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	Implementation of wastewater treatment systems in non-sewered households – a model for rural municipalities
Short name of the project	SafeWater
Previous calls	yes ◯ no ◉
Seed money support	yes ◯ no ◉

2. Programme priority

	2. Water-smart societies

3. Programme objective

	2.1. Sustainable waters

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	*Fundacja K2 Solutions*
Name of the organisation (English)	K2 Solutions Foundation
Website	*www.k2solutions.pl*
Country	PL

Type of Partner	NGO
	Non-governmental organisations, such as Greenpeace, WWF, 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 following organisations are taking part in a project within the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme for the first time:
- Puck Municipality (Poland)
- K2 Solutions Foundation (Poland),
- Hässleholm Municipality (Sweden),
- Administration of Lithuania Minor Protected Areas (Lithuania)

None of these organisations have previously participated in projects funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and are therefore new to the Programme.

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

In the Baltic Sea Region, a significant share of rural residents and seasonal homeowners remain disconnected from public sewerage systems. According to Eurostat data (2022), only around 70% of the population in Poland is connected to centralised sewage networks, with much lower rates in rural municipalities. In Latvia, this share is 66%, in Lithuania 78%, and in Estonia 86%. While countries such as Germany, Finland, and Denmark report connection rates exceeding 96–98%, non-sewered properties still exist in remote rural areas and among holiday homes increasingly used as year-round residences.In such locations, wastewater is often discharged directly into the ground or stored in outdated, leaky septic tanks that are rarely emptied. This leads to groundwater contamination, eutrophication of nearby water bodies, odour nuisance, and public health risks, particularly in tourist regions and nature-sensitive areas.SafeWater directly addresses this issue by installing affordable, decentralised wastewater treatment and greywater reuse systems in non-sewered buildings, especially in areas

where central infrastructure is unlikely to be developed. The proposed model is both demonstrative and replicable. Its implementation can significantly improve environmental conditions in rural municipalities and recreational zones across the Baltic Sea Region.

5.2 Focus of the call

The project supports the cohesive development of small municipalities and rural areas by offering a practical solution to one of the most persistent infrastructure gaps in the Baltic Sea Region: the lack of access to public sewerage. Centralised systems are not technically or economically feasible in many such communities, especially in areas with dispersed housing or seasonal population pressure. As a result, wastewater is often discharged untreated into the environment, posing risks to public health and polluting local and regional water bodies. SafeWater provides an affordable, scalable, and regulation-compliant model for decentralised wastewater treatment in single households or small clusters. The project demonstrates a viable pathway for other municipalities facing similar conditions by installing the pilot system in underserved communities. By providing a ready-to-replicate model that can be adapted across the region, the project contributes to more cohesive and resilient rural development aligned with the Programme's objectives, especially in areas with limited institutional and financial capacity.

6. Transnational relevance

Lack of sewerage and uncontrolled wastewater discharge occur across the Baltic Sea Region, though the scale varies. Transnational cooperation allows testing the same system under different conditions (climate, legal, social), increasing its universality. It also enables the development of a joint set of recommendations for local municipalities.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project builds trust between local communities and institutions by jointly addressing a sensitive and often neglected issue: the lack of wastewater infrastructure. Through hands-on collaboration, pilot installations, and transparent communication, citizens gain confidence in public environmental initiatives. This trust lays the foundation for further cross-border cooperation in areas such as decentralized water management and climate adaptation.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

SafeWater initiates a practical network of rural municipalities across the Baltic Sea Region that face similar challenges with non-sewered households. Through shared pilot results, joint documentation, and knowledge exchange, the project builds a durable collaboration platform that can expand to include more regions, technology providers, and policymakers.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

The project reaches residents directly affected by environmental risks, especially in small villages and seasonal housing areas. By involving homeowners in the design, installation, and monitoring of wastewater solutions, the Programme becomes tangible and relevant at the household level. This engagement fosters stronger environmental awareness and promotes EU visibility in everyday life.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

Untreated wastewater discharge due to lack of infrastructure poses immediate risks to human health and water quality, especially in tourist-heavy regions. SafeWater@Home offers a fast, replicable response by delivering turnkey treatment systems that can be installed even in remote locations. The project equips municipalities with tools to react to environmental crises without waiting for large-scale infrastructure investments.

8. Target groups

The project targets groups that are directly affected by the lack of access to sewerage systems and are responsible for addressing the resulting environmental and public health risks. These include:Local public authorities in rural and peri-urban areas are responsible for local infrastructure, environmental protection, land use, and public health. They play a central role in implementing and scaling up the model and will be engaged from design to the evaluation of the pilot actions.Sanitary and environmental agencies are responsible for monitoring compliance with wastewater standards and preventing groundwater and soil contamination. Their input is essential in validating system performance and ensuring regulatory alignment.Residents and homeowners of non-sewered properties, both permanent and seasonal. As the final users of the system, their behaviour and acceptance are critical to success. The project will involve them directly through training and system use.Local contractors and installers, who will be involved in the implementation, allowing the model to be realistically applied in future replication by municipalities.All groups will be engaged through joint planning, pilot testing, local consultations, capacity-building, and dissemination. Each group not only benefits from the results but contributes their practical knowledge and local context, ensuring relevance and long-term use of the project's outputs.

	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	*Wastewater planning and infrastructure provision in rural areas*	*Poland, Sweden, Lithuania*
2.	National public authority	*Environmental protection and sanitation supervision*	*Poland, Sweden, Lithuania*
3.	Interest group	*Homeowners and rural residents without sewerage connection*	*Poland, Sweden, Lithuania*

4. Small and medium enterprise	*Local contractors for installation and maintenance of treatment systems*	*Poland, Sweden, Lithuania*

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 Nutri
PA Hazards
PA Bio-economy

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 comprises four organisations from Poland, Sweden, and Lithuania, bringing together practical implementation capacity, local governance experience, and transnational outreach.

1. K2Solutions Foundation (Poland) – Lead partner. An NGO experienced in environmental research and practical sustainability solutions in rural contexts. K2Solutions is responsible for overall project coordination, system specification, pilot installation in Poland, and the preparation of replication materials.
2. Puck Municipality (Poland)—Partner. This local public authority manages coastal areas with significant seasonal tourism pressure. Puck Municipality provides the testing grounds for the Polish pilot, engages directly with local communities and summer house owners, supports practical implementation, and promotes project results through local policy and public awareness initiatives.
2. Hässleholm Municipality (Sweden) – Partner. A local public authority with extensive rural infrastructure planning and citizen engagement knowledge. Hässleholm will coordinate the Swedish pilot implementation, engage homeowners, and contribute to evaluation and policy-level recommendations.
3. Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (ALAL) – Partner. ALAL provides transnational

knowledge transfer and will support regional dissemination in Lithuania. It ensures the project outputs reach other rural municipalities across the Baltic region and reflect wider policy challenges.

The selected partners represent the main types of actors affected by the challenge and responsible for delivering solutions: NGOs, municipalities, and municipal associations. Their geographic spread ensures that the pilots represent different infrastructural, legislative, and cultural contexts.

11. Workplan

The project will follow a practical, step-by-step structure that leads from challenge identification to tested solutions, ready for replication by rural municipalities across the Baltic Sea Region. Main activities:
Preparation and site selection: Two pilot locations will be selected in non-sewered rural areas in Poland and Sweden. Sites will be chosen based on environmental sensitivity, lack of infrastructure, and community engagement potential.
System design and procurement: A low-cost, decentralised wastewater treatment model will be finalised, including:a biological pre-treatment (e.g., anaerobic or aerobic chamber),a filtration and polishing unit (e.g., sand, gravel, or mineral media),A greywater collection and reuse unit (e.g., irrigation, toilet flushing).
Pilot installation and commissioning: Local contractors will carry out system installation with technical oversight from the project team. Homeowners will be directly involved and trained in maintenance and monitoring.
Monitoring and evaluation: For a minimum of three months, the pilots will be monitored for system performance (BOD, COD, nitrates, E. coli), cost-efficiency, user satisfaction, and regulatory compliance.
Capacity building and knowledge sharing: Target groups will be engaged through local workshops, open demonstration events, site visits, and co-creation of recommendations.
Documentation and replication toolkit: A practical toolkit will be developed, including technical drawings, cost tables, installation manuals, monitoring templates, and policy briefs. This output will help local authorities independently implement the solution.
Dissemination and advocacy: The solution will be promoted among rural municipalities, sanitary inspectorates, and regional authorities through targeted online communication, national association networks, and a transnational final event.
Pilot objective: To demonstrate that non-sewered properties can be sustainably and legally served by decentralised treatment solutions that are feasible for both homeowners and municipalities, even in remote or seasonal locations.
Target group involvement: Local authorities and sanitation officers will be engaged in planning, permitting and upscaling. Residents and homeowners will directly operate and evaluate the systems. SMEs will install and maintain them. NGOs will support awareness campaigns.Use of project outcomes: Final outputs will be used by local public authorities and rural residents to implement similar systems independently. National inspectorates and regional agencies will use the technical results and monitoring data to update local guidelines and planning frameworks.

12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	*EUR 470,000.00*
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	*EUR 0.00*
Total budget (including preparatory costs)	**EUR 470,000.00**

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

This project is designed for municipalities that currently lack tools to address the issue of wastewater. The implementation indicators can support future public investment decisions at the local level.

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