

## Save the Baltic Sea with your project or digital innovation

19.05.2017

The 2017 application process for grants from the Bank of Åland's Baltic Sea Project is starting, and this year a new category is being launched: digital innovations. Ilkka Paananen, CEO of the mobile game development company Supercell, will evaluate project ideas together with Skype co-founder Niklas Zennström and others. During 2017 our grants will total up to EUR 400,000.

The Baltic Sea is one of the world's most endangered seas. Dead zones already cover portions of the sea bottom as a consequence of eutrophication (excessive nutrient runoffs from land). The Baltic Sea Project is now urging applicants to join in environmental efforts that are aided by digital innovations.

"Today we have tremendous opportunities to use technology to solve many of the problems that we have long known. This region has the capacity to be a world leader in responsible, innovative solutions to challenges in water quality. For that to happen, we need to join forces with others, and this award is a great platform to do that," Niklas Zennström says.

Application period starts on Friday, May 19

Private individuals, schools and organisations can now apply for funding to protect the Baltic Sea. All ideas are welcome, and the application period runs until September 30. The winners will be selected by a public vote, aided by a jury consisting of several environmental experts. The most innovative and impactful projects will be granted funding or a period of expert help.

"The Baltic Sea Project now has five different categories through which people can apply for funding. We encourage everyone to participate in efforts to ensure a healthy Baltic Sea," says Anne-Maria Salonius, Director of the Finnish Mainland Business Area, Bank of Åland, and Jury Chairperson, Baltic Sea Project.

Last year, nine projects shared a total of EUR 200,000, of which the winner was granted EUR 80,000 for a project that removes pharmaceutical residues and other hazardous substances from wastewater. In 2016 the Baltic Sea Project received a total of 140 grant applications, which was a 63 per cent increase from 2015.

You will find more information about the application process on the [www.balticseaproject.org](http://www.balticseaproject.org) website.

For further information, please contact: Anne-Maria Salonius, Director, Finnish Mainland Business Area, Bank of Åland Plc, tel. +358 40 733 1106