

Funding Guidelines

**International Baltic Sea Foundation
for Nature Conservation**

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Objective

The Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation (hereafter BaltCF) was founded in 2014 with the aim of supporting environmental–and nature protection across the Baltic Sea region.

In order to achieve this objective, the founder has allocated both a fixed capital stock and free capital, which shall be exclusively used for funding of nature conservation and environmental protection projects as defined in the statute of the Foundation.

The BaltCF operates across the whole Baltic Sea region. It particularly supports cooperation between NGO's and authorities and funds international projects in the Baltic Sea region countries.

The Board of Trustees and the Board of Directors of the BaltCF developed the present Funding Guidelines in order to provide orientation about basic funding principles and conditions for all applicants. These Funding Guidelines apply to applicants who submit their own projects as well as those seeking co-funding in the context of an application submitted or planned with other institutions or donors. The guidelines are based on the provisions of the Foundation's statute; project applications should therefore always provide evidence of how the planned activities contribute to the funding priorities of the BaltCF.

The Funding Guidelines lay down the general conditions, application procedures, principles and documentation requirements for the applicant. The specific application forms are provided by the BaltCF office and their use is mandatory for the applicant.

Funding principles

Object of funding

According to § 2.1 of the statute of the International Baltic Sea Foundation for Nature Conservation, the Foundation supports nature conservation, environmental protection measures and projects in the Baltic Sea region countries which:

1. improve the ecological stability and/or the regenerative capacity of the marine environment,
2. contribute to the reduction and/or degradation of pollutants or depositions leading to eutrophication,
3. help to secure and/or improve habitats for rare or protected species and support biodiversity,
4. help to secure, expand or develop marine protected areas,
5. help to secure, expand or develop terrestrial protected areas in the Baltic Sea's immediate catchment area,
6. help to compensate the negative effects in impact on the Baltic Sea's natural environment,
7. in keeping with nature conservation requirements, support the maintenance and development of habitats in the Baltic Sea and/or its immediate catchment area.

Eligibility

Eligible beneficiaries include associations, federations, organisations and corporate bodies under public law, actively working in the Baltic Sea catchment area and having a charitable focus similar to BaltCF. A corresponding proof of the status of the applicant can either be provided by means of an official certificate or a written description of activities.

Only beneficiaries who have submitted a full project application may be granted financing, based on the condition that they comply with the reporting and documentation requirements of BaltCF. Non-German organisations can only receive funds if they provide evidence that their activities comply with the provisions of the German charity legislation. Applicants should provide a reasonable own contribution of at least 10% of the funding that they apply for.

General principles

The BaltCF is seeking for long-term positive impact with its projects and therefore would like to produce measurable results and create sustainable structures with the allocated funds.

The funding period applied for should therefore normally be not less than 2 years and the requested amount not less than 50.000 €.

In principle the BaltCF can allocate grants as deficit-grants. The BaltCF would like to ensure the most effective and efficient use of the Foundation's means and therefore strives for synergies and leverage effects with other projects and funding instruments. Applications seeking co-financing for EU- or other publicly funded projects are therefore welcome and encouraged.

Project application

Deadlines

Project concepts can be sent to the BaltCF office at any time. The project application, including proof of the applicant's status, should be drafted in English or German language. In case of positive evaluation of the **project concept**, a **full application** should normally be submitted within 3 months. Project applications with a requested funding amount of up to 100.000€ can be decided during the quarterly BaltCF Board of Directors' meetings. Project applications beyond 100.000€ will normally be decided upon during the six-monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Content

Applicants first have to present their project idea in a **project concept form** of 2-5 pages. The content should at least include the following:

1. Title of the project
2. Applicant, contact person and legal status of the applying organisation
3. Description of the framework conditions, project background and justification of the necessity of carrying out the project, location of the implementation
4. Objective of the project

5. Activities
6. Implementation timetable and partnership
7. General budget
8. Expected measurable results

Expenses

The BaltCF will only reimburse expenses associated with the approved project and for which evidence can be issued. The reimbursement complies with the approved budget and includes the following categories:

1. Personnel costs
2. Overheads, max. 10% of total eligible costs
3. Travel costs
4. External contracts
5. Investment costs

Forms

All forms that are necessary for the application are made available in electronic form by the BaltCF. Project Concepts exclusively have to be sent in electronic form to the BaltCF office. Concepts and applications will only be accepted on the forms that are provided for this purpose by the BaltCF.

The use of the following forms for the application process is mandatory. Current versions of these forms are published on the BaltCF website:

1. Project concept
2. Project application
3. Timeline
4. Budget
5. Payment request
6. Content report
7. Financial report
8. Final report

Project approval

Selection procedure

The BaltCF strives for a transparent and objective selection of projects. For this purpose the BaltCF developed its own selection criteria, according to which every project is uniformly assessed. The selection criteria are regularly updated and published on the BaltCF website.

Decisions regarding funding are taken by the Board of Directors (up to 100.000€ co-funding) and by the Board of Trustees (beyond 100.000€ co-funding).

During the selection procedure the BaltCF can involve the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Foundation for the evaluation of projects, as far as the applicant does not explicitly object to this for data protection reasons. Thereby, all documents are treated

confidentially and the principles of data protection are observed. The funding approval is issued by the BaltCF office.

For the allocation of the Foundation assets, the bodies of the Foundation are only linked to legal provisions and to the provisions of the founding statutes of the International Baltic Sea Foundation for Nature Conservation. There is no legal claim for the granting of the funding.

Payments

Approved funds have to be spent according to the project budget and timetable. Upon approval of the project, the applicant is entitled to request up to 10% of the total funding amount as a pre-payment. Subsequent payment requests are possible six-monthly, but only if at least 80% of the planned amount has been spent. Exceptionally, and in case of high investment spending, payment requests can be granted more often.

Deviations from the project application

Cost shifts of up to 10% in each cost category are possible during project implementation, larger deviations need to be justified and authorised by the BaltCF in written form.

If the approved activities cannot be carried out during the foreseen calendar year, the BaltCF must be informed in written form. If instead, other activities with comparable costs can secure the implementation of the project, the BaltCF may authorise this upon request. If this is not the case, the approved funds can be cut accordingly.

Evidence and documentation

Evidence

Upon finalisation of the project, following documents shall be provided to the BaltCF:

1. Final report
2. Financial report
3. Evidence/documentation of the project results (Press releases, pictures, publications, maps etc.)

Reports

Interim content and financial reports should be prepared biannually and submitted in electronic form to the BaltCF office. The BaltCF templates shall be used for reporting. Together with the reports, evidence of all expenses shall be provided in the form of invoices.

Acknowledgment of the BaltCF support

All purchases, products and publications, as well as educational and stakeholder activities carried out in the framework of the project, should include appropriate reference to the funding support provided by the Baltic Sea Conservation Foundation.

The BaltCF is authorised to publish the projects' matters and results on its website and in publications.