

Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013
5th call for applications
09 January 2012 – 29 March 2012

Announcement Note

1. Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 offers financial support to transnational projects contributing to the development of a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated Baltic Sea Region. The Programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the Territorial Cooperation Objective of the European Community. It also integrates the objectives and financing of Cross-border Cooperation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for Belarus. Norway is contributing with national financing to enable Norwegian partners to fully participate in achieving the objectives of the Programme.

The Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 takes an active part in the implementation of the **EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region ("Strategy") and its Action Plan**. This first macroregional concept of the European Union has been adopted by the European Council including the Member States of the Baltic Sea Region in October 2009. For the period 2007-2013, no additional EU funding is made available to support activities set out in the Action Plan. The funding for implementing the Action Plan including the already listed "flagship projects" and "horizontal actions" should be drawn from a variety of funding sources including the Territorial Cooperation programmes of the region. The transnational Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 has been identified as an important financial instrument to support the implementation of the Strategy and its Action Plan. For more information please go to:

http://eu.baltic.net/Baltic_Sea_Region_Strategy.7428.html
or http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/baltic/index_en.cfm

2. Objectives and Priorities

The strategic objective of the Programme is to strengthen the development towards a sustainable, competitive, and territorially integrated Baltic Sea Region by connecting potentials over the borders. The Programme is focused on the preparation of investments and actions aimed at improving the economic potential of the region. At the same time, the goal is to minimise the existing differences in the socio-economic development between the western and the eastern parts of the region. The Programme is considered as a tool to address common challenges for the countries around the Baltic Sea.

The Programme is divided into four thematic priorities. Currently 80 projects are being financed by the Programme. The applicants for the 5th call will apply under the Programme priority 4 "Promoting attractive and competitive cities and regions" and its area of support 4.2 "Strategic support for integrated BSR development and socio-economic and territorial cohesion." Thus the projects will help implementing key activities of priority 4 and close current gaps in the Programme i.e.

- cross-sectoral and territorial development strategies at pan-Baltic level to guide socio-economic transformation and
- cooperation of metropolitan regions, cities and rural areas which may enhance the Baltic Sea Region identity.

3. Availability of funds

The ERDF funds for the Programme priorities 1, 2 and 3 as well as all the ENPI funds are already committed. **In priority 4 there are 4.43 Million EUR from the ERDF, and 0.84 Million EUR of Norwegian funds still available.** The available funds allow for a selection of 2-3 additional projects in the Programme.

4. Focus of the call

The call is open for projects implementing the following **horizontal actions of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's Action Plan**:

1. "Strengthening multi-level governance, place based spatial planning and sustainable development"

The Programme is looking for projects establishing a dialogue amongst actors at all levels of governance in the Baltic Sea Region with the aim to ensure the involvement of all levels into the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The dialogue should include local and regional level authorities, national authorities, macro-regional (pan-Baltic) organisations as well as the European Commission. Applying projects should demonstrate models how multi-level governance could work in implementing flagship projects or strategic actions in different priority areas of the Action Plan.

2. "Build a regional identity"

The Programme is looking for projects promoting a common identity of the overall Baltic Sea Region, in particular as regards branding of the Region to the target groups outside the Baltic Sea Region. The branding may focus on different topics of overall Baltic Sea Region relevance (e.g. tourism, education, business). The project activities should address the entire Baltic Sea Region.

5. Project duration

The project activities may start the day after the Monitoring Committee approval (see further point 13). **Project implementation activities must end on 30 September 2014.** For more information please see chapter 3.2 in the Programme Manual.

6. Who can receive funding?

Legal persons with non-profit objective can receive Programme funding for the implementation of project related activities. For more information regarding the categories of eligible project partners please see chapter 1 and chapter 9.1.1 in the Operational Programme as well as chapter 2.1 in the Programme Manual. Private companies are welcome to participate in the projects; however, they must use their own funds to finance their costs.

7. The role of research organisations in the projects

Research organisations have an important role in the Baltic Sea Region Programme projects in supporting the development of solutions to common challenges. Yet, projects supported by the Baltic Sea Region Programme are expected to have a link to regional development and to implement and test research outcomes in practice rather than to only make new research or to develop educational products. Therefore a cooperation of solely research and education organisations is not supported by the Programme. Instead, projects should always involve end-users of the research outcomes or educational products in their partnership.

8. Co-financing rates

As a general rule, the ERDF co-financing rate for project partners located in the Programme area in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden is up to 75% and for project partners located in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland the ERDF co-financing rate is up to 85%. For the Norwegian partners the co-financing rate is up to 50%. For more information on the co-financing rates please see chapter 9.1.2 and 15 in the Operational Programme and chapter 2.1 in the Programme Manual. For information on co-financing rates for partners located outside the Programme area please see also chapter 9.1.2 in the Operational Programme.

9. Lead Partner Principle

Each project has to appoint a lead applicant/lead partner who is responsible for preparation and submission of the application form. In case of approval of the project, 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 Technical Secretariat) of the Programme. Principally, lead partner organisations must be located on the territory of an EU member state in the Programme area or in duly justified cases in Norway. They must be legal persons fulfilling the criteria laid down in chapter 9.1.1 of the Operational Programme as well as chapter 2.1 of the Programme Manual.

10. Reimbursement of preparation costs

Project partners eligible for ERDF or Norwegian national funding can apply for reimbursement of costs related to the preparation of the project proposal. Only projects approved by the Monitoring Committee can have their preparation costs reimbursed. Personnel costs, travel and accommodation costs and costs for external services directly related to the project preparation can be reimbursed up to the amount of 50 000 EUR or

2% of the total eligible project costs, whichever is lower. Only preparation costs accounted from 30 March 2011 on and incurred and paid until the date of the Monitoring Committee decision will be considered as eligible for reimbursement. For further information please see chapter 5.4 in the Programme Manual.

11. State Aid

The projects must not include any state aid relevant activities. Please check the Programme website under "documents" for further information on state aid.

12. Project Applications

All applicants are required to fill in a project idea form (available under eu.baltic.net) and to ask for feedback to their project idea from the Baltic Sea Region Programme Joint Technical Secretariat. This should be done by 20 February 2012 at the latest. Feedback from the Joint Technical Secretariat can be obtained either in written form, or during an individual project consultation whatever the applicant prefers. **Applications for which no prior feedback from the Joint Secretariat was asked will be considered as inadmissible.**

At the time of application applicants are asked to fill in the application form in English. Detailed information on how to fill in the application form is provided in the application form itself. The application form is part of the application package and is available for download on the Programme website: eu.baltic.net.

The application form has to be submitted in paper and in electronic (excel) version. The paper version of the application form must include partner declaration forms completed by each project partner (incl. the lead applicant). A model partner declaration form is included in the application package and available on the Programme website. Please note that the content of the partner declaration form has been modified after the 4th call and the new template must be used for the 5th call.

Optionally, the applicant may submit letters of support from associated organisations and project stakeholders as well as one document in pdf-format containing up to five DIN A4 pages of graphical information; such as:

- flowchart demonstrating interdependencies between various work packages
- chart demonstrating time wise implementation of project activities
- map demonstrating the geographical scope of the project proposal
- pictures or plans of the planned investments or concepts
- flowchart demonstrating the project management structure

Please note that the application form is the only official basis for the assessment. Therefore, all information relevant for the proper assessment of a project proposal must be included in the application form itself. The graphical information is seen as complementary only, aiming at helping the assessor to better understand the information provided in the application form.

The electronic (excel) version of the application form (including optional graphical information in the pdf-format) has to be sent on **29 March 2012** at the latest to the following address: **applications@eu.baltic.net**.

The original paper version duly signed, stamped and dated (including the partner declarations and optional letters of support) has to be sent on **29 March 2012** at the latest (date on the post stamp) to the following address:

Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013
Joint Technical Secretariat
Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein
Grubenstraße 20
18055 Rostock, Germany

13. Project Selection

All project applications will be subject to a two-step assessment procedure. They will first be checked against the admissibility criteria including the compliance with the focus of the call. **In addition, project applications for which no feedback was asked from the Joint Technical Secretariat by 20 February 2012 are considered as inadmissible.** Only projects having passed the admissibility check will be subject to a quality assessment, which is carried out based on the quality criteria. The admissibility criteria and the quality criteria are presented in chapter 9.3 in the Programme Manual.

Based on the results of the quality assessment, funding decisions on project proposals will be made by the Monitoring Committee at its meeting in June 2012. The Monitoring Committee is composed of representatives of both national and regional authorities from the participating states.

14. Further Information and Assistance

All official Programme documents

- Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 Operational Programme v3.0,
- Programme Manual v6.0,
- Application Package including the announcement of the call, application form and model partner declaration form

are available on the Programme website eu.baltic.net. For further assistance please contact the Joint Technical Secretariat in Rostock or Riga at info@eu.baltic.net.