

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	Youth and Rural Livelihoods
Short name of the project	4YOUTH
Previous calls	yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> no <input type="radio"/>
Short name of the previous project	CIRC-2-ZERO
Seed money support	yes <input type="radio"/> no <input checked="" type="radio"/>

2. Programme priority

1. Innovative societies

3. Programme objective

1.1. Resilient economies and communities
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4. Potential lead applicant

Name of the organisation (original)	Hämeen ammattikorkeakoulu Oy (HAMK)
Name of the organisation (English)	Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK)
Website	https://www.hamk.fi/en/



Country	FI
Type of Partner	Higher education and research institution

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.

- 1) Lolland Municipality
- 2) Rogaland County Council
- 3) Häme Village NGO

5.1 Specific challenge to be addressed

In the Baltic Sea region, including Häme, Lolland, and Rogaland, youth outmigration contributes to regional disparities, population aging, and economic challenges. Unlocking the potential of these areas requires developing them into attractive places to live and work for all generations, with a particular focus on young people. Actions must be based on the regions' demographic and socioeconomic realities, responding to the needs and aspirations of local residents—especially youth. Successful development depends on proactive cooperation with local authorities, youth organizations, and other stakeholders. Through transnational cooperation, experiences and best practices are shared, and young people's voices are actively heard to understand what would encourage them to stay or return to the region. This collaborative approach enhances the liveability and vitality of the affected areas in a sustainable and inclusive way.

5.2 Focus of the call

In the Baltic Sea region, including smaller towns and rural areas such as Häme (FI), Lolland (DK), and parts of Rogaland (NO), youth outmigration contributes to growing regional disparities, demographic imbalance, and socio-economic decline. These challenges affect the very fabric of local communities, making cohesive development more urgent than ever. Unlocking the potential of these areas requires targeted efforts to make them attractive and viable places to live and work for all generations—especially young people.

Projects should be rooted in local demographic and socio-economic conditions, ensuring that development is shaped by the voices and aspirations of residents. Transnational cooperation offers a powerful platform to share experiences and identify solutions, particularly by engaging with youth to understand what would encourage them to stay or return. By working together across borders and involving local actors, these projects can turn shared challenges into opportunities and strengthen the resilience and liveability of small and rural communities throughout the region.

6. Transnational relevance

The public authorities in the three participating geographical areas – Kanta-Häme (Finland), Lolland (Denmark), and Rogaland (Norway) – have developed various approaches to enhance liveability and resilience in their regions and municipalities. For the rural parts of these areas, it is important to provide opportunities to attract and retain young people in their local communities.

Therefore, it is essential for these areas to constantly seek best practice sharing with similar regions and municipalities abroad to increase the capacity of their local communities. The Baltic Sea Region Programme offers an opportunity to enable this best practice sharing in a structured approach, which would benefit the three areas, and potentially create possibilities for other regions and municipalities surrounding the Baltic Sea. This is why transnational funding is essential for implementing this project idea.

7. Specific aims to be addressed

Building trust that could lead to further cooperation initiatives

The project partners have not previously worked together on a funded project. The small project instrument will enable them to build trust for further cooperation initiatives. Throughout the project lifecycle, joint workshops and other events will establish a common ground between the project partners and target groups. In addition to the project partners, youth from three countries surrounding the Baltic Sea will benefit from joint project activities, which build capacity for resilience. Further cooperation initiatives could include transnational follow-up projects funded by other instruments together with the young residents, who participated in the project.

Initiating and keeping networks that are important for the BSR

The project partnership will initiate networks among young people, and aims to keep them after the project ends, for the benefit of the Baltic Sea Region. As most of the target group of 13 to 30 years old



citizens is usually in an education phase, the project can broaden their horizons on the shared challenges of the BSR, and potentially influence their educational pathways, for example, through follow-up study exchanges. In addition, new young residents often encounter similar challenges across the participating countries and regions (e.g., language acquisition of Danish, Finnish, and Norwegian). Learning from youth in other countries could help them to overcome these challenges with the support of public authorities and NGOs.

Bringing the Programme closer to the citizens

The project will bring the Programme closer to the citizens by directly involving youth from the participating geographical regions in the project activities (e.g., through workshops). Additionally, the project structure is designed in such a way that the project outcomes directly affect the livelihoods of young people in rural areas. Consequently, citizens in Lolland, Kanta-Häme and Rogaland will be able to experience the Programme's benefits first-hand, which will make the geographical areas more attractive for new young residents.

Allowing a swift response to unpredictable and urgent challenges

N/A

8. Target groups

The target groups are located in the Zealand Region of Denmark, the Kanta-Häme Region of Finland, and the Rogaland County of Norway. The project partners have a wide range of contacts that will be engaged during the project to reach the following regional and local target groups.

Firstly, the project activities will address interest groups (i.e., youth voluntary associations, clubs, etc. other than NGOs). These groups can benefit the most from the project activities, because they can directly improve their livelihoods. The target group will participate in workshops and other project events.

Secondly, the project activities will address regional public authorities (i.e., public service). Thirdly, the project activities will address local public authorities (i.e., public service). Best practice sharing between the project partners and the target groups will involve both regional and local public authorities. This best practice sharing will be facilitated through the project activities, such as workshops and other project events.

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. Interest group	Youth voluntary associations, clubs, etc. other than NGOs	Denmark: Zealand Region Finland: Kanta-Häme Region Norway: Rogaland County
2. Regional public authority	Public service	Denmark: Zealand Region Finland: Kanta-Häme Region Norway: Rogaland County
3. Local public authority	Public service	Denmark: Zealand Region Finland: Kanta-Häme Region Norway: Rogaland County

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

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 project will facilitate best practice sharing for young people in rural areas through the involvement of two public authorities in Norway and Denmark, as well as a village NGO in Finland. These regions and municipalities have been selected due to their shared challenges. The Rogaland County will be represented by the County Council and Lolland by the Municipality, respectively. Both public authorities will test best practices to create opportunities for young people in their local communities.



To reach more relevant target groups in rural areas and increase their capacity, the consortium will ask a village NGO from the Kanta-Häme Region to join the consortium. The Lolland Municipality, Rogaland County Council, and Häme Village NGO will actively contribute to knowledge sharing between the project partners and in disseminating the local results of the project to a wider circle of stakeholders.

Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK) is the lead partner, and has coordinated similar consortia in EU projects and established contacts with relevant actors in the Kanta-Häme Region. HAMK's strategy focuses on regional development through education and applied research, development, and innovation. This is achieved through participation in several European networks, such as the Regional University Network – European University (RUN-EU) alliance. HAMK also focuses on the sustainable use of natural resources, for example, through the ongoing Coordination Project for the National ERDF Themes for Green Transition. As part of the project management, HAMK will facilitate the cooperation between the public authorities and NGOs as well as the involvement of the target group youth interest groups.

All in all, the involvement of the four project partners representing two regions and one municipality ensures that the specific territorial context is addressed appropriately. The project could benefit from the involvement of partners from more similar regions within the Programme area that have not previously participated in the Programme. The consortium will explore this possibility during the proposal development phase.

11. Workplan

This project aims to strengthen the attractiveness of small towns and rural areas in the Baltic Sea region by engaging young people directly in identifying and shaping solutions to local demographic and socio-economic challenges. Over a two-year period, the project will focus on listening to young people's views, exchanging experiences across borders, and building knowledge that supports inclusive regional development.

The first phase of the project (months 1–6) will focus on organizing youth workshops and online surveys in each partner region, such as Häme (Finland), Lolland (Denmark), and Rogaland (Norway). These participatory activities will allow young people to express what would make them more likely to stay in or return to their home regions. The insights gathered will serve as a foundation for the following phases.

From months 4 to 18, the project partners will actively participate in transnational exchange, joining existing networks such as the Baltic Sea Youth Platform and hosting thematic online sessions. These sessions will allow partners to share challenges and good practices on key topics like education, employment, community life, and digital engagement, especially as they relate to young people in smaller communities.

Simultaneously, between months 6 and 20, the project will collect and share good practices from participating regions and beyond. These might include youth attraction campaigns, initiatives supporting remote work from rural areas, or models that foster local engagement and belonging



among young people. The practices will be made accessible through project communication channels and shared with local authorities, youth organizations, and other stakeholders.

In the final stage (months 21–24), the project will host a transnational youth forum that brings together young participants, municipalities, and regional stakeholders. The forum will be an opportunity to present findings, reflect on lessons learned, and develop shared recommendations for how rural areas across the Baltic Sea region can become more appealing places to live and work for future generations.

The main target groups of this work package are young people aged 13–30 living in or connected to rural and small-town areas, as well as local and regional authorities responsible for development planning. Youth organizations, educational institutions, NGOs, and community actors will also play an active role throughout the process.

The results of this work package will benefit not only the participating regions but also other rural and demographically challenged areas across the Baltic Sea region. Municipalities, policymakers, and civil society organizations can apply the insights and models developed through the project to strengthen youth engagement and improve the liveability of their regions in the long term.

12. Planned budget

ERDF budget (planned expenditure of partners from the EU)	EUR 350,000.00
Norwegian budget (planned expenditure of partners from Norway)	EUR 50,000.00
Total budget (including preparatory costs)	EUR 400,000.00

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

Are any target groups missing in the PIF?

Questions related to budgeting and expenditure

(max.1.000 characters incl. spaces)



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>