

BSAP Fund Call for Proposals – Questions and Answers

Helsinki, 21 March 2025

Q1	Several fields in the application form do not have a character limit but have a predefined size. Should the text remain within the visible size of the field, or is it acceptable for the text to extend beyond it, requiring scrolling to read in full?
A1	Key information is to be within the boundaries of the boxes in the application form. However, supporting documentation can be added, if relevant, as appendices to the application form.
Q2	Can a project with partners from both Baltic and non-Baltic countries apply for BSAP Fund funding? Should the main partner be from a HELCOM state, and can other partners be from the EU or EFTA countries?
A2	<p>The lead applicant as well as potential project partners can be from any country (except from Russia or Belarus) as long as the project is within the Baltic Sea watershed.</p> <p>Please note, that NEFCO will sign the contract and make disbursements only with the lead applicant. It is then for the lead applicant to further distribute funds to potential partners in the project.</p> <p>As noted in the Eligibility Criteria, the Lead Applicant should be a legal entity. It is possible to involve in the project one or more partners from the same-, or another country (“Partners”).</p>
Q3	Are interdisciplinary projects eligible for funding?
A3	Interdisciplinary projects are welcome if they meet the eligibility criteria.
Q4	It is stated that up to 50% of the project budget can be funded. Does this mean that the remaining 50% must be provided by another funding organisation or covered by the applicants themselves?
A4	The remaining budget must be provided either by another funding organisation or by the applicant(s) themselves.
Q5	Must the required co-funding be secured before submitting a project proposal to the BSAP Fund, or can it be applied for once BSAP funding has been approved?
A5	The co-funding does not need to be secured before submitting the proposal. A solid financing plan at the application stage is however considered as a strength.
Q6	Is there a maximum funding limit for projects?
A6	<p>Yes. The maximum BSAP funding available follows the EU’s <i>de minimis</i> aid thresholds. There is no restriction on the project's total budget, including funding from other sources.</p> <p>Funding from the BSAP Fund is paid out in accordance with the EU’s <i>de minimis</i> regulation per organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2831 ceiling of 300,000 euros; - Commission Regulation (EU) No 2023/2391 for fisheries and aquaculture sector ceiling of 40,000 euros

	<p>- Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 for agriculture sector ceiling of 25,000 euros</p> <p>Please note that in case the lead applicant has received other funding that falls under <i>de minimis</i> aid regulation during the past three years, this will affect the amount that can be provided for the project from the BSAP Fund.</p> <p>Please also note that the BSAP Fund can fund up to a maximum of 50% of realised costs from the project's total budget.</p>
Q7	Does the 50% own contribution requirement apply to the total project budget as a whole, or must each budget category (e.g. personnel costs, consumables, travel expenses) be co-financed separately at a 50% ratio?
A7	It is based on the total budget.
Q8	In the case of a joint research project, must each project partner secure its own 50% contribution individually? If a situation arises where some project partners do not receive approval from their respective funding organisations, resulting in certain tasks not being carried out as planned, would the project still be eligible for BSAP funding, even if the proposal requires amendments?
A8	<p>Please note, that NEFCO will sign the contract and make disbursements only with the lead applicant and looks on the project and the project budget as a whole. It is then for the lead applicant to further distribute funds to potential partners in the project and consider how project partners contribute to the project.</p> <p>A solid financing plan at the application stage is considered as a strength.</p> <p>Possible amendments to projects already approved will be considered on a case-by-case basis.</p>
Q9	Does a certain project meet the BSAP Funds eligibility criteria?
A10	During an open call for proposals the BSAP Fund does not provide detailed advice or feedback on project specific matters.
Q10	What are the accepted Overhead levels?
A10	The BSAP Fund does not approve overhead costs as part of the eligible costs that can be reimbursed by the BSAP Fund.
Q11	Is the applicant's own contribution (working time, provision of infrastructure etc) eligible as part of the overall project budget and as a basis for the 50% funding?
A11	Yes, the applicant's own contribution is eligible as part of the overall project budget, as long as it can be demonstrated that such in-kind contributions are directly linked to the project.
Q12	Is funding also possible for projects that have already started?
A12	Yes, projects that have already started are eligible to apply for funding. The funding however, must be used for activities and expenses that are yet to materialise.
Q13	Can the project be implemented by one organization/institution? Is the project obliged to have partner(s)?
A13	The project can be implemented by only one organisation or institution.

Q14	When could the decision for funding or rejection of the project be planned?
A14	The decision on funding or rejection of the project is expected to be made by the end of May 2025. Each applicant will be informed once the decision has been made.
Q15	Are there any preferences/restrictions on types of projects that the fund finance? Are you more into funding demonstration projects and projects where measures are directly undertaken, or do you also fund more desk-top oriented development projects aiming at improving the knowledge base and management perspectives of Baltic Sea biodiversity?
A15	<p>The BSAP Fund supports a wide range of projects that contribute to the implementation of the Baltic Sea Action Plan. As noted in the Eligibility Criteria <i>“Projects should focus on concrete measures benefitting the ecological status of the Baltic Sea, delivering on the BSAP. The final outcomes of the projects should be tangible with measurable results.</i></p> <p><i>The applicant should be able to show a clear and concrete link to the environmental effect which is the aimed benefit of the project.</i></p> <p><i>All projects are to comply with relevant HELCOM recommendations and guidelines.”</i></p> <p>For more details, please refer to the Eligibility Criteria document available on: https://www.nefco.int/financing/other-regions/baltic-sea-action-plan-fund/</p>
Q16	How long can the project implementation be planned for?
A16	The standard implementation period for projects funded by the BSAP Fund is 24 months.