

Interreg Baltic Sea Region

Announcement Note for the 1st call for applications in specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation”

Support to the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs)¹

Timeline: 02 December 2014 – 19 February 2015

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 (EUSBSR, the Strategy) and its Action Plan. For the funding period 2014-2020 the thematic priorities 1-3 of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region have been very much aligned with the objectives of the Strategy to maximise the synergies and leverage effects on other financing sources in the programme areas. The 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 to be financed under the thematic priorities 1-3 can be found in the Cooperation Programme.

In addition, the programme provides direct support to the coordination activities of the macro-regional cooperation. The support is provided through the thematic priority 4 ‘Institutional capacity for macro-regional cooperation’ and its specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation” in particular.

With the specific objective 4.2 “Coordination of macro-regional cooperation” the programme aims at increasing the capacity of public administrations and pan-Baltic organisations for transnational coordination in implementing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. In addition, it facilitates the implementation of common priorities with the partner countries Norway, Russia and Belarus.

Under this specific objective the programme provides co-financing for the following macro-regional cooperation activities:

- Support to the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs);

¹ This document was endorsed by the Joint Programming Committee on 25 November 2015. However, please note that it is still subject to final approval by the Monitoring Committee to be established within three months of the date of notification of the European Commission decision adopting the Cooperation Programme

- Targeted support and communication activities related to the implementation of the Strategy.

2. Focus of the call

This call is open for one of the foreseen type of actions, namely:

- Support to the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs).

The programme provides support to Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs) in carrying out tasks related to their role as a coordinator/leader of a thematic area set in the Action Plan of the EUSBSR. Examples of actions co-financed by the programme can be found in the Cooperation Programme and Programme Manual for the specific objective 4.2. "Coordination of macro-regional cooperation", chapter C.

3. Who can receive funding?

Organisations responsible for the coordination of the specific Priority Area/Horizontal Action of the EUSBSR Action Plan as listed on the EUSBSR website (<http://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu>) are eligible to apply for the programme's support to Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) and the Horizontal Action Leaders (HALs).

Each Priority Area or Horizontal Action can be represented in only one application. The following approaches are possible:

- 1) The organisation(s) sharing the leadership of a specific Priority Area/Horizontal Action (co-PACs/HALs) can submit an application together.
- 2) PACs/HALs from different Priority Areas/Horizontal Actions can combine their efforts and submit a joint application. Also in this case the co-PACs/HALs have to be represented in the same application.

When forming the partnerships, the PACs/HALs have to ensure that at least two partners are involved from at least two countries. Organisations that have been established by public authorities or bodies from at least two programme countries can act as a single applicant.

Further details on the composition of the project partnership can be found in the Programme Manual for the specific objective 4.2. "Coordination of macro-regional cooperation", chapter C.

4. Availability of funds

The PACs/HALs may apply for a programme co-financing amounting up to EUR 100,000 per Priority Area/Horizontal Action.

In case a joint application is submitted combining efforts of several of Priority Areas/Horizontal Actions, the programme co-financing can be multiplied according to the number of Priority Areas/Horizontal Actions represented.

5. Programme co-financing and co-financing rate

PACs/HALs have to provide own contribution to receive programme co-financing. They are entitled to receive up to 85% ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) co-financing.

In order to be eligible for the programme co-financing, the organisations responsible for coordination of a specific Priority Area/Horizontal Action have to show clear commitment to the PAC/HAL tasks. This may be expressed by, e.g., allocating sufficient staff resources to the general PAC/HAL task, covering travel costs, communication support, ensuring general administrative support such as accountancy or office supply.

6. Lead partner principle

Each project has to appoint a lead applicant/lead partner who is responsible for preparation and submission of the application form. After 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 Secretariat (MA/JS) of the programme.

7. Duration of projects

The PAC/HAL project implementation time may last up to 12 months (estimated approximately from mid-2015 until mid-2016). In addition, the project contracting phase lasts two months and starts on the day after the Monitoring Committee decision. Furthermore, after the project implementation phase, the project has an additional closure phase which lasts up to three months. The specific project phases will be set out in the subsidy contract.

8. Project applications

PACs/HALs are required to fill in a project application form. 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 (interreg-baltic.eu) as of January 2015.

PACs/HALs are highly recommended to take contact with Joint Secretariat before submitting the final application to obtain feedback. Feedback from the Joint Secretariat can be obtained either in written form, or during an individual project consultation.

The final application form and the partner declarations have to be submitted in electronic version. Paper versions will be requested after the approval of the application. 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 as of January 2015.

Please note that the final application is the official basis for the assessment. Therefore, all information relevant for the proper assessment of a project proposal must be included in the application form.

The electronic (pdf) version of the application form and the partner declarations have to be sent by **19 February 2015** at the latest to the following address: application@interreg-baltic.eu

9. Overlap with the technical assistance grant provided by the EU Commission

All PACs/HALs are invited to apply in the first call. The next call will be organised after the revision process of EUSBSR Action Plan is finalised.

Several PACs/HALs will receive/have received funds from the technical assistance provided by the EU Commission² partly covering years 2015/2016. These PACs/HALs are asked to indicate the grant period, the activities covered and partners concerned (institutions hosting Priority Area/Horizontal Action concerned) in the application form. Based on this declaration, the eligibility period and the amount of the programme co-financing will be set accordingly.

Example: If the PAC/HAL has received a TA grant covering 2015 (implementation period ends in December 2015), the programme co-financing will be available starting from January 2016. Furthermore, the programme co-financing amount will be reduced accordingly.

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, the Joint Secretariat will inform the lead applicant. The applicant may complete the application and send missing documents and/or the amended application form in the time frame given by the Joint Secretariat. Only applications that have passed the admissibility check will proceed to the quality assessment.

The quality assessment covers verification of the relevance of the proposed activities in relation to the implementation of the Strategy. The Joint Secretariat carries out the quality assessment of the PACs/HALs applications according to the specific quality assessment criteria set in the programme Manual for the specific objective 4.2. "Coordination of macro-regional cooperation". The lead applicant has to address the possible clarifications and revise the application form accordingly within the time frame given by the Joint Secretariat. The assessment criteria are presented in the programme Manual. The Monitoring Committee of the programme will select the applications and make the funding decision based on the quality assessment.

² Technical assistance and dissemination of information on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and an improved knowledge of macro-regions strategy allocation by the European Parliament; 2011-2014

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 Cooperation Programme;
- Programme Manual for the 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 programme provides tools and organises events to support the applicants in the development of the projects. Furthermore, the MA/JS provides written feedback and offers consultations in its offices (Rostock/Riga) and via telephone/Skype.

For advice on the specific objective 4.2 "Coordination of macro-regional cooperation" please contact:

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