



## **BSR Cultural Pearls 2025 Call for applications**

BSR Cultural Pearls is a title for smaller towns, cities and municipalities that provides awarded candidates a programme and support to use culture in building social resilience.

By engaging and involving their citizens, increasing quality of life, sense of belonging and trust, they will be able to make their communities stronger and more resilient.

Annually, we invite local authorities from the region – especially those from less central areas – to join this transformative journey. Through a meticulous selection process, the candidates with outstanding and impactful action plans on culture driven social resilience are awarded the BSR Cultural Pearls title.

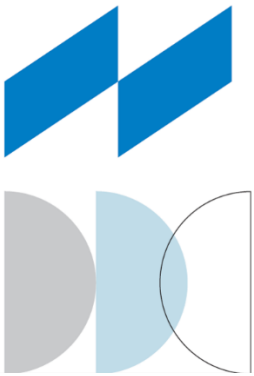
Applications must be submitted in English via project website [www.culturalpearls.eu](http://www.culturalpearls.eu).

**The deadline application submission is 24 May, 23:59 CET.**

For questions please contact:  
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*The project “Baltic Sea Region Cultural Pearls for more resilient cities and regions” is co-funded by the European Union's Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme and led by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) along eleven partners from across the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). It aims to strengthen social resilience in BSR municipalities by harnessing the potential of local assets of culture and creativity. Specifically, the project objectives are to enable smaller cities and regions increase their social resilience and maintain the quality of life with local assets in an innovative way.*

## Conditions of Entry



- Towns, cities, municipalities and other settlements from the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme area, including Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (the States (Länder) of Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Schleswig-Holstein and Niedersachsen (only NUTS II area Lüneburg region)), Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.
- Smaller, mid-sized and less central towns and cities are especially welcomed.
- A single municipality or a team of municipalities can participate, but in this case a lead partner needs to be indicated.
- The capital cities Stockholm, Helsinki, Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Warsaw, Berlin and Copenhagen are non-eligible.

## Application procedure

- Applications must be submitted using online form.
- Incomplete entries will not be considered.
- Applications must be submitted in English.
- Receipt of an application will be acknowledged by an automatic system reply.

## The Selection Process

BSR Cultural Pearl selection has two stages.

### 1. Pre-selection

Eligibility criteria, motivation and general approach of each candidate is evaluated by the Selection Committee consisting of BSR Cultural Pearls project partnership. All applications are assessed individually and based on the summary of scores number of eligible candidates are accepted to enter the final selection phase.

### 2. Final selection

The object of the final selection is Culture and Resilience action plan developed by the candidate and evaluated by an international Jury. Each plan is assessed individually and the final selection is based on the summary of the scores given by the Jury.



## **Overarching criteria**

### **MOTIVATION**

Willingness to engage and involve citizens, increasing quality of life, sense of belonging and trust to make your community stronger and more resilient, and how BSR Cultural Pearls program will help you to achieve that.

### **AWARENESS**

Understanding challenges, strengths and local community needs.

### **ABILITY TO LEARN**

Cros-departmental and cros-sectoral team with the strong will and ability to learn and transfer the knowledge into the actions.

### **ENGAGEMENT**

Readiness to cooperate with local NGO's, Culture and Creative Sector actors.

### **CAPACITY TO DELIVER**

Capacity of human and financial resources to participate in the programme, develop and implement the culture driven social resilience action plan.

### **BSR PERSPECTIVE**

Openness for cross-border cooperations and knowledge exchange within Baltic Sea Region.

## **Pre-Selection criteria**

Clear and compelling motivation to become a BSR Cultural Pearl.

An innovative and holistic general approach to the programme and activities it plans to carry out as a BSR Cultural Pearl.

Potential to generate real and sustainable impact in strengthening culture-driven resilience.

An open, inclusive, and cross-sectorial engagement of different stakeholders in the application and implementation process.



## **Final Selection criteria**

The applicant's Culture and Resilience Action Plan will have a long-lasting and meaningful impact on addressing its current challenges.

The applicant's Culture and Resilience Action Plan is well embedded in its core strategies and development plans.

A well-articulated, clear, and high-quality Culture and Resilience Action Plan.

Good balance between being ambitious yet realistic and achievable.

The applicant applies a truly participatory approach and envisages a broad engagement of different stakeholders both inside the administration (i.e. across departments) and outside throughout the process.

The applicant aims to strengthen and expand its cross-border ties across the Baltic Sea Region.

The applicant has demonstrated its capacity to deliver the planned projects and initiatives both in terms of human, physical and financial resources.

## **Awarding ceremony & Publicity**

BSR Cultural Pearls title awarding ceremonies will be organized in every Pearl 's city to create a momentum for local communities, uniting people and building a common understanding of how important it is to be strong all together and ready for the unknown challenges that might come. The local ceremony can be organized in conjunction with an existing event, such as an annual city festival, or as a stand-alone event. In addition to that, an international hybrid ceremony will take place at the end of the title year, celebrating the achievements of the Pearls during their title year, and announcing the forthcoming Pearls.

By becoming a "Pearl" you gain national and Baltic Sea Region wide visibility. From the moment of the announcement and during the whole program you are in the spotlight – with the support of the local partners all the working phases are captured in photos,

videos, stories are shared as part of a larger communication campaign.