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	VERDI – Visual and Environmental Resilience Design Interventions for Small Towns and Peripheral Communities
Short name of the project	VERDI
Previous calls	yes ◯ no ◉
Seed money support	yes ◯ no ◉

2. Programme priority

	1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

	1.1. Resilient economies and communities

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Politechnika Gdańska
Name of the organisation (English)	Gdańsk University of Technology
Website	https://pg.edu.pl/en
Country	PL

Type of Partner	Higher education and research institution

Contact person 1	
Name	Katarzyna Bobkowska
Email	katbobko@pg.edu.pl
Phone	+48 889 072 920
Contact person 2	
Name	Jakub Szulwic
Email	szulwic@pg.edu.pl
Phone	+48 609 271 271

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.

Lubichowo Municipality (Poland), expected: municipalities in Latvia, Germany NGO or university from Lithuania; Swedish digital solutions partner.

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

In many smaller towns and rural municipalities across the Baltic Sea Region, the main street is not just a traffic corridor—it often serves as the heart of social and functional life. This is the case in Lubichowo, a village in northern Poland, where a regional road runs through a compact residential and service area, forming a classic linear street frontage. Along this axis, key services, shops, administrative buildings, two main bus stops, and the everyday lives of both residents and seasonal visitors are concentrated.Despite its central role, the street space is not welcoming—there is a lack of greenery, heat islands emerge, and there is little shade or space to rest. The limited aesthetics, excess of concrete, and strong sun exposure in summer are particularly problematic for vulnerable groups: children commuting to school, seniors accessing public services, or residents waiting for public transport. The public space neither supports social interaction nor fulfills ecological or climate-adaptive functions.The issue we address is that this central street fails to serve as a social or environmental space. Urban greenery is nearly absent due to lack of soil access, paved surfaces, and legal restrictions related to the ownership of the road corridor. Green practices—like flower planting or herb boxes—do exist but remain hidden in backyards, while frontages stay bare, often due to unclear responsibilities or fear of vandalism.The project responds to this challenge with innovative,

low-cost, nature-based micro-interventions—such as façade planters, shared planter boxes, green walls, or shaded bus stops—co-designed with residents, schools, local NGOs, and entrepreneurs. Together, we aim to foster a sense of responsibility, climate adaptation, and environmental awareness, rethinking greenery in narrow, constrained public spaces.By combining spatial data (3D models, UAV imaging, thermal photography) with local knowledge and participatory design methods, we will develop a repeatable method for identifying and assessing suitable locations for green micro-interventions. This tool will also benefit other municipalities with similar limitations, supporting the transformation of transit-oriented streets into resilient, welcoming, and community-driven spaces.

5.2 Focus of the call

Our project addresses the call by collaborating with a rural municipality and its community to co-develop scalable, low-cost, inclusive solutions enhancing liveability, climate resilience, and social cohesion in small Baltic Sea Region towns.The focus is a real challenge: making underused, overheated public streetscapes in small towns more attractive, functional, and socially owned despite limited budgets and constraints. Using Lubichowo, a rural municipality in northern Poland, as a case, we aim to create tools and methods applicable to similar settings.Our two-pronged approach:First, co-develop a digital decision-support tool—a scoring algorithm and spatial dashboard—to help local authorities identify optimal sites for micro-green interventions in constrained streetscapes. This empowers data-poor municipalities to better use spatial assets.Second, work with schools, seniors, NGOs, shop owners, and local leaders to build a model for social participation, ownership, and maintenance, fostering trust, agency, collaboration, and long-term commitment.The project strengthens community bonds by making greenery a shared responsibility. It promotes balanced development by giving small, rural places a voice and method for climate-conscious urban transformation tailored to their capacities. Solutions are replicable, educational, and foster a culture of collaboration and care for public space.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenges addressed in this project — such as heat-prone public spaces, limited greenery in rural main streets, and the lack of social ownership over public areas — are shared by many small towns and villages across the Baltic Sea Region. While the local contexts differ, the underlying conditions are similar: constrained space, limited technical capacity, low budgets, ageing populations, and underused civic potential.
Transnational cooperation is needed because:
-We want to build a replicable method that works across diverse administrative, spatial, and cultural contexts. Only by working with other municipalities and regions can we ensure that our tools (e.g. the micro-greenery location algorithm or the community engagement model) are transferable and adaptable.
-We benefit from exchanging know-how on governance, civic innovation and green infrastructure among local actors who typically have little access to international networks. This is especially relevant for rural areas and smaller places often overlooked in innovation funding.
-Our academic and civic partners can compare technical approaches (e.g. geospatial data use, UAV mapping, participation methods) and jointly refine them for higher effectiveness and simplicity — benefiting regions with fewer resources.

By cooperating across borders, we not only test and scale the solution, but also strengthen the visibility and voice of small towns in the Baltic Sea Region as actors of innovation, sustainability and social cohesion.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

Our project unites local authorities, research institutions, NGOs, and residents across the Baltic Sea Region, many with limited prior collaboration. We build trust by tackling a shared challenge: greening and socially activating everyday spaces in small towns through accessible, innovative methods.We promote mutual understanding by co-creating tools, piloting them locally, and openly documenting successes and failures. Each partner brings unique local perspectives while jointly testing scalable, adaptable methods.Through workshops, participatory design, peer reviews, and shared ownership, the partnership lays groundwork for lasting cooperation beyond the project. We connect rarely collaborating actors—municipal officers, school communities, spatial data experts—showing that successful transformation requires crossing traditional boundaries.This project acts as a catalyst for future initiatives combining social innovation, green transition, and spatial resilience in peripheral areas.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

This project aims to create and strengthen a cross-sectoral, transnational network focused on spatial data, social participation, and climate adaptation in small and rural communities. It unites municipalities, universities, civil society, and local leaders—often isolated in peripheral Baltic Sea Region areas—by sharing knowledge, co-developing methods, and collaboratively testing tools to build a lasting cooperation ecosystem.The network extends beyond institutions, involving school groups, youth councils, senior clubs, and local entrepreneurs in hands-on learning and action. Knowledge and tools are documented and shared across borders to support future partnerships beyond the pilot phase.Through structured exchanges, shared outputs, and open communication, the project establishes a durable network dedicated to inclusive, green, and spatially just transformation in underrepresented BSR territories.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

The project focuses on engaging citizens directly in improving everyday public spaces through micro-green interventions (e.g. façade planters, rainwater-fed pots, modular greenery). By inviting residents, shop owners, and local NGOs to co-design and maintain small green installations, the project empowers people to take visible, measurable action in their environment. Digital tools (e.g. geospatial maps) and community workshops will help identify the best spots and showcase positive impact. The project fosters ownership, creativity and environmental awareness, especially in smaller municipalities where civic participation opportunities are limited. Citizens are not just consulted—they co-create and co-monitor the solutions, making EU programmes visible and relevant in their daily lives.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

In the face of a rapidly changing urban and climatic environment, especially in small towns and rural areas with limited resources, the ability to respond swiftly to unpredictable events becomes a key element of sustainable development and community resilience. Our project not only addresses the current issues of lack of greenery and unwelcoming public space but, above all, builds a system and culture of adaptability that enables flexible, proactive, and immediate actions.

Swift response here primarily means:
-Modularity and scalability of solutions
-Building local readiness and responsibility
-Creating socio-ecological resilience
-Replicability and knowledge sharing
In this way, the project becomes not only an effort to improve the aesthetics and functionality of a single street but a foundation for a flexible, proactive urban strategy capable of rapidly responding to future threats and needs.

8. Target groups

Primary: Municipal governments of small towns and rural communities.
Secondary: Residents, especially active citizens, local businesses, schools.
Tertiary: Researchers, educators, and NGOs working on environmental resilience.

	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 authorities are responsible for the implementation of operational and organizational procedures.	Poland, Lithuania, Latvia
2.	Higher education and research institution	Universities with expertise in spatial data, remote sensing, and social sciences, supporting mapping, algorithm design, and community-based planning and evaluation.	Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Sweden

3. NGO	Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in community development, environmental protection, participatory urban planning, and social innovation.	Poland, Lithuania, Germany

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 Bio-economy
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

Lead applicant: Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland
Confirmed partner: Lubichowo Municipality (PL)
Planned partners: Lithuania (small town/municipality and university and NGO), Germany(university or community innovation org. or municipality), Sweden (partner focused on public space, apps or civic tech), Latvia (small town/municipality and university)
VERDIS brings together public authorities, academia, and civic groups for spatially-informed green micro-actions.

11. Workplan

1. Mapping of spatial issues and stakeholder input 2. UAV and sensor-based data collection (e.g. thermal, light pollution) 3. Participatory co-design workshops 4. Pilot micro-interventions (green corners, light screens, shading) 5. Evaluation and adaptation6. Joint publication of the VERDIS toolkit and local exhibitions

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	Can student co-creation be included as part of the participatory engagement process?

15. Additional information

The project builds on interdisciplinary academic work, existing community engagement, and pilot sensing in rural settings. It links education, innovation, and civic responsibility into spatial resilience.

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