

Call for Applications for the Organisation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum 2020

Announcement note for specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation”

Timeline: 10 May 2019 – 4 October 2019

Interreg Baltic Sea Region calls for applications to prepare and organise the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region Forum 2020 (Strategy Forum 2020). This call is open to all eligible partners interested in organising the Strategy Forum 2020. However, prior endorsement of the application by the National Coordinators for the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR, the Strategy) is required (see below).

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.

Interreg Baltic Sea Region takes an active part in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and its Action Plan. For the funding period 2014-2020 thematic priorities 1-3 of Interreg Baltic Sea Region have been aligned with the objectives of the Strategy to maximise the synergies and leverage effects on other financing sources in the Programme area. Interreg Baltic Sea Region offers support to the Strategy implementation for example by financing flagship projects and their preparation (seed money support). A detailed description of the actions financed under thematic priorities 1-3 can be found in the Programme document.

In addition, 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 2020.

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 up to 600-900 people during the last few years.

Also in the future, 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 (e.g. Norway and Russia).

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 2020.

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 communication activities (including establishment of common visual identity for the Strategy Forum);
- 3) implementation of the Strategy Forum (e.g. rent of premises and furniture, rent of conference equipment and sound systems, catering, registration system, security costs, speaker costs, costs related to the logistics, staff resources, conference materials, related costs to setting up and organising a networking village);
- 4) promotion of project results relevant for the Strategy (e.g. from projects co-financed by Interreg Baltic Sea Region);
- 5) 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);
- 6) 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 specific objective 4.2 “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 eight EU Member States from the Programme area (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, parts of Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden) and from Norway 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. See point 8 below.

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 co-financing to support the Strategy Forum 2020 is a maximum of EUR 255,000 ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) plus additional Norwegian funds available for partners from Norway. For all partners the co-financing is 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

The implementation phase of activities related to the preparation and organisation of the Strategy Forum 2020 may last up to 12 months (estimated approximately from early

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.eu

2020 until end 2020). In addition, on the day after the Monitoring Committee approval the contracting phase will start. Within this period, which lasts up to three months, a subsidy contract is expected to be concluded. 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.

8. Preparing the application

The applicants interested in hosting the Strategy Forum, have to first express their interest in form of a project idea.

- **Expression of interest**

All lead applicants are asked to submit a project idea form (PIF) (available at interreg-baltic.eu) briefly describing the main aims of the Forum, its thematic focus and contribution to the EUSBSR promotion, a draft event concept and the partnership outline.

The PIF has to be accompanied by a letter of support from the National Coordinator³ representing the country where the Forum will take place. The respective National Coordinator has to assure the needed support for the successful Forum organisation (e.g., agenda setting, guidance related to priorities and implementation of the strategy etc.).

The completed PIF has to be submitted no later than 28 June 2019 to idea@interreg-baltic.eu.

After the deadline the MA/JS will forward the PIF(s) received to the group of the National Coordinators for the EUSBSR.

- **Pre-selection by the EUSBSR National Coordinators**

The National Coordinators, in close cooperation with the European Commission, will evaluate the PIF(s) received and pre-select the proposal(s) presenting highest relevance in the EUSBSR context (thematic relevance, ability to assure the needed outreach to target groups and disseminate EUSBSR achievements, demonstrating strong links to the NC of the country where the Forum might be held). This will be done **by 6 September 2019 the latest**. Following the NC group discussion, the NC Chair will inform the MA/JS about the outcome of the discussion (meeting minutes).

- **Preparation of the full application**

Following the NC pre-selection, the MA/JS will approach the endorsed applicant(s) to grant access to the online application system (BAMOS), where complete project application(s) shall be submitted.

³ The list of National Coordinators is available on the EUSBSR website: www.balticsea-region.eu

Applicant(s) is (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.

9. Submission of full application

The complete application is to be submitted to the MA/JS:

- as a digital copy via the online submission system – BAMOS – no later than 4 October 2019 at 16:00 CET, and
- as a hard copy no later than 4 October 2019 (date verified by the postmark).

Hard copy has to be sent to:

Managing Authority (MA)/ Joint Secretariat (JS) Rostock
c/o Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein (IB.SH)
Grubenstrasse 20
18055 Rostock, Germany

The hard copy of the application has to be sent together with:

- 1) Signed partner declarations for all project partners (including lead applicant), in original or as copies;
- 2) Letter of support provided by the EUSBSR National Coordinator where the Forum is to take place; and
- 3) Draft concept of the Strategy Forum.

A partner declaration template is included in the application package and available on the Programme website.

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

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 (for more information, please see the Programme Manual for the coordination of macro-regional cooperation, Chapter D.2.1), the MA/JS will inform the lead applicant. The applicant may complete the application and send missing documents in the time frame given by the MA/JS. Only applications that have passed the admissibility check will proceed to the quality assessment.

The MA/JS carries out the quality assessment of the application(s) according to the specific quality assessment criteria set in the Programme Manual for specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation”.

Based on the quality assessment, the Monitoring Committee of the Programme will select the application. This will be done in a written procedure which will be launched no earlier than 28 October 2019.

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 and partner declaration form are available on the Programme website interreg-baltic.eu.

The MA/JS provides written feedback and offers consultations at its offices (Rostock/Riga) and via telephone/Skype.

For advice on specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation” please contact:

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For general advice on the Programme matters please contact:

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