

Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 1st Call for Applications 25 February - 30 May 2008

Announcement

1. Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 is one of the Structural Fund programmes under the Territorial Cooperation Objective of the European Community. It integrates the objectives of Cross-border Cooperation of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. The Programme supports transnational projects contributing to the development towards a sustainable, competitive and territorially integrated Baltic Sea Region.

The Baltic Sea Programme is co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Norwegian national funding (NOR) as well as through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

2. Objectives and Priorities

The strategic objective of the Programme is to make the Baltic Sea region an attractive place to invest, work and live in. The Programme is especially 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 as well as to resolve issues of common concern for the countries around the Baltic Sea Region.

The Programme is divided into four thematic priorities. The priorities and the Programme co-financing allocated to them are shown in the table below:

	ERDF (MEUR)	NOR (MEUR)	ENPI (MEUR)
Priority 1 FOSTERING INNOVATIONS ACROSS THE BALTIC SEA REGION	58.7	1.7	5.0
Priority 2 IMPROVING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY	39.1	1.1	4.0
Priority 3 MANAGING THE BALTIC SEA AS A COMMON RESOURCE	58.7	1.7	4.0
Priority 4 PROMOTING ATTRACTIVE AND COMPETITIVE CITIES AND REGIONS	39.1	1.1	7.3
TOTAL	195.6	5.6	20.3

Applicants are invited to submit project applications under one of the four priorities. A comprehensive description of the Programme objectives and priorities are included in the Operational Programme.

3. Who can apply?

As a general rule public authorities and bodies governed by public law (also called public equivalent bodies) located in the Programme area are welcome to participate in the Programme (for more information 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 with their own financing.

4. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

The Programme co-financing provided from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument is for the benefit of the eligible regions in Russia and Belarus. **The application for ENPI co-financing in the Programme is opened under suspension clause.** This means that applicants may apply for ENPI co-financing but the ENPI funds will be released only if Russia respectively Belarus signs the Financing Agreements with the European Commission until end of 2008.

The Programme is first and foremost administrated according to the ERDF rules. Project partnerships involving Russian and/or Belarusian partners are asked to send a single joint application to the Programme. However, the ENPI financed project partners have to follow certain provisions of the ENPI regulations (see more details in the Programme Manual). Applicants are made aware that some implementing procedures concerning the implementation of ENPI funds within the Programme are not fully finalised as the call is opened but are under clarification with the responsible authorities.

5. Co-financing rates

As a general principle, the ERDF co-financing rate for the project partners located in the programme area in Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden is up to 75% and for the project partners located in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland 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 participation of partners located outside the programme area please see also chapter 9.1.2 in the Operational Programme.

6. Lead Partner Principle

Each project has to appoint a Lead Partner who takes over the full responsibility for management, communication, implementation and co-ordination of activities among the involved partners. The Lead Partner bears legal responsibility and liability 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 Partners must

be located on the territory of an EU member state in the programme area or in duly justified cases in Norway.

7. Strategic Projects

The Baltic Sea Programme puts special emphasis on projects that have a particular strategic relevance for the whole Baltic Sea 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.

8. 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. Only projects approved by the Monitoring Committee can have their preparation costs reimbursed. Personnel costs, travel and accommodation costs and costs for external services that directly link to the project preparation can be reimbursed up to 50 000 EUR or 2% of the total eligible project costs, whichever is lower. The preparation costs of applications submitted to this call are eligible from 1 June 2007 until the date of the Monitoring Committee decision on the selection of projects for funding. For further information please see chapter 5.4 in the Programme Manual.

9. Project Applications

Applicants are asked to fill in the Programme 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 available for download on the Programme website eu.baltic.net.

The application form has to be submitted electronically and in paper. The paper version of the application form must include a partner declaration form from all the partners. A partner declaration form is included in the application package and available on the programme website.

The electronic version of the application form has to be sent **at the latest by the 30th May 2008 at 16:00 o'clock** to the following address: applications@eu.baltic.net.

Similarly the original paper version duly signed, stamped and dated has to be sent **at the latest by the 30th May 2008** (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**

10. 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 that pass the admissibility check will be subject to a quality assessment, which is carried out based on the quality

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criteria and the so called additional quality features. The admissibility criteria, the quality criteria and the additional quality features are presented in chapter 5.3 in the Programme Manual.

Based on the results of the quality assessment, funding decisions are made by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme. The Monitoring Committee is composed of representatives from both national and regional authorities within the participating states. The Monitoring Committee meeting is expected to be held in October 2008.

11. Further Information and Technical Assistance

All official Programme documents:

- Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 Operational Programme;
- Programme Manual;
- Application Package including the announcement of the call, application form and partner declaration form
- as well as further guidance

are available on the Programme website eu.baltic.net

The Joint Technical Secretariat organises Lead Applicant seminars and provides individual project consultations 2-4 April 2008 in Hamburg and 9-11 April 2008 in Riga.

Further assistance is also provided by the Joint Technical Secretariat in Rostock and Riga, e-mail info@eu.baltic.net.