

Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027

1st call for proposals

20th December 2022 – 15th February 2023

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS

(Open for regular projects under all Programme Priorities)

Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027

After more than 30 years of implementing territorial cooperation in the European Union, Interreg programmes enter the new generation for 2021-2027. As before, cross-border cooperation tackles common challenges identified jointly in the border regions to exploit the untapped growth potential.

The Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027 enters a new era of multilateral cross-border cooperation between the coastal regions of five EU Member States: Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland.

Actions with the focus on economic, environmental, and social development, natural and cultural heritage, and cooperation of different actors in the area are supported by the Programme foremost aiming above all at improving the quality of life of its residents through the blue and green growth of the area.

For the Programming period of 2021-2027 the Programme sets a vision of its development direction as *"United by the sea into action for blue and green future – Innovative, Sustainable, Attractive and Active South Baltic"*.

Programme Priorities and Measure

The project applications under the 1st call for proposals can be submitted under all Programme Priorities and Measures.

PRIORITY 1 - Innovative South Baltic

- **Programme Measure 1.1 Digitalising the region**

The project activities should propose innovative approaches including digitalisation of public services and increasing the level of digitalisation of different sectors to integrate services and strengthen connectivity within the South Baltic area. It is expected that proposals will support development of digital skills and boost the development especially of sectors related to the blue and green economy.

- **Programme Measure 1.2 Building connectivity of the region through internationalization**

The Project proposals are expected to enhance the SMEs competitiveness, innovativeness, and their presence on an international market: expansion of SMEs stands in need of efficient cross-border learning and networking platforms,

business advisory services and matchmaking actions to assist them in moving from domestic to international business practices.

PRIORITY 2 - Sustainable South Baltic

- **Programme Measure 2.1 Supporting transition towards green energy**
The cross-border projects are anticipated to be aimed at raising awareness of the need for developing solutions to improve the production and use of renewable energy, which can further help implementing the energy transitions. Solutions may include complementary actions focusing on developing and adapting systems of energy storage and distribution in order to ensure the safe and efficient use of renewable energy.
- **Programme Measure 2.2 Promoting sustainable use of water**
The Baltic Sea and its tributaries suffer from a high level of pollution (e.g., plastics and chemicals) and eutrophication. Actions planned in project proposals should aim at broadening support of efficient and sustainable water management, especially in the field of reducing the outlets of nutrients and hazardous substances into river-basins, and subsequently the Baltic Sea to enhance the water quality.
- **Programme Measure 2.3 Supporting a circular and more resource efficient development**
There is a visible potential for cross-border projects aimed at promotion and implementation of circular economy related actions connected to reuse and recycling, circular product development and design, new resource efficient products and services, water efficiency methods for industry and public sector etc. Proposals of the new solutions for the areas of mobility, employment, healthcare and social security systems, use of natural (non-renewable) resources, business sectors etc are expected from the project partners.

PRIORITY 3 - Attractive South Baltic

- **Programme Measure 3.1 Developing sustainable, resilient, and innovative tourism**
Project proposals are anticipated to address sustainable tourism development: the actions should focus on the improvement of the tourist and cultural offers and creation of new ones forming new and innovative services and products; reduction of the negative impact of travel and tourism on the natural environment; sustainable use of resources such as energy; mitigation of tourism seasonality and transition towards sustainable, all-year-round tourism.

PRIORITY 4 - Active South Baltic

- **Programme Measure 4.1 Strengthen the cooperation capacity of actors based within the South Baltic Area (including civil society)**

To solve common cross-border problems and build mutual reliance in the areas of administration, regional development and cross-border mobility projects are proposed to include a wide group of actors, especially local actors, to cooperate, create ample opportunity for networking, exchange experience and build cooperation capacities under implementation of a joint project.

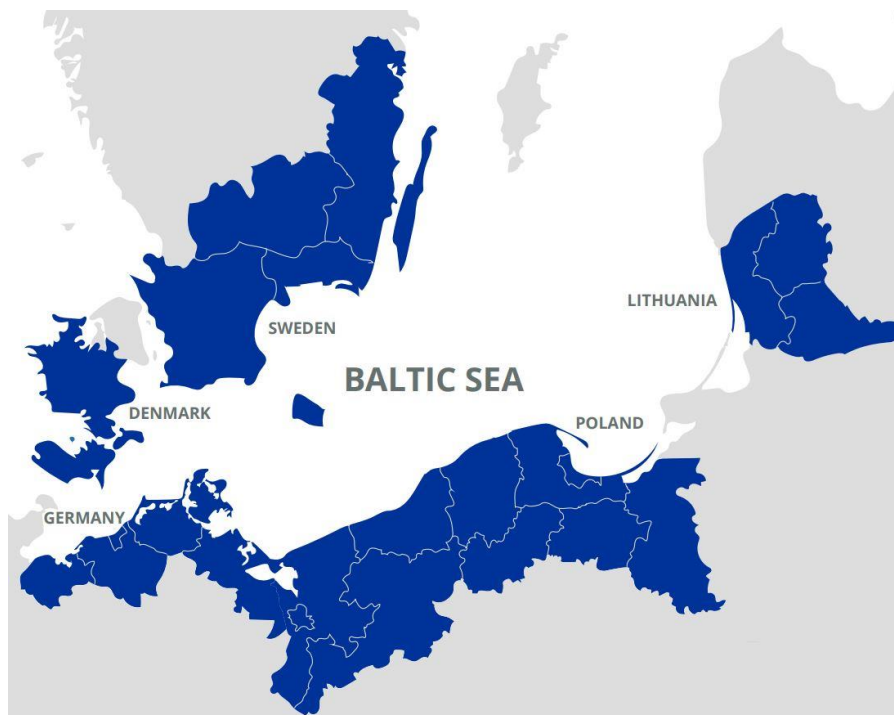
When applying for the Programme funding in the WOD2021 system, make sure to choose the relevant to the addressed Measure application code introduced below:

Measure 1.1	STHB.01.01-IP.01-001/22
Measure 1.2	STHB.01.02-IP.01-001/22
Measure 2.1	STHB.02.01-IP.01-001/22
Measure 2.2	STHB.02.02-IP.01-001/22
Measure 2.3	STHB.02.03-IP.01-001/22
Measure 3.1	STHB.03.01-IP.01-001/22
Measure 4.1	STHB.04.01-IP.01-001/22

Programme area

The eligible area for the Programme consists of regions from five EU Member States, which includes the following NUTS III units:

- **Denmark:** Bornholm, Østsjælland, Vest-og Sydsjælland
- **Sweden:** Skåne län, Blekinge län; Kalmar län, Kronobergs län
- **Germany:** districts (Landkreise) Nordwestmecklenburg, Rostock, Vorpommern-Rügen, Vorpommern-Greifswald and district-free city (kreisfreie Stadt) of Rostock
- **Poland:** Chojnicki, Miasto Szczecin, Szczeciński, Stargardzki, Koszaliński, Słupski, Szczecinecko-Pyrzycki; Gdański, Trójmiejski and Elbląski
- **Lithuania:** Klaipėdos apskritis, Tauragės apskritis, Telšių apskritis.



NB: As a general rule, project activities should be implemented in the Programme eligible area. In exceptional cases, if for the benefit of the Programme eligible area and the Programme's objectives, some activities may be implemented outside the Programme eligible area or even on the territories of other EU Member States.

Partner type in projects

In the South Baltic Programme the project partnership can consist of three types of partners:

- Lead partner (LP);
- Project partner (PP);
- Associated partner (AP).

While all types of partners are expected to commit themselves to the delivery of the project, only the first two types of partners can benefit directly from ERDF funding and have to provide their own contribution as a counterpart to the Programme co-financing: Lead partners and Project partners.



Lead partner

In order to act as a Lead partner in the South Baltic Programme project an organization has to meet the following criteria.

Eligible legal form:

- national, regional and local authorities;
- bodies governed by public law (as defined in Art 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014). This means body fulfilling all three conditions:
- established under public or private law for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character, and
 - having legal personality, and
 - financed, for the most part, by the State, regional or local authorities, or other bodies governed by public law; or subject to management supervision by those bodies; or having an administrative, managerial or supervisory board, more than half of whose members are appointed by the State, regional or local authorities, or by other bodies governed by public law.
- associations of one or several regional or local authorities;
- associations of one or several bodies governed by public law;
- European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (as defined in the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 as amended by Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013).

Eligible geographical location:

1. Programme area (referring to the legal address of the organisation).
2. In justified cases, organisations of national or regional level that are located outside the Programme area but have a recognizable impact and/or functional links with the Programme area. In such cases it is strongly recommended that the JS is contacted in advance to confirm eligibility.
3. The national/regional authorities which have territorial jurisdiction over the Programme region also can become Lead Partners if justified.

NB: Each Lead Partner should have sufficient financial, management and organisational capacities: this will be assessed on a case-by-case basis during the quality assessment of applications. Therefore, such organisations, especially NGOs, should be able, on short notice, to present and provide the JS with three year's balance sheets and employment records to prove their ability to cover for potential irregularities during project implementation.

Project partner

In order to act as a Project partner in the South Baltic Programme project an organization has to meet the following criteria.

Eligible legal form:

- national, regional and local authorities;
- bodies governed by public law (as defined in Art 2(1) of Directive 2014/24/EU);
- associations of one or several regional or local authorities;
- associations of one or several bodies governed by public law;
- European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) (as defined in the Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 as amended by Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013).
- SME associations and clusters;
- Chambers of commerce, trade unions and NGOs;
- other entities established under public or private law operating for the specific purpose of meeting needs in the general interest, not having an industrial or commercial character;
- SMEs.

Eligible geographical location:

1. Programme area (referring to the legal address of the organisation).
2. Organisations located outside the Programme area, but in exceptional cases with a justification of their involvement.
3. Applicants located within EU Member States other than the Programme Member States are entitled to receive a maximum of 80% of ERDF co-financing. Such applicants may become partners only under special conditions.

Involvement of SMEs as Project partners

In order to act as a Project partner in the South Baltic Programme project an SME has to meet the following criteria:

1. SMEs can participate as project partners in projects under all Programme Measures.
2. SMEs cannot act as the Lead Partners.
3. Each organisation representing SME should be established at least 3 years before the announcement of the call for proposals for which each respective SME is applying.
4. To confirm their status each SME must fill a relevant section in the Supplementary Application Form and submit it in the WOD2021 Application System.

5. Involvement of SMEs in projects as projects partners should be justified and explained to be relevant and necessary for achievement of project results.

NB: An SME cannot join the partnership as a Project partner if its main activity within its business profile and its role in the project consists of project coordination, management, communication, and consulting!

It is strongly recommended to involve partners from the public sector located in the Programme area of the respective participating country from where any SME is involved for a broader coverage of target groups, wider communication, and sustainability of project results maintained with the help of the public sector organization.

Associated partner

If an organisation does not comply with the eligibility requirements or does not intend to become financially involved in the project but is willing to take part in the projects, it may take on the role of the associated partner: these partners participate in the activities of the project but are not directly involved in the design and implementation of the project and have no budget share.

There is no limitation of the legal form and geographical location for associated partners!

Financing of the Programme

Available Programme funding

The total ERDF funding allocated to the Programme for the period 2021-2027 is **EUR 79 916 558,00**.

The distribution of funds between the Programme Priorities and Measure is presented below.

Category	Amount in EUR (ERDF)	%
PRIORITY 1 - Innovative South Baltic	15 983 312,00	19%
1.1 Digitalising the region	11 188 319,00	13%
1.2 Building connectivity of the region through internationalisation	4 794 993,00	6%

PRIORITY 2 - Sustainable South Baltic	35 962 450,00	42%
2.1 Supporting transition towards green energy	14 384 980,00	17%
2.2 Promoting sustainable use of water	12 586 857,00	15%
2.3 Supporting a circular and more resource efficient development	8 990 613,00	10%
PRIORITY 3 - Attractive South Baltic	19 979 140,00	23%
PRIORITY 4 - Active South Baltic	7 991 656,00	9%

Co-financing rates

All partners regardless their geographical location can receive the amount of ERDF co-financing of max 80%.

The project budget formula is:

Max 80% of ERDF + 20% of co-financing = 100% of the total eligible budget.

NB: It must be underlined that co-financing rates for particular project partners may be reduced if activities are subject to the state aid rules.

Costs incurred during the project preparation

The Programme offers a lump sum for project preparation costs (no proof in the form of financial documents is needed), under the condition that the project application has been approved in the call for proposals.

The lump sum is the only way to cover preparation costs; real costs cannot be submitted and claimed for reimbursement.

NB: The lump sum is granted only if the project did not receive seed money from the South Baltic Programme (including the seed money facility implemented under the South Baltic Programme 2007 – 2013 and the South Baltic Programme 2014-2022) or another seed money instrument.

Project start date

The earliest start date of the project can be the day after the end date of the respective call for proposals.

At the latest, the implementation phase is required to start three months after the decision of the Monitoring Committee.

NB: Project activities can be carried out before approval of the project by the Monitoring Committee, but at the project's own risk!

Application package

The documents necessary for application can be found in the application package published on the Programme website – <https://southbaltic.eu/call-for-proposals1>

The Programme documents will not be altered during the call for proposals and project assessment.

The application package consists of:

- Call for proposals announcement;
- Programme Manual;
- Guidelines on filling in and submitting the Application Form;
- The list of supporting documents to be attached to the Application Form;
- Complaint form template

All relevant documents have to be filled in English as this is the official and working language of the Programme. Applications submitted in another language will be considered ineligible.

It is recommended to get familiar with the draft template of the Subsidy Contract as well as with the draft template of the Partnership Agreement before submitting the application.

Submission of applications

In the programming period of 2021-2027 the Programme introduces an electronic system for the submission of the Application Forms: **the WOD2021 Application system**.

All Application Forms should be filled in and submitted via the WOD2021 Application system and accompanied by the supporting documents:

1. Supplementary Application Form (MS Excel).



2. Additional documents to be filled in, signed, dated, and stamped using the relevant template forms (where available):
 - Project Partner Declarations;
 - Letters of Commitment for all associated partners (if applicable);
 - Letter of Dedication and Support from EUSBSR PA (if applicable);
 - Declaration of compliance with the DNSH principle (if applicable);
 - Statements on non-discrimination (Polish partners only)

NB: The JS reserves the right to request any partner to submit additional documents during the assessment process to support their financial, organisational and/or management capabilities and eligibility in accordance with the Programme rules as well as documents related to the State Aid/ De minimis aid.

The Application Form should be introduced to the system by 15th February 2023, 4 p.m. Warsaw time (CET) at the latest!

Selection and approval of projects

The decision on the selection and approval of project proposals is taken by the Monitoring Committee of the South Baltic Programme. Submitted and registered applications are subjected to a two-stage assessment carried out by the Joint Secretariat officers and external experts:

1. Administrative and eligibility assessment.
2. State aid and quality assessment.

Only if the application passes the Administrative and eligibility check it can be subject to State aid and quality assessment.

The Monitoring Committee's decision on the approval of projects submitted under the 1st call for proposals is expected on **22 June 2023**.

Complaints

If the partnership does not agree with the project assessment and selection process and assumes the process of assessment and selection was not conducted in line with the assessment and selection procedures, it is entitled to submit a complaint.



Annex 5 Complaint procedure and template of the Programme Manual provides an explicit description of the complaint procedure and the form to be filled in. The Annex can be found at the Programme website at www.southbaltic.eu.

Further information and contacts

Comprehensive information on the South Baltic Programme can be found at the Programme website at www.southbaltic.eu.

In case of any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Joint Secretariat:

JOINT SECRETARIAT
Interreg South Baltic Programme 2021-2027

Plac Porozumienia Gdańskiego 1

80-864 Gdańsk

Poland

Phone +48 58 74 638 55

Email: southbaltic@southbaltic.eu