

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	Urban Challenge Incubator – Empowering Communities through Public Innovation
Short name of the project	Hack4Public
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

3. Programme objective

1.2. Responsive public services

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Krakowski Park Technologiczny
Name of the organisation (English)	Krakow Technology Park
Website	https://www.kpt.krakow.pl/
Country	PL



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

The partnership is currently being established. The planned consortium will include business support organisations and higher education institutions. At this stage, we anticipate that all selected partners will have previous experience in the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme.

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

Local public authorities, both in metropolitan cities and surrounding municipalities, are increasingly confronted with complex societal challenges that require not only responsive governance but also proactive citizen engagement. While cities like Kraków have developed some tools for civic collaboration, there is still a lack of integrated, replicable frameworks that enable systematic identification of local needs and co-creation of solutions with residents, civil society organisations, and students. This gap limits the scalability and long-term impact of social innovation activities. The challenge is even more pronounced in smaller municipalities functionally connected to urban centres. These localities often face similar issues—such as declining quality of public services, limited access to shared spaces, inadequate digital inclusion, and mobility barriers—but lack the institutional capacity, expertise, and resources to initiate participatory innovation processes. Citizens in these areas remain disconnected from solution design, and their voices are rarely channelled into concrete actions. The project addresses these challenges by developing a transnational model of the Urban Challenge Incubator – a structured tool supporting cities and towns in activating local communities to identify pressing challenges and co-develop solutions. The model will include a series of hackathons designed

around real-life problems submitted by local authorities and citizens. Interdisciplinary teams will work with public data, expert guidance, and mentoring to generate practical innovations. These will be further prepared for pilot testing in real environments. The model will be initially developed and tested in Kraków, with the active involvement of neighbouring municipalities. However, its structure and methodology will be designed to ensure transferability and adaptability across different local contexts in the Baltic Sea Region. By combining citizen engagement, open innovation, and practical implementation support, the project will empower local governments to become more resilient, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of their communities.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project supports the balanced development of local communities—both in urban areas and in surrounding suburban and peripheral municipalities—by actively engaging residents in the process of public innovation. While the Urban Challenge Incubator model will be developed in Kraków, a key component of the concept is to also address the needs and challenges raised by communities from smaller administrative units functionally connected to the city. Residents, students, school pupils, and representatives of civic organisations from these areas will be invited to identify pressing issues and co-create solutions. This approach provides smaller municipalities and local institutions with access to proven methods of citizen engagement and innovation generation, without the need for extensive resources. The resulting model will be designed to be scalable and adaptable, allowing for its implementation in other local contexts across the Baltic Sea Region. Transnational collaboration and knowledge transfer will further enhance social cohesion, local resilience, and more balanced territorial development throughout the programme area.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenges of inclusive public innovation, citizen engagement, and territorial cohesion are shared across the Baltic Sea Region, particularly in areas surrounding major urban centres. While the Urban Challenge Incubator will be developed in Kraków, the underlying issues—such as limited capacity of local governments to engage communities in solution development—are not unique to Poland. Transnational cooperation will allow us to co-design a flexible and transferable incubation model, drawing on successful approaches from partner countries. By working together, we will exchange methods for public participation, co-creation, and piloting solutions in real-life settings. This collaboration ensures that the model we build can address a variety of socio-territorial conditions and be implemented across different administrative and cultural contexts. The project will contribute to building a shared toolbox for local innovation across the region.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project aims to establish a collaborative model between public institutions, business support organisations, universities, and civil society actors, based on jointly identifying problems and co-creating solutions. Regular interactions through hackathons and implementation processes will allow



participants to build long-term relationships and exchange experiences grounded in trust and mutual understanding. The Urban Challenge Incubator model will be developed in close cooperation with international partners, creating space for testing and scaling tools in various local contexts. By working together on real-life social challenges, the project will serve as a launchpad for sustained transnational cooperation and contribute to a regional network of institutions supporting social and public innovation across the Baltic Sea region.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The project aims to build a lasting network of institutions supporting social and public innovation across the Baltic Sea Region. Cooperation among partners from different countries will be based on the joint development and testing of the Urban Challenge Incubator model, which can be adapted to diverse local contexts. The partnership will facilitate mutual learning and foster trust among public authorities, universities, business support organisations, and civil society actors. As a result, a functional network will emerge, capable of implementing similar approaches, sharing good practices, and continuing collaboration beyond the project's duration. This network will strengthen territorial cohesion and enhance the region's capacity to address shared social and development challenges together.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

The project places citizens at the heart of public innovation by engaging them as co-creators of solutions to real challenges. Through open calls for local issues, participation in hackathons, and real-life testing of developed ideas, residents of urban and suburban areas gain tangible influence over public service design. The Urban Challenge Incubator model aims to foster a sense of agency, build trust in public institutions, and encourage innovative mindsets among diverse groups, including youth, seniors, people from smaller towns, and those at risk of exclusion. A strong communication component and visible activities in public spaces will make the project accessible and relevant to everyday citizens. As a result, the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme will become embedded in local realities and resonate more closely with people's lives.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

The Urban Challenge Incubator model is designed to provide a flexible, rapid-response mechanism for addressing emerging urban and local challenges. By facilitating regular hackathons and open calls for ideas, the project creates an agile structure that enables local governments to co-create solutions with citizens and experts in real time. This approach reduces the distance between problem identification and solution testing, allowing municipalities to adapt quickly to crises, such as environmental risks, social tensions, or sudden disruptions in services. The model integrates interdisciplinary teams, data-driven methods, and rapid prototyping, ensuring that innovative responses are not only timely but also grounded in local needs. The transnational partnership enhances this capacity by allowing partners to exchange knowledge and jointly respond to cross-border issues when needed.

8. Target groups

Target groups The project focuses on four key target groups that will be directly involved in the implementation of activities and use of project results: 1. Local public authorities (LPAs) – in particular, the Municipality of Kraków and surrounding municipalities, which will submit challenges and cooperate in piloting the developed solutions. LPAs play a central role as initiators of public innovation and beneficiaries of the tested models. Through the project, they will gain access to a structured



framework that supports rapid, low-cost solution testing with citizen involvement.2. Business support organisations and social innovation intermediaries – responsible for implementing the incubator model, managing selection processes, providing mentoring, and supporting teams in preparing pilot-ready prototypes. Their experience and links with the innovation ecosystem are crucial for the effective delivery and future scalability of the project.3. Local residents and communities – including students, seniors, suburban residents, and people from disadvantaged groups. They will co-create the challenges and participate in hackathons and solution development. The project creates opportunities to build civic agency, strengthen skills, and increase engagement in public life.4. Universities and research institutions – as knowledge partners supporting the design process, providing data, expert input, and engaging students and early-stage researchers. Their involvement ensures higher quality outputs and strengthens the link between education and practical problem-solving. Project activities will be designed to enable the active involvement of these groups at all stages, from ideation to implementation and validation of results.

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. Higher education and research institution	Research and education in social innovation, urban development, civic engagement.	(depending on partners)
2. NGO	Social inclusion, community participation, youth and civic activation.	(depending on partners)
3. Interest group	Local residents, students, youth and community representatives engaged in co-creation processes.	(depending on partners)
4. Business support organisation	Support for social innovation, incubation, and capacity-building for public services.	(depending on partners)
5. Local public authority	Public service delivery, local development, strategic planning and innovation.	(depending on partners)

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 Culture

PA Education

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 project partnership is currently under development. Initial discussions are taking place with institutions from different parts of the Baltic Sea Region that have expressed interest in the project's thematic scope and potential for implementation. At this stage, no formal partnership agreements have been signed. We plan to involve local public authorities from mid-sized and larger cities that are willing to test or adapt the Urban Challenge Incubator model within their local contexts. These cities often serve as innovation hubs and provide a strong foundation for building transnational cooperation. At the same time, the project aims to include smaller municipalities functionally linked to urban centres. This balanced composition will support the co-design of a flexible and scalable solution, adaptable to various local governance structures. The partnership is also expected to include business support organisations and social innovation intermediaries. These actors will play a key role in coordinating selection processes, mentoring teams, and preparing solutions for testing. Their involvement will strengthen the project's practical orientation and contribute to effective implementation and dissemination of outcomes. Higher education and research institutions will complement the consortium by providing expert knowledge, access to research and data, and involving students and early-stage researchers in project activities. Their participation will ensure the relevance, analytical depth, and quality assurance of the project's results. The final partnership will bring together diverse perspectives—urban and suburban, institutional and civic—while ensuring geographic and functional variety. Partners will be selected based on their relevant experience, openness to collaboration, and ability to apply and scale up the project results within different contexts across the Baltic Sea Region.

11. Workplan

The project will develop and test a model of an Urban Challenge Incubator that supports public institutions in identifying, co-developing and implementing innovative solutions to local challenges. The main activities will include the collection of challenges from public authorities and communities, co-creation processes with stakeholders, a series of challenge-based hackathons, and structured follow-up support to pilot selected solutions. A particular focus will be placed on developing a low-threshold implementation model for public institutions, including a framework for testing solutions in real-life conditions. The pilots will involve selected teams working on concrete, citizen-driven solutions responding to urban and peri-urban challenges, with the support of mentors and experts. The target groups – including municipal staff, students, residents, entrepreneurs and NGOs – will be engaged throughout the whole process: from defining challenges to developing, testing and potentially implementing the solutions. The final outcomes of the project – the incubator model, tested tools and guidelines – will be used by local public authorities and innovation ecosystem actors to embed more participatory, rapid, and low-risk innovation processes into their daily operations. The incubator model will be designed in a way that enables scaling and adaptation in other cities and regions across the Baltic Sea Region.

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	<p>1.Does our focus on developing and piloting an Urban Challenge Incubator primarily in Kraków, with partial inclusion of neighbouring municipalities, meet the expectations for addressing the “cohesive development of small places” under this call?</p> <p>2.Is the combination of hackathon-based co-creation, rapid prototyping, and structured implementation support considered an eligible and valuable methodology for testing public service innovation in small projects?</p> <p>3.Can the pilot activities focus on testing a selection of solutions developed during the project, or is it expected that the full incubator</p>
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	<p>model itself is tested in multiple locations?</p> <p>4. Would transnational value be sufficiently demonstrated if the model is developed locally but designed to be easily transferable and adaptable by partner countries?</p> <p>5. Are business support organisations eligible to lead or co-coordinate public service innovation processes in this type of project, or should leadership remain with local authorities?</p>
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	<p>1. Is it eligible to include remuneration for mentors and experts involved in hackathon processes and pilot testing within the project budget?</p> <p>2. Can costs related to organising events such as hackathons, workshops, and pilot tests—including venue rental, catering, transportation, and small prizes—be considered direct eligible costs?</p> <p>3. Is it possible to allocate a separate budget line for the preparation of communication and educational materials (e.g. incubator handbook, toolkits, visual content for citizen engagement)?</p>
Any other questions	-

15. Additional information

As KPT, we cooperate on a daily basis with the Krakow Metropolis Association in the implementation of numerous projects that directly improve the quality of life of residents—including by raising the standard of public transport use and improving air quality. The Metropolis supports and inspires by enabling free networking and building multi-sector partnerships. It creates a space for exchanging views and experiences, serving as an excellent framework for developing solutions that are complementary across the metropolitan area. At the same time, as a member of ENoLL (European Network of Living Labs), we act as an ambassador of the values of co-creation and open innovation. We provide value to our members and stakeholders by offering opportunities to develop their capacities and knowledge—thereby strengthening them in developing and scaling impactful innovative products and services. In doing so, we also support them in expanding the value they bring to their own communities and ecosystems.

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>

