses on site selection and stakeholder coordination. Suitable bays and marinas in Germany, Sweden, and Estonia will be selected based on boating intensity and ecological sensitivity. Local authorities, SMEs, NGOs and community representatives will be involved to ensure commitment and local relevance. The deliverable is a report on selected sites and a stakeholder engagement strategy.
Activity 2 is dedicated to data collection and noise mapping. In each area, noise from recreational boats will be measured under varying conditions (speed, engine type, hull design, and water depth). SMEs, such as rental operators, will support data collection. TiHo, TalTech and IVL will produce a structured, open-access dataset linking vessel and environmental characteristics to noise levels as output. This dataset will provide a scientific basis for spatial planning, guideline development, and further research. Statistical noise maps for small non-AIS vessels will be created as an additional output. Such sound maps will be a valuable complement to the commercial shipping sound maps that EU Member States are using to assess the environmental status within MSFD d11.
Activity 3 addresses communication and stakeholder engagement. Awareness activities will run alongside data collection, with strong input by BUND and CCB. Local events and other modes of outreach, such as online format, printed and online materials will inform local SMEs, residents, fishers, and NGOs and invite them to contribute their perspectives on underwater noise. Practical solutions will be co-developed. Deliverables include communication materials, flyers, online resources, and documentation of stakeholder dialogue. The output is an awareness toolkit tailored to stakeholder groups to promote sustainable boating behaviour.
Activity 4 focuses on the development and transfer of project results. Based on the project's findings, recommendations will be formulated, such as area-specific speed reductions and voluntary codes of conduct. Deliverables include a summary report and user-specific guidance. Outputs comprise stakeholder guidance and transferable communication instruments that support broader adoption across the BSR.
The project ensures durability of its key outputs beyond its lifetime. The noise emission dataset will remain available for planning, modelling, and policy development. Communication tools are designed for continued use by local actors and replication across the BSR. Final users include local and regional authorities (for spatial planning and regulation), SMEs (for guidance and awareness), research institutions (for modelling and advice), NGOs (for outreach and engagement), local communities (to reduce conflicts and promote healthier ecosystems), and international actors as the Euorpean Boating Industry (for broader adaptation).

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*
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	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
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