Interreg Baltic Sea Region
Priority 4, specific objective 4.1
2nd Call for Seed Money Applications

Announcement Note
Timeline: 5 November 2019 – 23 March 2020

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 and Russia1 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.

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Seed money projects are expected to cooperate with the responsible Policy Area Coordinators and Horizontal Action Coordinators (PAC/HAC).

**Please note:** The Action Plan is currently under revision and the revision process might not be finalised during the seed money application phase. As the project ideas have to be in line with the revised Action Plan and have to meet the expectations and needs of the relevant policy area or horizontal action, it is highly recommended to discuss the project ideas and their contribution to the revised Action Plan with the relevant PAC/HAC as early as possible.

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.

Regarding the EU funding programmes for the period 2021-2027 it is expected that by the second half of the seed money project implementation period in 2021 there will be enough information available about the new programmes in order to investigate on funding possibilities and to start to prepare for an application. Any other international, national or regional, public or private funding source should be taken into consideration as well. 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 to 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.

4. Programme co-financing

In total, EUR 1 million of Programme co-financing from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is available for this call. Norwegian national funding to the Programme is available to Norwegian project partners as well as European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)/Russian national funding – for Russian 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). Belarus has not signed a Financing Agreement and therefore partners from this country are not eligible for Programme funding.

Each project has to involve at least three project partners from three different countries of the Programme area: a lead partner\(^2\) 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.

\(^2\) The lead partner is further referred to as “lead applicant” in this document as a project proposal is in its application phase as long as it is not approved neither rejected.
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 and ends 30 September 2021. 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 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 9 December 2019 the seed money draft application describing the planned main project idea has to be submitted to the responsible PAC/HAC. The draft application PDF template is available at https://www.interreg-baltic.eu/apply-for-funds/seed-money-calls.html. The contact details of the PAC/HACs are available at https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/contacts/contacts.

The role of the PAC/HACs is to ensure the strategic assessment of the project ideas (i.e. selecting ideas and partnerships with the most strategic value for the policy area or horizontal action). Basic criteria for the pre-selection by PAC/HACs are given in the Programme Manual (Chapter J.8.1). If PAC/HACs set additional pre-selection criteria reflecting specific needs and targets of the policy area/horizontal action in question, the link to this specific criteria will be published on the Programme website.

Each policy area/horizontal action may pre-select up to four seed money applications for the call. PAC/HACs will send a letter of support for each pre-selected application to the MA/JS. In the letter of support PAC/HACs explain how the application contributes to their policy area/horizontal action in the Strategy and how the application helps to
implement the updated Action Plan\(^3\) (please see chapter 2). The PAC/HAC sends the letter of support, which contains the contact data of the lead applicant of the pre-selected proposals, to the MA/JS by **20 January 2020**. Following this step, the MA/JS will contact the lead applicants of the proposals pre-selected by the PAC/HACs and invite them to submit a complete seed money application to the Programme.

**8.2 Submission of complete applications to the MA/JS**

In early February 2020 the lead applicants of the pre-selected proposals will receive access to the online application system (BAMOS). The lead 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 the lead applicants) have to be sent to the MA/JS in paper version.

The deadline for submission of the full application is **23 March 2020**.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Step 1 draft seed money application for PAC/HAC pre-selection</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital version</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Which documents?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>When?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>How?</strong></td>
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<th><strong>Step 2 Complete seed money application</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Partner declarations for all project partners (including the lead applicants)</strong></td>
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\(^3\) Due to the update of the EUSBSR Action Plan some policy areas or horizontal actions might be merged and the current number of 13 policy areas and 4 horizontal actions might decrease. Thus, applicants are advised to get in touch with the respective Policy Area and Horizontal Action Coordinator during the development of their project proposal to make sure that the proposal reflects any possible changes in the future structure of policy areas and horizontal actions.
| **When?** | By 23 March 2020. Please note: The date on the postmark must be 23 March 2020 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/June 2020.

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

- Interreg Baltic Sea Region Cooperation Programme;
- Programme Manual (Chapter J for seed money);

The application package for the 2nd seed money call is available under:
The MA/JS offers the following assistance to applicants:

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

Jan Schmidt, Project Officer, phone: +49 381 45484 5272,
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Online seminars for the pre-selected projects informing about the application process are planned for the first half of February 2020. Information about upcoming events will be available at the Programme website: http://www.interreg-baltic.eu/events.html.