

Call for Applications for the Organisation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum 2022

Announcement note for specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation” *Timeline: 1 December 2021 to 4 February 2022*

Interreg Baltic Sea Region calls for an application to prepare and organise the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum 2022 (Strategy Forum 2022). This call is restricted to applicants who are supported by the National Coordinators for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR, the Strategy).

1. Introduction and objectives

Interreg Baltic Sea Region offers financial support to transnational projects contributing to the development of a more innovative, better accessible and sustainable Baltic Sea Region. The Programme has been designed under the territorial cooperation goal of the European Union.

Besides the support to thematic transnational cooperation projects, the Programme provides direct support to the coordination activities of the macro-regional cooperation. The support is provided through thematic priority 4 “Institutional capacity for macro-regional cooperation” and its specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation” in particular.

2. Focus of the call

This call is open for applicants to prepare and organise the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum 2022.

Strategy Forums are events which aim at shaping debates among decision-makers from businesses, politics, international organisations and civil society from across the Baltic Sea Region. They are important platforms that ensure visibility of the Strategy and strengthen cooperation in the region. Strategy Forums of the EUSBSR have been organised every year since 2010 with an increasing number of participants, reaching around 600-900 people during the last few years. The format of the event can be hybrid, online, or on-the-spot, if the Corona situation allows for it.

The Strategy Forums should provide a platform for the involvement of civil society and relevant governance levels, for stimulating policy discussion in the region and for the

promotion of project results relevant for the Strategy. Furthermore, the Strategy Forums should facilitate closer dialogue on joint cooperation priorities with the partner countries.

3. What can be financed?

All the costs co-financed by the Programme have to be clearly related to the preparation and implementation of the Strategy Forum 2022.

The Programme co-financing can cover costs related to:

- 1) preparation of the Strategy Forum and its content (if needed for the support of the Strategy Forum development, partners can, for example, plan studies or carry out surveys);
- 2) promotion and connected communication activities (including establishment of common visual identity for the Strategy Forum);
- 3) further communication and IT related costs (linked to running the hybrid or online event);
- 4) implementation of the Strategy Forum (e.g. rent of premises, rent of conference equipment and sound systems, registration system, speaker costs, costs related to the logistics, staff resources);
- 5) promotion of project results relevant for the Strategy (e.g. from projects co-financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region);
- 6) follow-up activities (e.g. evaluation of results, networking activities to wrap up the results of the Strategy Forum, planning of next activities, sharing experience with the next Strategy Forum organisers);
- 7) related reporting and administrative costs.

All partners implementing activities co-financed by the Programme must comply with the relevant public procurement legislation and rules set by the Programme.

Please note that in specific cases of the Strategy Forum preparation and implementation, partners can also use unpaid voluntary work, which is the only type of in-kind contribution accepted within the Programme. For more information, please consult the Programme Manual for coordination of macro-regional cooperation (section F.3.1.6).

4. Who can receive funding?

So far, Strategy Forums were organised by public authorities at local, regional or national level together with pan-Baltic organisations. In addition, research and training organisations, sector agencies and associations as well as private non-for-profit organisations from the Programme area are invited to apply.

The application has to involve at least two partners from two different countries of the Programme area: a lead partner and at least one project partner. Organisations that have

been established by public authorities or bodies from at least two Baltic Sea region countries can act as single applicants¹.

In order to be eligible for the Programme support, the applicants have to obtain support from the group of National Coordinators for the EUSBSR². It is expressed in a letter of support, which is signed by the Chair of the group of National Coordinators for the EUSBSR. The same principle applies in case National Coordinators act as applicants.

5. Lead partner principle

The applicants have to appoint a lead applicant/lead partner who is responsible for preparation and submission of the application form. After approval of the application, the lead partner takes over the full responsibility for management, communication, implementation, and co-ordination of activities among the involved partners. The lead partner bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The lead partner is also the link between the project and the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) of the Programme.

6. Programme co-financing and co-financing rate

The Programme's maximum co-financing to support the Strategy Forum 2022 is EUR 255,000 ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) equalling up to 85% of the total eligibility costs. Project partners have to provide own contribution amounting to 15% of the total eligible costs to receive the Programme co-financing.

A clear reference to the funding source has to be ensured when implementing the planned activities. This means in particular using the EU and Programme logo. For further details please see section F.1.8 of the Programme Manual for specific objective 4.2 "Coordination of macro-regional cooperation".

7. Duration of activities

As a starting point, on the day after the Monitoring Committee approval (expected for mid-March 2022), the contracting phase will start. Within this period, which lasts up to three months, a subsidy contract is expected to be concluded. The implementation phase of activities related to the preparation and organisation of the Strategy Forum 2022 will start right after the contracting of the project and will need to end by 31.10.2022 the latest. Furthermore, after the closure of the implementation phase, the partners have an additional closure phase which lasts up to three months. The specific project phases will be set out in the subsidy contract.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 Art 12(2) and Art 12(3)

² The list of National Coordinators is available on the EUSBSR website: www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/

8. Preparing the application

The applicants interested in hosting the Strategy Forum have to first express their interest to the National Coordinators for the EUSBSR. The National Coordinators, in close cooperation with the European Commission, evaluate the received request(s) and proposed draft Strategy Forum concept and issue a letter of support. The letter of support determines the eligibility of the application and has to be submitted together with the application.

In parallel, lead applicants have to submit a compulsory project idea form (PIF), briefly describing the partnership, draft work plan and planned budget. The completed PIF must be sent via e-mail no later than **7 January 2022**. The submission of the PIF is prerequisite for obtaining access to the online application and monitoring system BAMOS. The MA/JS supports the project development by providing feedback through online consultations. The consultations are offered only once the PIF is submitted.

Applicants are required to complete an application form in the online application system BAMOS. Detailed information on how to fill in the application form is provided in the application form itself.

Furthermore, together with the application form, the applicants have to submit a draft concept of the Strategy Forum. It is recommended to develop the concept in close cooperation with the European Commission (DG REGIO), the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme MA/JS, the National Coordinators for the EUSBSR and “Let’s communicate!” project funded by Interreg Baltic Sea Region that functions as the Communication Point of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

9. Submission of applications

The final application is to be submitted to the MA/JS via the online application system - BAMOS not later than **4 February 2022, 16:00 CET**. In addition, the electronic (pdf) version of the draft concept of the Strategy Forum and the partner declarations completed by each project partner (incl. the lead applicant) have to be sent by **4 February 2022** at the latest to the following address: application@interreg-baltic.eu.

A model partner declaration form is included in the application package and available on the Programme website. Paper versions, including the originally signed partner declarations, will be requested after the approval of the application.

Please note that the final application together with the compulsory attachments is the sole basis for the quality assessment of the application.

10. Selection procedure

The MA/JS will verify the completeness and correctness of the submitted documents. If a proposal does not fulfil the technical admissibility criteria, the MA/JS will inform the lead applicant. The applicant may complete the application and send missing documents and/or

an amended application form in the time frame given by the MA/JS. Only applications that have passed the admissibility check will proceed to the quality assessment.

The quality assessment covers verification of the relevance of the proposed activities in relation to the implementation of the Strategy. The MA/JS carries out the quality assessment of the applications according to the specific quality assessment criteria set in the Programme Manual for specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation”. The lead applicant has to address the possible clarifications and revise the application form accordingly within the time frame given by the MA/JS. The assessment criteria are presented in the Programme Manual. The Monitoring Committee of the Programme will select the application based on the quality assessment.

11. Programme language

The official language of the Programme is English. Therefore, all communication between applicants and the MA/JS is carried out in English. Information in application forms as well as official correspondence must be treated accordingly.

12. Further information and assistance

The official Programme documents:

- Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 Programme document;
- Programme Manual for specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation”, chapter C;
- Application package including the announcement of the call, application form example and partner declaration form are available on the Programme website interreg-baltic.eu.

The MA/JS provides written feedback and offers consultations, e.g. online or via telephone.

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