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	From Wood Waste to Value: An Innovation Platform
Short name of the project	W2V Platform
Previous calls	yes ◯ no ◉
Seed money support	yes ◯ no ◉

2. Programme priority

	3. Climate-neutral societies

3. Programme objective

	3.1. Circular economy

4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Võrumaa Haridus- ja Tehnoloogiakeskus
Name of the organisation (English)	Võru County Education and Technology Centre
Website	www.ewers.ee
Country	EE

Type of Partner	Education/training centre and school
	primary, secondary, pre-school, vocational training, etc.
Contact person 1	
Name	Eveli Kuklane
Email	eveli.kuklane@ewers.ee
Phone	+372 5308 9990
Contact person 2	
Name	Kaire Jaagomäe
Email	kaire.jaagomae@ewers.ee
Phone	+372 5663 8444

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.

N/A

5.1 Specific challenge to be adressed

In the wood processing and furniture sector,particularly in rural and challenged areas of the Baltic Sea Region, the transition to a circular economy is notably constrained by the underutilization and limited valorization of industrial wood waste. This primarily includes wood offcuts and other wood-based by-products generated by small and medium-sized enterprises(SMEs). SMEs in these regions are increasingly burdened by rising waste management costs specifically for these wood residues. In many cases, the remaining wood waste is used for low-value purposes such as combustion for heating, which not only limits its economic potential but also contributes to CO_2 emissions.They often lack accessible, cost-effective, and systematic solutions for the collection, sorting, reuse, or upcycling of their wood waste. Moreover, the absence of established infrastructure, relevant knowledge networks, and practical expertise specifically concerning wood waste limits their ability to effectively implement circular economy practices and explore wood waste valorization opportunities.This reliance on a linear model not only increases businesses' operational costs and environmental footprint but also represents a significant loss of potential resources and revenue. Beyond the operational challenges for existing businesses, the underdeveloped state of the circular economy for industrial wood waste in these areas also stifles innovation and limits opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators.

Individuals and new ventures interested in developing sustainable products from secondary materials encounter considerable obstacles, including a lack of reliable information on available wood waste streams, inconsistent supply chains, and insufficient access to essential technical expertise, specialised facilities (e.g., for R&D, prototyping), and necessary funding. This directly impedes the emergence of new circular economy business models tailored to the region's wood material flows. The primary target groups facing this multi-faceted challenge are SMEs in the wood processing and furniture sector in rural areas, and aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators looking to develop circular products from industrial wood waste. Addressing this challenge is crucial for advancing the Programme's objective 3.1 toward a more circular economy and a greener, climate-neutral Baltic Sea Region, by transforming wood waste into valuable resources and fostering sustainable regional development.

5.2 Focus of the call

Our project is designed to strongly support the cohesive development of small places, rural areas, and areas experiencing challenges across the Baltic Sea Region, being in direct alignment with the call's focus on fostering a greener Europe through the circular economy. The main contribution is the economic strengthening achievable through the circular economy. By transforming underutilised industrial wood waste, especially residues from the wood sector which are vital to the economic fabric of many of these regions, into a valuable resource, the project's aim is to reduce the operational costs of local SMEs and create new revenue streams through innovative circular economy ventures. Simultaneously, it actively promotes local green innovation and entrepreneurship within these communities, giving individuals and new ventures the opportunity to develop sustainable products and services from local wood waste streams, thereby diversifying the regional economy and potentially attracting and retaining skilled professionals. In addition, the project emphasizes the creation of important regional cooperation and knowledge exchange. By creating strong networks and platforms both at the local level and more widely across the Baltic Sea Region, it facilitates the important sharing of knowledge, best practices, and potential partnerships for implementing circular economy solutions, effectively breaking down geographical barriers typical for rural and problematic areas.

6. Transnational relevance

Addressing the underutilization of industrial wood waste, particularly wood by-products, and fostering a circular economy transition in regions like Võru requires transnational cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region. This is essential primarily because the challenge is shared across many BSR regions within the wood processing industry, necessitating the exchange of diverse experiences and proven solutions for efficient waste collection, innovative valorization techniques, and successful business models for upcycled products, thereby avoiding costly reinvention in each locale. Furthermore, transnational cooperation is needed to facilitate market access and the creation of cross-border value chains within the Baltic Sea Region, which is crucial for enhancing the economic viability of circular economy initiatives. It is also vital for attracting specific expertise and facilitating technology transfer for technical valorization aspects that may be more readily available in other BSR countries. This collaboration approach allows for building collaborative research and innovation capacities across the region, accelerating the development of new circular economy solutions specifically tailored to the wood sector and the regional context. Ultimately, collaborating transnationally ensures a more

coordinated and impactful approach to reducing the environmental footprint of the wood industry across the entire Baltic Sea Region, directly contributing to the shared sustainability objectives of the region in a way that isolated regional efforts could not achieve.

7. Specific aims to be adressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives
We achieve this aim through the practical, tangible, and collaborative nature of our project activities. Joint planning and implementation of concrete tasks, such as piloting wood waste collection and sorting systems, co-developing innovative wood-based circular products, conducting training on wood waste valorization techniques, and establishing incubation processes for wood-sector circular businesses, fundamentally builds trust. Successful cooperation in solving shared challenges reduces perceived risks and increases confidence in the benefits of transnational cooperation. This positive experience and demonstrated reliability increase partners' willingness to participate in further transnational projects or initiatives. The network developed through the project becomes a trusted platform for future cooperation
Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR
We will actively cultivate relationships with diverse Baltic Sea Region stakeholders, leveraging targeted outreach and existing connections. This includes industry (SMEs, associations) from Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden for practical uptake; research/academic institutions (Latvian Academy of Art, Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry, HDK-Valand) for design and biomaterials expertise; and business support, NGOs, and public authorities for dissemination, circular economy promotion, and policy alignment. This targeted networking fosters joint project concepts aligned with INTERREG priorities for future funding, strengthening project impact and regional circular economy adoption."
Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens
To make the Baltic Sea Region INTERREG Programme and its circular economy work resonate with citizens, we will translate complex goals into understandable, relatable information about their tangible benefits. This involves:Creating clear, accessible communication materials across various platforms.Highlighting local success stories to inspire action and demonstrate relevance.Providing accessible touchpoints through public events and spaces to showcase practical examples.Translating project outcomes into visible impacts for citizens and communities.Our goal is to ensure citizens understand, support, and feel connected to the Programme's positive impact on the region.
Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges
The project design incorporates built-in flexibility and adaptability, allowing for necessary adjustments and course correction. This includes a modular approach, enabling the project to adapt later stages based on learnings and emerging needs. Furthermore, there is a possibility of reallocating resources within reasonable limits to address urgent priorities. This financial flexibility is explicitly planned to ensure the project can adjust to unforeseen circumstances or optimize activities based on evolving needs and mutual agreement.

8. Target groups

Target Group 1: SMEs in the wood and furniture sector Countries: Estonia, Latvia, Sweden. Field: Circular production, product development. Target Group 2: Local communities and consumers Countries: Estonia, Latvia, Sweden. Field: Public awareness, consumption behavior. Target group communities show growing interest in sustainable products. They contribute to waste segregation and support circular initiatives through feedback and demand. Target Group 3: Aspiring entrepreneurs and innovators, Countries: Estonia, Latvia, Sweden. Field: Innovation, product development.This group brings flexibility, creativity, and technical skills to wood waste valorization. They drive new business models and green entrepreneurship. Target Group 4: Educational and research institutions, Countries: Estonia, Latvia, Sweden. Field: Training, R&D, prototyping. These actors support design-driven innovation and build capacity through hackathons, mentorship, and curriculum integration.Target Group 5: Business support organizations and NGOsCountries/Regions: Estonia, Latvia, Sweden. Field: SME support, sustainability promotionThey will help disseminate project results and ensure uptake across regions and sectors.

	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.	Small and medium enterprise	Wood processing and furniture manufacturing, waste valorization, circular economy implementation	Estonia (mainly Võru County), Latvia (mainly Riga, Kuldīga), Sweden
2.	Education/training centre and school	Design, engineering, vocational training, wood competence development, circular economy skills	Estonia (Võru County), Latvia (Riga, Kuldīga), Sweden (Gothenburg)
3.	Higher education and research institution	Biomaterials, wood chemistry, experimental design, product innovation, sustainable development	Latvia (Latvian Academy of Art, Latvian State Institute of Wood Chemistry), Sweden
4.	Business support organisation	Supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, and new circular economy business models in the wood sector	Estonia, Latvia, Sweden and problematic areas

5. NGO	Environmental protection, circular economy advocacy, community engagement, public awareness	Estonia, Latvia, Sweden across the countries

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 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

Our transnational partnership combines expertise in production technology, sustainable design, and innovation training to bridge knowledge gaps, support SMEs and entrepreneurs, and co-develop market-oriented solutions for wood waste valorization.The lead partner, Võru County Education and Technology Centre in Estonia, brings core technical knowledge through its wood competence center (TSENTER), coordinating the project, hosting hackathons, and leading product development from residual wood materials. The Latvian Academy of Art and HDK-Valand – Campus Steneby in Sweden, both equal partners, offer strong experience in sustainable and experimental design. The Latvian Academy of Art's deep expertise in contemporary art and design, particularly in material innovation, is crucial for translating wood waste into high-value design objects. Its connections within Latvia's creative industries and involvement in projects like Riga Makerspace provide direct pathways for pilot testing and engaging local innovators. HDK-Valand – Campus Steneby adds specific strengths in sustainable product development and circular design, with strong links to SMEs and regional networks in Västra Götaland, fostering community-oriented design outcomes. Both academies co-organize hackathons, develop prototypes, deliver capacity-building activities, and offer access to advanced workshop facilities and expert mentoring.Together, partners will implement design-focused hackathons, pilot new product concepts, and deliver training, jointly producing and disseminating the

Circular Wood Product Development Toolkit for long-term knowledge transfer. This collaboration across Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden ensures geographical diversity, complementary skills, and broad stakeholder outreach, contributing to a greener, more circular Baltic Sea Region.

11. Workplan

Activities, Outputs & Impact: Our project aims to transform industrial wood waste into valuable resources and products within the Baltic Sea Region, fostering a circular economy. Key Activities & Outputs: Joint Needs Assessment & Best Practice Analysis:Output: "Baltic Sea Region Wood Waste Valorization Best Practice Analysis" detailing waste profiles, needs, and best practices in selected regions. Design-Driven Innovation & Prototyping Workshops (Hackathons): Output: 8-10 validated product concepts/prototypes from wood waste, complete with technical specifications. Pilot Testing & Target Group Engagement: Our pilots will specifically test the most viable product concepts from the hackathons, for example as advanced biocomposite materials and high-value design objects made from wood offcuts, evaluating their feasibility and market potential. Product Development for SMEs: Output: At least 6 tested prototypes/small-batch productions for SMEs with specific need to vaolorize wood-based waste generated during production. Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer: Output: A "Circular Wood Product Development Toolkit" and training for SMEs and educators, based on the knowledge and know-how gathered and created in previous stages. We'll involve our target groups throughout the project: SMEs: Participating in needs assessment, hackathons, product development, and training. Designers & Engineers: Leading hackathon product development and prototyping. Education & Training Centers: Providing expertise, facilities, and delivering training. Regional Development Agencies: Contributing to the needs assessment and helping disseminate outcomes. Users of Final Outcomes: The project's practical outcomes are designed for direct use by:Wood Processing SMEs: To adopt new valorization methods and develop products. Designers & Engineers: To apply new skills and tools in sustainable design.Education & Training Institutions: To integrate new knowledge into curricula and foster R&D.

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 0.00
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	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
Questions related to budgeting and expenditure	*(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)*
Any other questions	Our project specifically aligns with Programme Objective 3.1 Circular Economy. Are there any specific policy initiatives or future directions within the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme that we should be particularly aware of, or align with, as we refine our project plan to maximize its strategic relevance? We've outlined the "Circular Wood Product Development Toolkit" as a key output for long-term knowledge transfer. From the program's perspective, what are the most effective strategies or platforms for disseminating such a toolkit to ensure its widest possible adoption and sustained impact beyond the project's funding period?

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