

**Interreg Baltic Sea Region
Priority 4, specific objective 4.1
1st Call for Seed Money Applications**

Announcement Note

Timeline: 21 September 2016 – 15 February 2017

1. Introduction

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

The Programme takes an active part in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR, the Strategy) and its Action Plan. It supports the Strategy implementation by, for example, co-financing flagship projects and providing seed money support for the preparation of future projects in line with the Action Plan of the Strategy.

Past experience in implementing the EUSBSR shows how challenging it is to mobilise funding sources as well as prepare and govern complex projects in an international environment. Those with project ideas often lack the time and financial resources needed to initiate projects with strategic impact. Seed money support from Interreg Baltic Sea Region aims to address these challenges. It is included under the Programme priority 4 'Institutional capacity for macro-regional cooperation.'

2. Focus of the call

This call is open for seed money applications that are expected to prepare project proposals with strategic importance to one of the policy areas or horizontal actions of the EUSBSR. In addition, linking project proposals to joint priorities with the partner countries Norway, Belarus and Russia is encouraged.

The Strategy and its Action Plan are structured around three objectives: saving the sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity. Seed money supports the preparation of projects that contribute to any of the actions under policy areas and horizontal actions listed in the EUSBSR Action Plan. The Action Plan can be found at www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu. Seed money projects are expected to cooperate with the responsible Policy Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Coordinators.

The funding for implementing the Action Plan should be drawn from a variety of funding sources. With seed money support, projects should be prepared to apply for funding from any EU, national or other funding sources. There is a need to increase the use of various financial mechanisms and to encourage combining different funding sources in the implementation of the Strategy. **Therefore, in this call the applicants are encouraged to prepare seed money applications that will develop projects targeting funding sources**

other than Interreg Baltic Sea Region. These are for instance different national and European programmes funded by EU funds (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, European Fisheries Fund and European Neighbourhood Instrument as well as programmes like HORIZON 2020, BONUS-Programme, LIFE programme and education and culture programmes). The projects may also target any other international, national or regional, public or private funding source. Projects are particularly encouraged to combine different funding sources.

3. What can be financed?

Seed money is meant to support the preparation phase of a project in line with the Action Plan of the EUSBSR. Seed money funding should be used to plan the main project activities, partnership and budget as well as investigate the current situation of the thematic field and potential funding sources for the main project.

Seed money projects are expected to deliver the following outputs as a result of their activities:

- **Output 1:** Report on the state of play in the field addressed, including description of the situation in the field and countries concerned, as well as a description of the target groups addressed by the future project and their needs.
- **Output 2:** Main project work plan, comprising a work plan, composition of a potential project partnership and an indicative budget plan for the main project.
- **Output 3:** Report on funding possibilities for the main project, including a road map on the steps to be taken after the seed money project.

Please consult the Programme Manual (Chapter J) for more information.

4. Programme co-financing

In total, EUR 1 million of Programme co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund is available for this call. Norwegian national funding to the Programme is available to Norwegian project partners.

The total budget of a seed money project is EUR 50,000. The Programme co-financing is up to 85% of the total budget. This financing rate applies to all seed money project partners. In order to receive the Programme co-financing, project partners have to provide their own financial contribution amounting to at least 15% of the total budget. These contributions must not come from other EU sources. In the application the project partners have to indicate their planned budget share per partner and output.

The budget is based on lump sums and linked to the delivery of the three predefined outputs mentioned under section 3 (above).

Divided into the three outputs a project may receive 85% of the following lump sums:

1. EUR 18,000 for delivery of output 1
2. EUR 28,000 for delivery of output 2
3. EUR 4,000 for delivery of output 3

5. Who can receive funding?

Public authorities at local, regional or national levels, research and training organisations, NGOs, sectoral agencies and associations from the Programme area are invited to apply.

Private for-profit organisations are not eligible for seed money.

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region area covers eight EU Member States (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden) and three partner countries (Belarus, Norway and North-West of Russia). Specific implementing provisions for the participation of Belarus and Russia have not been finalised. Therefore, partners from these countries are currently not eligible for funding. Negotiations with Russia are ongoing. Belarus has not yet formally agreed to the Cooperation Programme document. For updates, please check <http://www.interreg-baltic.eu/>.

Each project has to involve at least three project partners from three different countries of the Programme area: a lead partner and at least two project partners. Lead partners must be located in the territory of an EU Member State in the Programme area or in Norway.

6. Lead partner principle

Seed money projects have to follow the lead partner principle: One of the partners is appointed lead partner (LP) and bears legal responsibility for the whole partnership. The LP is also the link between the project and the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) of the Programme. The LP takes on the responsibility for the submission of the application form; management, communication and implementation of the project; as well as co-ordination of activities among the partners involved.

7. Duration of seed money projects

The project duration consists of three phases: a contracting phase, an implementation phase and a project closure phase. The contracting phase lasts at least two months and starts on the day after selection of the project by the Monitoring Committee. The implementation phase lasts up to 12 months. The closure phase lasts up to three months.

8. Seed money application procedure

The seed money application procedure consists of two steps. First, applicants have to obtain support from the relevant Policy Area Coordinator/Horizontal Action Coordinator (PAC/HAC), who will assess the strategic relevance of the planned main project. The second step is the submission of the application to the MA/JS after the applicant has been pre-selected by the PAC/HAC.

8.1 Pre-selection of applications by PACs/HACs

By **28 October 2016** the seed money draft application describing the planned main project idea has to be submitted to the responsible PAC/HAC. The draft application PDF document is available at <http://www.interreg-baltic.eu/>. The contact details of PACs and HACs are available at <http://www.balticsearegion-strategy.eu/contacts>.

The role of Policy Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Coordinators is to ensure the strategic assessment of project ideas (i.e. selecting ideas and partnerships with the most strategic value for the policy area or horizontal action). Basic criteria for pre-selection by PACs/HACs are given in the Programme Manual (Chapter J.8.1).

Each PAC/HAC may pre-select a maximum of three seed money applications for the call. Due to their broad focus, Policy Areas Innovation and Bio-economy may pre-select up to five applications. PACs/HACs will forward a list of pre-selected draft applications to the MA/JS by the 2nd week of December 2016. Following this step, the MA/JS will contact the applicants pre-selected by the PACs/HACs and invite them to submit a complete seed money application to the Programme.

8.2 Submission of complete applications to MA/ JS

In the beginning of January 2017 the pre-selected applicants will receive access to the online application system (BAMOS). The applicants will be asked to fill in and submit an application via the online system. In addition, the signed application and the partner declarations for all partners participating in the project (including lead partner) have to be sent to the MA/JS.

The deadline for submission of the full application is **15 February 2017**.

An overview of the application process is provided in the table below.

Step 1 draft seed money application for PAC/HAC pre-selection	
Digital version	
Which documents?	Seed money draft application in a functional PDF format
When?	By 28 October 2016 24:00 CEST (UTC +02:00)
How?	Send e-mail to the respective PAC or HAC (http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/contacts)

Step 2 Complete seed money application	
Digital version	
Which documents?	Online application
When?	By 15 February 2017 24:00 CEST (UTC +02:00)
How?	Submit via online system: http://ba.bamos.eu/
Paper version	
Which documents?	Signed application (identical to the digital version) Partner declarations for all project partners (including lead applicant)

	as original or copies
When?	By 15 February 2017 24:00 CEST (UTC +02:00). Please note: The date on the postmark must be 15 February 2017 or earlier
How?	Mail documents to: Interreg Baltic Sea Region Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat IB.SH Grubenstraße 20 18055 Rostock, Germany

8.3 Selection of applications

The MA/JS is responsible for the verification of completeness and correctness of the submitted documents (admissibility check) as well as for the quality assessment. The assessment criteria are described in the Programme Manual (Chapter J.9). The outcome of the quality assessment will be presented to the Monitoring Committee (MC). The MC will select the seed money projects for funding in May 2017.

9. Programme language

Draft and complete applications as well as other templates and documents have to be filled in in English.

10. Further information and assistance

The official Programme documents are available on the Programme website (<http://www.interreg-baltic.eu/>):

- Interreg Baltic Sea Region Cooperation Programme;
- Programme Manual (Chapter J for seed money);
- Application package for the 1st seed money call.

The MA/JS offers the following assistance to applicants:

For general advice please contact: seed.money@interreg-baltic.eu

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A Lead Applicant Seminar for the pre-selected projects is planned for the third week of January 2017. Information about upcoming events is available at the Programme website: <http://www.interreg-baltic.eu/events.html>.