

# 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	Experience Literature
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Short name of the project	ExpLit
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Previous calls	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>
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Seed money support	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>
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### 2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies
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### 3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities
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### 4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Tukuma pilsētas Kultūras nams
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Name of the organisation (English)	Tukums City Culture Centre
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Website	www.tukumakn.lv
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Country	LV
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Type of Partner	Infrastructure and public service provider
	public transport, utility company (water supply, electricity supply, sewage, gas, waste collection, airport, port, railway, etc.)
<b>Contact person 1</b>	
Name	Dana Kalpina
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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.

Estonian Children's Literature Centre (Eesti Lastekirjanduse Keskus) in cooperation with Estonian Literary Society (Eesti Kirjanduse Seltsi tegevjuht) and Tartu Public Library (Tartu Linnaraamatukogu)- promotes Estonian children's literature through exhibitions, reading programs, author events, and international fairs.

Vilnius Teachers' House (Vilniaus Mokytojų Namai)- cultural hub in Vilnius organizing literary evenings, author talks, and poetry readings. It supports reading promotion.

### 5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

The aim of the project is to foster children's and young people's enjoyment of reading and their engagement with literature as a creative and socially unifying process, thereby countering the growing tendency to replace reading with passive digital content consumption. Through the involvement of professionals from the literary field—authors, editors, and event organizers—the project will offer activities that actively engage young participants: creative workshops, word games, rap and poetry sessions, as well as literature festivals and meetings with writers. These activities will encourage creative expression, strengthen language skills, and enhance a sense of belonging to local culture. This approach directly supports the INTERREG BSR programme's objective to promote cohesive development in regions facing significant demographic and socio-economic challenges. The decline in reading motivation and cultural participation is part of a broader issue—growing territorial disparities and limited access to quality educational and cultural activities in smaller settlements and rural areas. The project addresses this issue by providing innovative, locally adapted solutions based on the needs and interests of children and young people. By involving local and regional municipalities, schools, libraries, cultural centers, and youth organizations, the project strengthens community capacity and

fosters stronger social connections. Literature is used as a tool to promote belonging, identity, and creative collaboration, thereby making these territories more attractive places to live and grow. The proposed activities not only support reading literacy and cultural competence but also encourage intergenerational interaction and small-scale economic activity (local authors, event producers, artists), contributing to the discovery of regional potential and sustainable development. The project demonstrates how cultural participation and education can become transnational tools for reducing inequalities and building resilient communities across the Baltic Sea Region.

We are convinced that literature can be felt and experienced beyond the limits of language. Even a child who cannot yet read can explore literature through listening, observing illustrations, drawing their own interpretations, engaging in interactive games, or participating in activity trails inspired by literary works allowing literature to become a shared cultural space regardless of age or reading ability.

## 5.2 Focus of the call

The project addresses the decline in reading motivation among children and youth, particularly in rural areas, where access to cultural and educational opportunities is often limited. By offering literature-based activities— literature festivals with creative workshops, games and author interactions—it strengthens community cohesion, encourages active participation, and fosters a sense of belonging. The project reveals local cultural potential and contributes to making small and remote places more attractive for young generations, thereby supporting cohesive development and reducing regional disparities in the Baltic Sea region.

Together with our partners, we will co-create and implement literature-based activities tailored to the needs of children and young people in small towns and rural areas across the Baltic Sea Region. These include creative workshops, rap and poetry sessions, interactive reading trails, and meetings with local authors. By embedding these activities in schools, libraries, and cultural centres, we will strengthen community ties, promote cultural participation, and enhance reading motivation. Through cross-border exchange and the involvement of literary professionals, we will share effective practices and co-develop scalable models for using literature to foster identity, inclusion, and resilience in regions facing demographic or socio-economic challenges.

## 6. Transnational relevance

The Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—are three small countries with close geographical and historical ties. Yet, we are also shaped by significant linguistic diversity: three national languages, distinct literary traditions, and relatively low levels of mutual translation and cross-border cultural circulation. This creates communication barriers, especially in literature, where children's and young people's exposure to neighbouring countries' authors is limited. Transnational cooperation is essential to overcome these barriers. By working together, we can create shared experiences of literature that go beyond language—through illustration, audio, performance, movement, and creative interaction. These formats allow children and youth to "experience literature" across borders, regardless of their reading level or language skills. This is particularly important in small towns and rural areas, where access to multilingual cultural content is often minimal. Together, we will co-develop and implement innovative, language-light activities such as interactive literary trails, visual storytelling, creative workshops, rap and poetry sessions, and author meetups that focus on the emotions, themes, and shared cultural values found in children's literature. These activities will be designed to inspire



curiosity and connection—helping young people discover the richness of neighbouring cultures not through translation alone, but through lived experience. Transnational partnership also allows us to exchange methods and develop inclusive models for cultural participation that can be adapted locally. It helps small countries like ours amplify our voices and address shared social challenges more effectively. Through this cooperation, we aim to build a more cohesive, culturally vibrant, and child-friendly Baltic Sea Region.

The project involves four cities from the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, ensuring strong and reliable international cooperation.

## 7. Specific aims to be addressed

### Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

Our partnership builds on existing professional ties and shared goals in literature and youth engagement. Previous collaborations in regional cultural projects have created mutual trust and open communication. This foundation enables smooth cooperation, transparent decision-making, and joint problem-solving. Partnering cities are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, which assures strong international experience and reliability.

Through inclusive activities involving local communities, we aim to strengthen trust not only among partners but also with stakeholders on the ground. Regular exchanges, shared planning, and collective evaluation will deepen relationships. Demonstrating successful cooperation in this project will create momentum for future joint initiatives, expanding networks and reinforcing our commitment to a culturally vibrant and cohesive Baltic Sea Region.

### Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

Our project initiates and sustains vital networks across the Baltic Sea Region by linking cultural institutions, local governments, schools, and youth organizations from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. We promote continuous dialogue through regular meetings, joint events, and shared digital platforms that encourage knowledge exchange and collaboration. By involving UNESCO Creative Cities and regional partners, we build a diverse and resilient network focused on literature and youth engagement. This network fosters long-term cooperation, enabling partners to respond effectively to social and cultural challenges in the BSR. Maintaining inclusive participation and transparent communication ensures the network's durability, strengthens regional cohesion, and supports the sustainable development of cultural initiatives across the Baltic Sea Region.

### Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

Our project brings the Programme closer to citizens by actively involving children, youth, families, and local communities in accessible and engaging literary activities. By organizing events such as creative workshops, interactive reading trails, author meetings, and festivals in small towns and rural areas, we ensure that culture and education reach beyond big cities and institutions. We collaborate closely with schools, libraries, and cultural centres to embed these activities into everyday community life, making the Programme tangible and relevant. Multilingual and language-light formats reduce barriers and invite participation regardless of linguistic background or reading ability. Through these locally rooted activities, the project promotes inclusion (accessibility for people with special needs), strengthens community bonds, and raises awareness of the Programme's objectives, making its benefits visible and meaningful at grassroots level across the Baltic Sea Region.

### Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

Our partnership is designed to be flexible and responsive to emerging challenges by maintaining open communication channels and strong collaboration across all partners. Regular virtual meetings and shared digital platforms enable quick information exchange and coordinated decision-making. The involvement of local institutions such as schools, libraries, and cultural centres ensures we can adapt activities swiftly to changing local needs or unforeseen circumstances.

By building on existing networks and trusted relationships, we can mobilize resources and expertise rapidly to address urgent issues affecting children’s cultural participation and education. This agile approach allows us to modify workshops, events, or outreach methods, ensuring continuous engagement despite disruptions. Overall, our structure supports resilience and prompt action, strengthening the project’s impact and relevance throughout the Baltic Sea Region.

## 8. Target groups

The main target group of the project is children and young people aged 3–18 living in smaller towns and rural areas, where access to cultural and educational opportunities is limited. For example, in Tukums (Latvia), the absence of local vocational and higher education institutions leads to early outmigration after grade 9. The proximity to Riga accelerates this youth drain, causing a gap between generations within the community.

The project aims to engage these children and youth through creative, literature-based activities that foster their sense of belonging, strengthen connections to their local culture, and motivate them to contribute to their hometowns in the future. Additional important target groups include local preschools, schools, libraries, cultural and youth centers, and municipalities. These institutions have the competence and interest to actively implement the project’s activities and embed its results into their ongoing work for child and youth development and community empowerment.

By involving these groups, the project creates a supportive environment that encourages participation, cultural engagement, and social cohesion in rural and small-town settings across the Baltic Sea Region.

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. Education/training centre and school	General education schools, non-formal education providers, libraries, cultural institutions, and youth centres - support outreach to children and young people and families	Latvia (Tukums), Lithuania (Vilnius and regions), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu, regions)

2. Infrastructure and public service provider	Ensure access to cultural and educational infrastructure (e.g. schools, libraries, community centres) and are essential for implementing sustainable, community-based youth engagement initiatives	Latvia (Tukums), Lithuania (Vilnius and regions), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu, regions)
3. Interest group	Authors, educators, librarians, and cultural professionals working with children and youth to promote reading, creativity, and engagement through literature-based activities	Latvia (Tukums), Lithuania (Vilnius and regions), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu, regions)
4. Local public authority	Municipal departments responsible for education, culture, and youth policies, supporting community-based initiatives that strengthen young people's ties to their hometowns	Latvia (Tukums), Lithuania (Vilnius and regions), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu, regions)
5. NGO	Tukums Writers' Association, Estonian Literary Society and other local NGOs promoting literature, cultural activities, and youth engagement within the community	Latvia (Tukums), Lithuania (Vilnius and regions), Estonia (Tallinn and Tartu, regions)

## 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 Culture

PA Tourism

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 partnership currently consists of organizations from Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, each bringing complementary experience in literature, education, and youth engagement across urban and rural settings. Tukums Municipality (Latvia) is the project coordinator. Tukums is a small town in western Latvia (population approx. 16,000), located between the capital city Riga and the Baltic Sea. The wider municipality includes rural areas and villages facing challenges such as youth migration, limited employment opportunities, and low civic engagement. Since 2023, Tukums has held the title of UNESCO City of Literature and is actively developing inclusive literary initiatives to foster creativity and community spirit, particularly among young people.

Estonian Children's Literature Centre (Tallinn, Estonia), though located in the capital, operates nationally and serves as a key institution in promoting children's reading culture across Estonia. It engages schools, libraries, and cultural institutions throughout the country, including rural areas, offering mobile exhibitions, workshops, and author visits that reach beyond urban audiences. Estonia is also home to two UNESCO Creative Cities: Tallinn (Music) and Tartu (Literature), which demonstrates a national commitment to creative and cultural development beyond the capital.

Vilnius Teachers' House (Lithuania) is a cultural and educational centre based in the capital, but it has long-standing experience in coordinating national and regional activities for teachers, youth workers, and families. Its programs extend beyond Vilnius, involving participants from smaller towns and rural regions, especially through travelling events, festivals, and educational outreach. Vilnius is also part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (Design), reflecting the city's investment in cultural innovation and outreach.

These partners were selected not only for their institutional capacity and expertise, but also for their commitment to inclusive cultural work that bridges the gap between capital cities and peripheral areas. Together, they ensure that the project addresses the needs of diverse communities across the



Baltic States.

If the project requires external expert assistance or additional partners, we will reach out to other UNESCO Creative Cities within the Northern Baltic cluster, from which we have just recently returned from our first meeting in Denmark.

## 11. Workplan

The project aims to revitalise children's and young people's connection with literature through creative, participatory, and cross-border experiences. It includes five main components:

### 1. International Children's and Youth Literature Festivals

Three festivals will be organised—one in each partner country (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania)—engaging children and youth aged 3–18 in diverse, interactive literary activities. These will include author meet-ups, creative writing and drawing workshops, storytelling, word games, and performance-based formats like literary-inspired rap. All partners will attend each festival to exchange methods and ensure joint ownership.

### 2. Partner Meetings and Exchange of Experience

Each partner will host an in-person meeting with project partners to:

- Share good practices and insights into youth cultural engagement;
- Co-create a joint activity framework for festivals and outreach;
- Select literary works to be translated and adapted;
- Discuss how to tailor formats to local contexts and community needs.

This ensures that the project content is well-aligned, inclusive, and rooted in each partner region.

### 3. Translation and Literary Award

Selected books will be translated into all project languages to ensure accessibility. A cross-border literary award will be introduced, judged by children and youth. There may be two age categories (e.g., 5–10 and 11–18). Children will also design the physical award object, inspired by the winning book. This pilot element strengthens active participation and cross-cultural dialogue through literature.

### 4. Development of Interactive Materials and/or Exhibitions

The project will produce interactive, literature-inspired resources, including:

- Illustration-based storytelling;
- Outdoor reading and discovery trails;
- Language-light games and learning tools;
- Co-created visual and digital content.

These formats allow inclusive access to literature for children with different abilities, languages, or learning needs.

### 5. Community Engagement through Co-creation

All activities are designed to shift from passive to active participation, making literature an experience of discovery, expression, and identity. Families, teachers, librarians, and local artists will be involved to support sustainability and local ownership.

### Use of Outcomes

Final materials, methods, and translated texts will be used by schools, libraries, municipalities, and cultural centres. They will remain available for further adaptation, sharing, and use across the Baltic Sea Region.



## 12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 420,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR XXX
<b>Total budget (including preparatory costs)</b>	<b>EUR 420,000.00</b>

## 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 many additional descriptions will be required, and how detailed (dates, numbers, etc.) will they need to be if the project idea gets approved?
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	How will the budget distribution be handled — in case the project is approved, will all financial flows go through the lead partner, or will each partner organization have access to their own funds?
Any other questions	How can we evaluate the project results if children's interest in reading does not develop after just one or a few events? How can we assess the long-term impact and results of the project?

## 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>