

## **Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 3rd Call for Applications 04 January - 22 March 2010**

### **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 eligible regions outside the Union. 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 will be made available to support activities set out in the Action Plan. The funding for implementing the Action Plan including the already listed "flagship projects" should be drawn from a variety of funding sources including the Territorial Cooperation programmes of the region. Naturally, 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.

**The Programme is encouraging particularly flagship projects of the Action Plan to prepare an application.** They should seek the support of the Action Plan's Priority Area Coordinators to verify their relevance for the Strategy (for practicalities see 12.) In general, all applicants are invited to explain the link of their project application to the Strategy and its Action Plan. During the assessment of applications, these links will be evaluated and highlighted to the decision making body (the Monitoring Committee). **Flagship projects and other actions consistent with the Strategy receive priority, unless they are deficient in quality or inconsistent with the priorities of the Programme<sup>1</sup>.** Information about the Strategy and its Action Plan will be provided at the Programme's Lead Applicant seminars. For more information please go to: [http://eu.baltic.net/Baltic\\_Sea\\_Region\\_Strategy.7428.html](http://eu.baltic.net/Baltic_Sea_Region_Strategy.7428.html).

#### **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.

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<sup>1</sup> This criterion/this passage is still under discussion by the Monitoring Committee.

The Programme is divided into four thematic Priorities. Applicants are invited to submit project proposals under one of the four Priorities. A comprehensive description of the Programme objectives and the content of Priorities can be found in the Operational Programme.

### 3. Availability of funds

Currently 46 projects are being financed by the Programme. The table below provides an overview of Programme funds (MEUR) which can still be committed to future projects.

	ERDF	NORWAY	ENPI
Priority 1	25.30		4.63
Priority 2	21.07		3.81
Priority 3	24.18		2.89
Priority 4	9.04		6.67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79.60</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>18.00</b>

### 4. Missing topics in the Priorities

Applicants may address any of the themes defined for Programme Priorities (see Operational Programme, chapter 6). However, the Monitoring Committee is particularly interested in projects tackling themes that so far have insufficiently been addressed by the approved projects. Such themes are:

#### Priority 1

- attracting people of different age, gender and profession to innovation issues (especially projects targeting women's and young people's participation in generation and absorption of new knowledge with the objective to facilitate their access to the labour market and to entrepreneurship)
- better access of rural/peripheral areas to knowledge-based economy
- improving education systems making people in the Baltic Sea Region open for innovations (a cooperation solely among education and research institutions is not encouraged)
- creation of overall transnational structures and links for innovation, qualification and technology transfer, especially linking innovation networks already implemented within the Programme with the objective to capitalise on results achieved so far in these networks

#### Priority 2

- integration of areas with low accessibility (in particular areas in the northern and eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region) to the other areas of the Baltic Sea Region
- promotion of ICT measures enhancing accessibility and sustainable socio-

economic growth

### **Priority 3**

- promotion of sustainable use of marine resources (e. g. aquaculture, offshore wind energy, use of biomass)
- prevention of trans-boundary pollution risks and promotion of environmental management and standards, especially concerning ship emissions

### **Priority 4**

- demographic change
- common identity of the Baltic Sea Region

The applicants should be aware that only limited ERDF funds (9.0 MEUR) are available in Priority 4 allowing for approximately 4-5 new projects.

## **5. 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. Please note, that the legal definition of project partners was rendered more precise in the recently amended Operational Programme (chapter 9.1.1). Private companies are welcome to participate in the projects; however, they must use their own funds to finance their costs.

## **6. 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%. The ENPI co-financing rate is up to 90%. 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.

## **7. 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.

## **8. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)**

The Programme provides co-financing from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the benefit of Belarus. In addition to Belarusian organisations, in well justified cases also project partners from EU Member States in the Programme area may use ENPI funds for activities benefitting Belarus. Project partnerships involving Belarusian partners are asked to send a single joint application to the Programme. Project partners receiving ENPI funding have to follow specific rules of the ENPI Regulations (see more details in the relevant chapters of the Programme Manual). As there is no ENPI funding available for Russian organisations, it is recommended to include these partners as associated organisations. Please find further guidance in the Programme Manual chapter 2.3.

## **9. Strategic Projects**

The Baltic Sea Region Programme puts special emphasis on projects that have a particular strategic relevance for the whole region. Such projects may be selected as strategic projects in the Programme. For further information see chapter 4.5 in the Operational Programme and chapter 6 in 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 after 22 March 2009 and incurred until the date of the Monitoring Committee decision will be considered as eligible for reimbursement. For further information please see chapter 5.3 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**

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](http://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 2nd call and the new template should be used for the 3rd call.

Projects applying as “flagship projects” of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region’s Action Plan are asked to submit a letter of commitment from the relevant Priority Area Coordinator together with the application form. The contact details of the Coordinators, the Strategy documents, and the guidance for the letter of commitment are available for download under: [http://eu.baltic.net/Baltic\\_Sea\\_Region\\_Strategy.7428.html](http://eu.baltic.net/Baltic_Sea_Region_Strategy.7428.html).

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 **22nd March 2010** 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 **22nd March 2010** 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. 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 meetings in June and September 2010.

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 v2.0,
- Programme Manual v4.0,
- Application Package including the announcement of the call, application form and model partner declaration form

are available on the Programme website [eu.baltic.net](http://eu.baltic.net). For further assistance please contact the Joint Technical Secretariat in Rostock or Riga at [info@eu.baltic.net](mailto:info@eu.baltic.net).