



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	Regenerative Prosperity - Rethinking the Prosperity of Small Municipalities
Short name of the project	Rethink Prosperity
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

1.1. Resilient economies and communities
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4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Varsinais-Suomen liitto
Name of the organisation (English)	Regional Council of Southwest Finland
Website	https://varsinais-suomi.fi/en/
Country	FI



Type of Partner	Regional public authority
	regional council, 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 initiative partners are currently looking for possible partners in the BSR area. There is ongoing discussion about partnership with University of Tartu, Estonia, who have ongoing research in the field of social innovation and thus specific expertise and empirical case examples of the needed regenerative livelihoods and social innovation. An inquiry has also been sent to Uppsala University's Gotland's campus, and from their networks also new-to-BSR-partners may be found.

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The project seeks to address the difficult situation faced by many small and/or rural places to ensure well-being and a good quality of life to their residents even when it is challenging to create eco-socially sustainable growth of their population and economy. The situation calls for regenerative prosperity: for a new understanding of prosperity and the ways of producing it.

The challenge has three aspects: First, there is a gap between many researchers and the academic community that look for post-growth and regenerative solutions to prosperity and the practitioners in development work who often operate strongly in terms of linear growth-economy. This gap of understanding needs to be addressed so that the science-based understanding has a possibility to turn into practical development work. Second, good examples, learning, and networks are needed for small municipalities to be able to generate novel ideas. Third, there is a need for new ideas on how public sector actors can support citizen and SME-led forms of regenerative prosperity such as sharing economy activities.

As an initiative long term goal the ideas of regenerative prosperity that bridge the gap between

research and practitioners would be integrated to regional development via, for example, the structure, implementation and monitoring of regional strategies.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project aims to create solutions for how to maintain vitality and prosperity in these places: to enhance liveability and resilience by increasing understanding of regenerative prosperity, thus supporting local communities to rethink their activities in ways that combine sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable ways of generating income.

Target groups are small municipalities and areas that experience decline in their economy and population and look for solutions for smart adaptation. Within these municipalities and regions the targeted actors are the people working on public and business development in e.g. municipal organisations, business support organisations, NGOs and SMEs. The aim is to invite people from different sectors to discuss regenerative prosperity together.

Rethinking prosperity in decreasing areas is crucial for keeping them within the cohesive development of the larger areas they are a part of, as urbanization leads to regional disparity and, seemingly inevitably, to some municipalities' decline.

For just sustainability transitions that support and maintain equality and peaceful local communities, it is of course crucial to address the voluntary sustainability actions of private citizens and civil society actors. Still, in addition to volunteer activities, we must also create genuinely regenerative and sustainable livelihoods that rethink the social and economic fabric of the economic systems.

6. Transnational relevance

In all countries across the Baltic Sea Region, there are small and rural places struggling with population decline and with it, also economic decline. Similarly, the challenge of creating new prosperity and simultaneously transitioning our societies to work sustainably within planetary boundaries is shared among the region. In order to create real impact, the change needs to happen locally, regionally and internationally. This can be done by operating on different areas in the Baltic Sea Region.

Our economies are intertwined and we all operate in the same system, which means that it is beneficial to engage in similar discussions in multiple locations and to especially develop the ideas for future regenerative livelihoods together within the EU economic region. Together we create ideas that can provide the right conditions for regenerative communities across the Baltic Sea region. Additionally, there are multiple possible subtopics where transnational relevance is apparent, such as slow tourism to enhance resilience and attractiveness.

Although the concrete solutions are inevitably tailored by the locals to the local context, transnationally, we can use peer learning as a method to learn how to foster and support said locals to be innovative and creative.

The chosen example sites of regenerative prosperity also act as peer learning and coaching partners to each other and create an insightful set of examples from different cultural contexts.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

Practitioners will have the chance to gain new knowledge, to meet each other and brainstorm together. Especially the deliberative focus of the conversations about the topic and the practitioners' needs builds trust for further cooperation initiatives. Actors from different sectors get the chance to meet each other at example sites. The project will support generating and promoting new ideas, and increase the transnational common understanding on the topic within the partner regions and the Baltic Sea Region in general.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The project enables creating new local, regional and macroregional networks that understand and are able to develop regenerative livelihoods transnationally in the economic region.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

Citizens will have the chance to take part in discussions about regenerative resilience and what it could entail in their community. The discussions will also encompass concrete examples. The discussions aim to spread awareness among local communities about the possible practical examples that could also be established in their communities. This could mean e.g. organising a deliberative discussion or dialogue among citizens at each example site.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

By increasing discussion, rethinking, and creating an understanding of concrete solutions, we can foster practical ideas to develop regenerative and resilient communities.

This is valuable particularly in unpredictable times, when the support of the community and resilience is highlighted. It is essential to find resilience that is not as dependent on, for example, global trade routes or their geopolitical security and functioning. Local food and other local products, local services, and local circular economy can coexist with global economy. It brings flexibility and resilience to the big picture.

8. Target groups

The main target groups are those actors who are active in developing the prosperity and economy of the municipality or area concerned. Such actors can be public authorities, education and research organisations, SMEs (especially social enterprises), and NGOs. The project aims to support their needs to foster local, sustainable, and regenerative prosperity. The target group consists especially of people and organizations whose practical needs can be met with this type of deliberative peer discussions and learning and who have the capacity to take forward the concrete ideas that the discussions will generate.



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	sustainable economy and (social) innovation	Finland, Estonia, Sweden
2. Local public authority	overall focus on local prosperity	Finland, Estonia, Sweden
3. NGO	solving different societal issues and providing non-profit services, capacity to act as employers	Finland, Estonia, Sweden
4. Small and medium enterprise	mission-driven enterprises, capacity to act as employers	Finland, Estonia, Sweden
5. Business support organisation	with an interest in developing sustainable and regenerative economic structures in the area	Finland, Estonia, Sweden

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 Innovation

PA Spatial Planning

PA Tourism

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

There is ongoing discussion with Helsinki-Uusimaa region, who is potentially interested in partnership. As Regional Councils both the Regional Council of Southwest Finland and Helsinki-Uusimaa region cover and serve many of the targeted small and declining municipalities. The councils are also responsible for supporting innovation work and securing the regions' prosperity while our societies change. For these reasons the suggested project is of great importance to these organisations.

There is ongoing discussion about partnership with University of Tartu and two other inquiries have been sent to Swedish and Norwegian organisations. It is intended that the different actors can also be brought together face to face and visit each others example cites, so it is preferred to find the partners near Finland.

Each partner region will find an example site and arrange discussion events. Shared tasks of the project, such as compiling the science-based facilitation structure, will be done jointly with more effort from some of the partners while some will only be responsible for the regional efforts.

11. Workplan

1. Finding local or regional example sites on regenerative prosperity from each partner area (e.g. cultural centres, SME's from the mission/well-being economy, non-profit service providers, self-sufficiency professionals, community supported agriculture practitioners, other social innovation sites; for example in Paide and Järva municipality, Estonia there are suitable sites: Sargvere village community house and an innovative library bus).
2. Expert consultations and creating a framework for knowledge-based facilitation: What should we talk about to close the gap between research (in the field of postgrowth or regenerative economy) and practical development work?
3. Refining understanding of local and regional needs on rethinking prosperity: consultations with target groups and citizens.
4. Organising deliberative discussions or dialogue with different representatives of the target groups at the example sites (with input from point 2. and 3., above).
5. Coaching and supporting the participants to generate their concrete development ideas and partnerships on rethought prosperity.
6. Bringing together the findings from the different areas and regions, and based on the findings, refining the discussion model to become replicable.

The project team and the stakeholders will be particularly sensitive to listening to the local needs. The deliberative discussions, engaging also local citizens, will be a necessary tool for listening and further input.

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	Are there other important and closely linked EU SBSR goals that should be integrated into the iterated version of the idea / application? E.g. smart adaptation.
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	Is it problematic if in the more refined budgeting the costs are dealt unevenly among different countries? This is to say: Is it possible to build a project so that the two potential Finnish partners have notably larger budget combined than the partners from other BSR countries?
Any other questions	(max. 1.000 characters incl. spaces)

15. Additional information

The project significance has been proved in the Interreg BSR funded core project We make transition! where civil sector actors potential for systemic sustainability transitions has been supported and explored. This work has made it clear that not just civil sector and voluntary actions, but also the business sector, SME's and economic development need to take into account the demand for systemic change to enable truly regenerative prosperity.

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>