Project idea form - small projects

Version 2.1

Registration no. (filled in by MA/JS only) _____

Project Idea Form

Date of submission 05/06/2025

1. Project idea identification

Project idea name	AquaMinds. Re-thinking Skills and Professions through Water Intelligence
Short name of the project	AquaMinds
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)	AKADEMIA GORNICZO-HUTNICZA IM. STANISLAWA STASZICA W KRAKOWIE
Name of the organisation (English)	AGH University of Krakow
Website	https://www.agh.edu.pl/en
Country	PL

Type of Partner	Higher education and research institution

Contact person 1	
Name	Dagmara Lewicka
Email	lewicka@agh.edu.pl
Phone	+48885978917
Contact person 2	
Name	*(max. 100 characters incl. spaces)*
Email	*(max. 100 characters incl. spaces)*
Phone	*(max. 100 characters incl. spaces)*

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.

AGH University of Krakow (PL)
Constructor University (DE)
Centre for Education and Enterprise Support (PL)

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

Despite progress in water infrastructure and policy across the Baltic Sea Region, many communities continue to face the consequences of unsustainable water use and low public engagement with water issues. Climate pressures, diffuse pollution from agriculture, and ageing infrastructure place increasing strain on local water bodies. Yet a critical underlying challenge remains overlooked: the lack of water-related competence among educators, students, and local actors who could contribute meaningfully to long-term solutions.The AquaMinds project addresses this challenge by focusing on the gap in water literacy and sustainability skills within vocational and secondary education. In many countries of the region, especially outside large urban centres, educational institutions are not adequately equipped to teach students how water systems function or how they can be protected and sustainably managed. This is particularly evident in sectors such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, and tourism, where everyday professional practices directly influence water usage and quality. Learners often graduate without the knowledge or tools to make informed decisions related to water, either in their work or in their communities. According to the EEA, over 60% of surface waters in Europe still do not meet good ecological status, with the Baltic Sea among the most affected regions by nutrient loads and local pollutants. Local authorities and small utilities key stakeholders in local water governance, frequently

lack the capacity to connect technical improvements with broader awareness-raising or educational efforts.The target groups of this project: educators, VET learners, municipalities, and civil society organisations are well positioned to shape water-smart behaviours but need support in developing knowledge, skills, and participatory methods. This is especially relevant in rural or peripheral areas, where access to up-to-date environmental education and innovation networks is limited.AquaMinds proposes to tackle this challenge by creating transnational learning environments where schools, training centres, and local actors can co-develop water-smart competences and implement visible, small-scale actions that build resilience and awareness in their communities

5.2 Focus of the call

AquaMinds directly supports the cohesive development of smaller places and rural communities by strengthening their capacity to respond to water-related challenges through education, participation, and local innovation. In many nonmetropolitan areas, water systems are under pressure from diffuse pollution, climate shifts, and low public engagement. At the same time, vocational schools and local authorities often work in isolation and lack access to up to date resources or collaborative tools that can build local resilience.This project aims to bring relevant knowledge, skills, and partnerships into regions that are typically overlooked in water policy discussions. By focusing on vocational education and linking schools with municipalities, water utilities, and civil society actors, the project helps integrate water-smart thinking into everyday community practices.Through regional showcases, practical learning modules, and tailored guidance for educators, AquaMinds will equip people with the tools they need to take part in the green transition. It gives smaller regions the opportunity to experiment, adapt, and share their own approaches to sustainable water use in a way that respects local context while promoting transnational cooperation across the Baltic Sea Region.

6. Transnational relevance

The challenges surrounding sustainable water use are shared across the Baltic Sea Region, yet the capacity to respond varies widely between countries, regions, and sectors. From nutrient leakage in agriculture to ageing infrastructure and limited environmental education, local communities face similar pressures but often lack opportunities to learn from one another. AquaMinds addresses this gap by fostering a collaborative environment where partners can co-design educational tools and methods that reflect shared values while respecting local differences. Transnational cooperation is essential for three main reasons. First, it allows partners to compare water-related challenges across diverse territorial settings and to identify common patterns in education gaps, stakeholder engagement, and knowledge transfer. Second, it enables the co-creation of water-smart learning resources that are both adaptable and grounded in tested practices, drawing on the varied strengths of academic institutions, innovation clusters, local governments, and civil society groups. Third, it offers a platform for students and educators to engage with peers in other countries, helping to build a European identity rooted in environmental responsibility. Water challenges are universal. The impact of water scarcity, pollution, and mismanagement does not stop at borders, nor should the responses. Education around sustainable water use should be designed and delivered across regions and nations to ensure that young people are equipped to understand and address water issues wherever they arise. A regional approach with a transnational learning space is vital to prepare learners for shared environmental futures. Each partner brings unique expertise shaped by their national and local

contexts. The involvement of organisations from Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Germany, and Norway creates a dynamic learning environment where ideas can be exchanged across geographical and institutional boundaries.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives
AquaMinds aims to foster lasting cooperation by building trust among educators, researchers, local authorities, and water sector stakeholders. Partners will collaborate through joint learning design, co-creation workshops, and regional pilot actions that bring together different actors in meaningful dialogue. This process creates not only technical outputs but also shared understanding and mutual respect across disciplines and borders. Involving partners from education, innovation, and governance, the project forms new alliances that are likely to extend beyond its duration. Regular peer exchange, joint review of pilot results, and inclusive communication will help cultivate a foundation for future projects focused on water resilience, green skills, and youth engagement.
Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR N/A

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens
AquaMinds engages directly with learners, educators, and local communities by embedding water sustainability into real-life learning experiences. Rather than treating citizens as passive recipients, the project actively involves them in shaping and testing small-scale solutions for local water challenges. These actions will take place in everyday settings such as classrooms, neighbourhood green spaces, or small water systems, making the Programme tangible and meaningful.Workshops, public events, and school-community collaborations will ensure broad outreach beyond formal education, encouraging families, local groups, and small municipalities to take part. The visibility of student-led projects and shared results will help build wider awareness of the Programme's aims, turning educational actions into community dialogue on sustainable water futures.
Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges N/A

8. Target groups

AquaMinds focuses on a core set of target groups that are both directly affected by water sustainability challenges and capable of contributing meaningfully to local solutions through

education, action, and community engagement.

The primary target group is educators and trainers in vocational and secondary education, particularly in sectors where water use and water-related impacts are significant, such as agriculture, construction, hospitality, and tourism. Many of these educators lack access to contemporary environmental resources or practical methods to engage students in place-based sustainability issues. Through capacity-building workshops, cocreation processes, and access to adaptable teaching materials, these professionals will gain the tools needed to embed water-smart thinking into daily instruction.

The second key group includes students and VET learners who will participate directly in water literacy activities and local pilot actions. These young people are future professionals whose everyday decisions will shape water use in multiple sectors. The project will give them the opportunity to develop green competences, take ownership of real-world solutions, and build civic responsibility around environmental challenges.

A third group includes local and regional authorities, as well as small utilities or public service providers. These actors often operate close to water systems but with limited strategic capacity for community engagement or educational outreach. Their involvement in hosting pilots, offering local data, and supporting microprojects will be essential for turning knowledge into action. Finally, civil society organisations and community groups will be involved in awareness-raising, outreach, and the scaling of learning outcomes beyond institutional boundaries. Their participation will support inclusion, visibility, and uptake across different parts of society.

	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	Sustainability education, water-related research, curriculum innovation, and knowledge transfer in green and blue skills development	Poland (Małopolska, Podkarpackie), Estonia (Harju), Lithuania (Vilnius), Germany (Bremen), Norway (Vestland)
2.	Education/training centre and school	Vocational and general education delivery, development of water-smart competences, learner engagement, and implementation of sustainability focused learning activities	Poland (Małopolska, Podkarpackie), Estonia (Harju), Lithuania (Vilnius), Germany (Bremen), Norway (Vestland)

3. Regional public authority	Local water management coordination, support for education-environment links, implementation of regional sustainability policies, and stakeholder engagement.	Poland (Małopolska, Podkarpackie), Estonia (Harju), Lithuania (Vilnius), Germany (Bremen), Norway (Vestland)

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 Education

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

The AquaMinds partnership brings together six complementary organisations from across the Baltic Sea Region, each contributing expertise in education, water sustainability, or regional innovation. The composition reflects both sectoral diversity and territorial relevance, enabling a balanced and effective transnational cooperation.
AGH University of Krakow (Poland) acts as Lead Partner, drawing on its strong background in environmental engineering, water-related research, and digital learning tools. AGH will coordinate the project and lead activities on learning design and pilot development.
CWEP – Centre for Education and Enterprise Support (Poland) contributes experience in vocational education, digital innovation, and stakeholder engagement. CWEP will support educator training, regional outreach, and co-development of microprojects with local partners.
JE Estonia is an educational NGO specialising in entrepreneurship and civic education. It brings a deep understanding of how to involve young people in real-world sustainability actions and will lead

activities on student engagement and outreach to secondary schools.
Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce (Vilnius) represents business and educational networks relevant to green skills development. It will facilitate regional links between education providers and water-related sectors, helping test tools and engage employers.
Constructor University (Germany) contributes academic expertise in sustainability, systems thinking, and digital learning environments. It will lead the knowledge-sharing and evaluation components, supporting the transferability of project outputs.
Ocean Hyway Cluster (Norway) offers deep experience in maritime innovation and the blue economy. As a partner rooted in a highly developed water sector, it will provide guidance on sectoral relevance, help contextualise water-smart practices, and support connections between education and industry.
The partnership covers a mix of urban and rural territories, ensuring that perspectives from both advanced innovation hubs and less-connected areas are represented. This diversity strengthens the project's ability to develop adaptable learning approaches.
The partnership remains open and may be expanded to include additional organisations, particularly those working in VET development, water utilities, or regional environmental education, from other Baltic Sea countries not yet represented in the consortium.

11. Workplan

The AquaMinds workplan is organised around four main activities that together build a coherent path from analysis and design to practical testing and long-term impact.
Activity 1: Framework and needs identification. Partners will jointly develop a shared pedagogical and civic framework for water-smart learning. This phase includes analysing current educational practices, identifying existing gaps, and mapping the regional challenges related to sustainable water use. An inventory of available materials and a summary of key institutional needs will support the creation of an evidence-based foundation for the next steps.
Activity 2: Development of educational content and training. Building on the findings, partners will co-create modular educational materials that address relevant water issues, such as pollution, water cycles, and sustainable usage in local sectors. These will be designed for vocational and secondary students and supported by a practical training programme for educators. The materials will promote active learning, realife application, and cooperation between schools and their communities.
Activity 3: Regional pilot actions and student-led microprojects. Each region will implement pilots where learners and teachers apply the developed content to local settings. These will take the form of small-scale microprojects designed and led by students in collaboration with local stakeholders, such as municipalities, water utilities, or environmental organisations. Examples may include water-saving audits, awareness events, or school-based monitoring activities. The pilots will test adaptability of the materials and promote civic involvement through action.
Activity 4: Consolidation and sharing of resultsThe final phase focuses on reviewing outcomes, improving resources, and producing an open-access AquaMinds Toolkit to support further use and replication. All educational materials, microproject templates, and facilitator guidance will be made available through a digital platform. Communication actions and local events will ensure broad outreach among schools, VET providers, and public actors across the region. All activities are designed to involve the target groups from the start. Educators, learners, local authorities, and civil society will not only benefit from the outputs but also actively shape the project throughout its implementation.

12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 450,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 50,000.00
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	How to precisely define result indicators and forms of their verification in the in the full project application?
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	How to technically separate the funding from the program and the case of the Norwegian partner?
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