



Interreg Baltic Sea Region Second call for applications Programme priorities 1-3 Small projects

Announcement Note

Call duration: 20 October 2022 – 26 January 2023

1. Introduction

Interreg Baltic Sea Region (the Programme) is launching the second call for small projects' applications in priorities 1-3. The Programme is a source of EU funding for public and private players who want to shape the Baltic Sea region to become more innovative, water-smart and climate-neutral. It creates an environment for cooperation across borders to develop, test and put into practice smart solutions for the benefit of people around the Baltic Sea. Its added value is the transnational dimension of the supported actions. The Programme exploits opportunities and addresses issues which cannot sufficiently be dealt with by single countries, but require a joint response by partners from several countries in the Baltic Sea region.

The Programme area covers nine countries. It comprises eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden) and one third country (parts of Norway). The detailed geographical coverage of the Programme is defined in the Programme Document published on the Programme portal at interreg-baltic.eu

The Programme is designed under the territorial cooperation goal of the European Union.

2. Priorities

The Programme is structured along three thematic priorities:

Priority 1 Innovative societies

Objective 1.1 Resilient economies and societies

The priority is dedicated to actions building sustainable, fair, innovative and resilient economies and communities across the Baltic Sea region. Under resilience, the Programme means the ability to respond to external disturbances such as severe recessions and financial crises, downturns of particular industries



or major health crises. Resilience also refers to a society characterised by strong social cohesion and a shared system of values. Thus, the priority fosters experimentation, “thinking outside the box” and working across different sectors to find suitable solutions. It aims to help develop models adjusting ability to produce critical goods in the region. Actions may assist business in recovery, mobilise creativity in increasing societal resilience, develop coordination mechanisms for managing economic and societal challenges. Actions should untap the potential of digitalisation to increase adaptability of the region.

Objective 1.2 Responsive public authorities

Furthermore, the priority encourages actions to experiment with new ways of delivering public services using innovative, data-driven and participatory methods to improve the lives of citizens. It supports testing unconventional approaches to services that reduce costs, bureaucracy as well as make public services more effective. Actions should engage citizens in transforming public services, develop common standards among public administration, test approaches combining research and public procurement to create new business opportunities.

Priority 2 Water-smart societies

Objective 2.1 Sustainable waters

The priority supports cooperation to implement water-smart solutions improving the state of water and making its management more sustainable. These waters include the Baltic Sea, coastal waters and inland waters. Thus, the priority helps prevent and reduce water pollution across various waterways. It encourages actions to rethink planning processes for more effective water management during storms, floods, droughts and groundwater scarcity and to adapt water management practices to changing climate conditions and to use water reasonably. Actions should be cross-sectoral as water resources and catchments are shared by multiple sectors and stakeholders.

Objective 2.2 Blue economy

Furthermore, the priority strives for further advancing blue economy businesses in using fresh and sea waters and marine resources more efficiently while supporting a healthy marine environment in the whole region. It helps create new business opportunities by developing value chains for sustainable fresh water and marine-based products and services and integrate climate change mitigation measures in business development plans. Actions may introduce common environmental standards and clean, digital, eco-efficient solutions. Actions may improve management of sea and inland water traffic and introduce solutions for remote navigational support. As different sectors may use the same resources, actions should help mitigate potential conflicts among users of the sea and land space and facilitate its joint use.



Priority 3 Climate-neutral societies

Objective 3.1 Circular economy

The priority covers actions that facilitate the shift from linear to circular use of resources. This implies keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible without increasing pressure on the environment. Thus, the priority fosters development of new circular approaches and putting them to test. It provides a space to integrate circular economy policies into territorial strategies and redefine smart specialisation approaches to advance the shift towards circularity. Actions should untap the potential of digitalisation as means of achieving a resource-efficient economy in the Baltic Sea region.

Objective 3.2 Energy transition

Moreover, the priority supports the energy transition and helps develop smart solutions to move towards the decarbonisation of energy systems. Solutions to increase renewable energy production and its use should be put to test. Increased energy efficiency in industrial processes as well as in public and private building stock is encouraged. Actions may mobilise industry and citizens to apply energy solutions for climate neutrality.

Objective 3.3 Smart green mobility

Furthermore, the priority strives for green and smart mobility solutions. It supports actions that ensure the smooth movement of people and goods while saving resources by increasing efficiency, integrating different transport modes and accelerating digitalisation. It helps to introduce green and intelligent mobility solutions and test innovative technologies to reduce pollution in cities and towns and their hinterland.

The detailed description of the Programme priorities, objectives and examples of actions to be financed can be found in the Programme Document published at interreg-baltic.eu. The information is also presented at the Programme portal <https://interreg-baltic.eu/get-funding/programme-2021-2027/> and in the tutorials on the Programme objectives published under: <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/>

3. EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

The Programme actively supports the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and its three objectives: Save the Sea, Connect the Region and Increase Prosperity. Many of the policy areas of the EUSBSR action plan are well reflected in the thematic objectives of the Programme. The expected Programme's contribution to the EUSBSR is described in the Programme Document and on the Programme portal at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/about/eusbsr/>. The Programme encourages applicants to get acquainted with this information as well as the action plan to the EUSBSR. More information regarding the EUSBSR is provided under <https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/>.



The Programme kindly asks applicants to consider the possible contribution of their projects to policy areas of the Strategy and a particular action within the policy area. The policy area coordinators of the EUSBSR (PACs) can help check whether ideas of the applicants are in line with the actions in those policy areas. PACs may give advice and support development and implementation of project ideas that help achieve the objectives of the EUSBSR action plan. PACs may also support policy dialogues in projects and help with dissemination of results. Contacts to PACs can be found at <https://balticsea-region-strategy.eu/contacts/eusbsr-actors>.

4. Main features of small projects

Small projects aim at facilitating **easier access** to the Programme, in particular for those partners that have not previously participated in the Programme, including Interreg BSR 2014-2020. The small project instrument supports, in particular, cooperation between the **public authorities and/ or non-governmental organisations** (NGOs). The partners are encouraged to develop practical and durable outputs and solutions to tackle the challenges that are in line with one of the Programme objectives. Pilot activities and development of solutions are not obligatory in small projects. However, the activities need to go beyond pure networking and knowledge exchange. Small projects should increase the capacity of the target groups to deal with the identified challenges during and after the end of the project implementation.

The structure of a small project is **simplified** and consists of one work package.

The total budget of a small project must **not exceed EUR 500,000 (including preparatory costs)**.

The duration of a small project consists of three phases: contracting phase that usually lasts three months, implementation phase that may last **up to 24 months**, and closure phase lasting three months.

For further details on small projects please consult the Programme Manual (chapter E) published on the Programme portal at https://interreg-baltic.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/IBSR-2021-2027_Programme-Manual-v1-0.pdf

5. Project partnership

- **Geographical composition**

Project partnership has to include **at least three project partners from three different countries of the Programme area**: a lead partner and at least two project partners. At least two of the project partners have to be located in the territory of two different EU Member States in the Programme area.

As a general rule, organisations located in the regions belonging to the Programme area can become project partners. **In exceptional cases** organisations located outside the Programme can apply as project



partners for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) or Norwegian funding. For more details please consult the Programme Manual (chapter C.2.3).

- **Lead partners, project partners and associated organisations**

As the project partnership is based on the **lead partner principle**, each project has to appoint a lead applicant/lead partner who is responsible for the preparation and submission of the application. The lead partner bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The lead partner is also the link between the project partners and the MA/JS.

Lead partners must be legally registered in the territory of a Member State or Norway covered by the Programme and must fall into the legal status category “public” as defined in the Programme Manual Chapter C.2.1. Where a legal entity is located in Germany or Norway (in the sense of legal registration) but outside the Programme area, it can still become a lead partner if it follows specific obligations defined in the Programme Manual (chapter C.1.2).

The Programme Manual (chapter C) also specifies which legal entities can act as a lead partner and project partners and provides lists of their responsibilities in the project. The lead partner and all project partners have a budget and a defined role in the project’s implementation.

Organisations not falling under these legal requirements may participate in the projects as **associated organisations**. Associated organisations support the project implementation from their own resources.

- **Composition of partnership**

The partnership should be composed **primarily** of local and/or regional and/or national **authorities**, as well as **NGOs**. Other types of organisations may participate as project partners as well supporting the public authorities and NGOs in their project tasks. Their role, in particular, the role of education and research organisations, should be well justified and explained in the application. Taking into consideration the limited budget of a small project, its structure and duration small projects can be implemented by the smaller partnerships. Organisations that **have not previously participated in the Programme**, including Interreg BSR 2014-2020, are encouraged to take part as partners in small projects.

6. Programme funding available for projects

The main funding source of the Programme is the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for partners from the EU Member States. The further funding source is Norwegian funding for partners from Norway.

Available Programme co-financing allocated to priorities 1-3 is shown in the tables below:



ERDF in million euro

Priority	Total	Committed in the first calls	Available
1. Innovative societies	59,198,101	28,692,967	30,505,134
2. Water-smart societies	59,198,101	29,059,084	30,139,017
3. Climate-neutral societies	88,797,153	27,764,754	61,032,399

Norwegian funding in million euro

Priority	Total	Committed in the first calls	Available
1. Innovative societies	2,301,351	1,001,351	1,300,000
2. Water-smart societies			
3. Climate-neutral societies			

Indicatively, in the second call for applications, the Programme plans to finance 15-20 small projects.

- **Co-financing rate**

Partners from EU Member States are entitled to receive up to 80% co-financing from ERDF. Norwegian partners will receive up to 50% co-financing from Norwegian funding. Project partners have to provide their own contribution to receive Programme funding.



- **Reimbursement of preparation costs**

Projects can apply for reimbursement of costs related to the preparation of the project proposal. Only projects selected by the Monitoring Committee can have their preparation costs reimbursed. The reimbursement of preparation costs is lump sum based. The lump sum amounts to EUR 10,000 total eligible expenditure, which corresponds to EUR 8,000 of the Programme funding. Preparation costs in small projects are a part of the total project budget. Projects that have received any other EU funds specifically designed to the development of the respective project application will not receive reimbursement of preparation costs. For further details please consult the Programme Manual (chapter E.3.4).

7. Application procedure

First, lead applicants **must complete and submit** to the MA/JS **a project idea form (PIF)**. In the PIF lead applicants briefly describe the challenge, partnership, draft work plan, and planned budget. The completed PIF must be sent to the MA/JS at any time after the call is opened but **no later than 5 January 2023**. The MA/JS provides feedback to applicants via consultations based on the submitted PIFs. The MA/JS aims to provide a consultation to all applicants who wish to have one. Early submission of the PIF will support the MA/JS to fulfil this aim.

PIFs submitted to the MA/JS will be available for the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. Upon applicants' consent, PIFs will also be shared with the policy area coordinators (PACs) of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The Monitoring Committee members and PACs may contact the lead applicants and provide guidance on the further development of the project ideas. The MA/JS will not receive information about the guidance provided by the Monitoring Committee members or PACs. It is up to the project partnership to consider how to take the guidance into account.

Any information in the project idea form, including the MA/JS feedback, will not influence the quality assessment. The quality assessment of the project applications will be carried out based on the information in the submitted applications only.

To fill in **a project application form** and work with **further documents and forms** (partner declarations, contact information, bank information), lead applicants must apply for **access** to the electronic data exchange system **BAMOS+** (<https://baplus.bamos.eu/>). **Requests for access to BAMOS+ must be submitted by 5 January 2023 at the latest.**

The application form contains guiding questions on how to fill it in.

The project application and all further documents and forms must be completed and submitted via BAMOS+ by the deadline of 26 January 2023 16:00 CET.



The table below summarises the process of the application procedure. **All documents and forms are submitted in the digital format only.**

What?	How?	When?
Project idea form (PIF)	<p>A lead applicant submits a completed PIF via e-mail: idea@interreg-baltic.eu.</p> <p>In the PIF a lead applicant may include its request for a project consultation.</p> <p>The template of PIF is available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/consultations/</p>	No later than 5 January 2023
Request for an account in BAMOS+	<p>After submission of the PIF, a lead applicant requests a login to BAMOS+ via e-mail: account@bamos.eu</p> <p>The template of a request for an account in BAMOS+ (log-in to BAMOS+) is available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/bamos-account/.</p>	No later than 5 January 2023
Project application	A lead applicant submits the completed application form in BAMOS+.	No later than 26 January 2023 16:00 CET
Partner declarations, signed by each project partner, including a lead applicant	<p>After submission of the completed application form the lead applicant uploads the signed partner declarations to the Document Centre in BAMOS + either with the advanced or qualified electronic signature or scanned copies with the handwritten signature.</p> <p>The template of a partner declaration is available at https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/calls/</p>	No later than 26 January 2023 16:00 CET
Contact information for each project partner, including a lead applicant, and each associated organisation Bank information of the lead applicant bank account	<p>After submission of the completed application form, the contact & bank information section in BAMOS+ becomes available.</p> <p>The section must be completed and submitted by the lead applicant.</p>	



The MA/JS is responsible for the verification of completeness and correctness of all submitted documents and forms (admissibility check) as well as for the quality assessment of the applications. The admissibility and assessment criteria are described in the Programme Manual, chapter E.2. The Monitoring Committee of the Programme is responsible for the final selection of applications. The selection is planned to take place in April 2023.

8. Further information and assistance

The official language of the Programme is English. Therefore, all communication between applicants and the MA/JS is held in English. Information in project idea forms, application forms and official correspondence must be in English.

The official Programme documents are available on the Programme portal at interreg-baltic.eu and include:

- Programme Document;
- Programme Manual;
- Application package.

The MA/JS offers the following assistance to an applicant:

- Gateway for applicants at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/>
- Matchmaking platform at <https://matchmaking.interreg-baltic.eu/landingpage/>
- Online tutorials published at <https://interreg-baltic.eu/gateway/tutorials/>
- Webinars
- Individual consultations (after submission of PIF)
- BAMOS+ helpdesk at helpdesk@bamos.eu
- General advice at info@interreg-baltic.eu