



**INTERREG III B
NORTHERN PERIPHERY PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first edition of the NPP newsletter in 2006. In the last edition of the newsletter the uncertainty surrounding negotiations on the future of Interreg was outlined, but since then a number of crucial agreements have been made and the future for the Northern Periphery looks very positive. With this in mind, and a number of other successes in the programme, we are able to start the year on an optimistic note and with a view to a future of transnational co-operation across the Northern Periphery. As work commences on this, NPP projects continue to achieve excellent results, as showcased by the PNASTINA project.

We hope that you enjoy reading the newsletter but, as always, we are grateful for your responses and comments!

**TRANSNATIONAL CO-OPERATION CONTINUES IN THE
NORTHERN PERIPHERY**

After a period of uncertainty, the outlook for INTERREG and the Northern Periphery Programme is becoming clearer and looks increasingly positive. Discussions among the Member States on the themes for the next programme period and the areas of co-operation are well under way and provide a good indication of possible future priorities. It is anticipated that these will be approved fairly shortly, as the proposals are in an advanced stage. In December 2005 European leaders also agreed on the overall budget for the EU for the years 2007-2013, although allocations to individual programmes are not yet known.

The Northern Periphery Programme area will remain essentially the same as in the current programme area, but with the positive addition of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The programme area in Scotland will also be extended to include the whole of Scotland (rather than just the Highlands and Islands). The expansion of the programme area will help increase the scope of NPP partnerships and bring new expertise and experience to the co-operation.

At the recent Programme Monitoring Committee meeting in December 2005, a structure for designing the future programme was agreed. The principal body responsible for designing and drafting the programme will be a Joint Programming Committee made up of representatives from the countries in the programme and drawing on knowledge and experience from the local and regional levels through specific drafting teams. The Joint Programming Committee will have its first meeting in Copenhagen on 1st February 2006 and will keep to a strict work schedule to ensure that the future programme is implemented as early in 2007 as possible.

**NO LOSS OF FUNDS:
N+2 TARGETS MET**

Thanks to the co-operation of all on-going projects, the certificate of expenditure for the Northern Periphery Programme once again reached the N+2 target for the year. This means that the programme and the projects will avoid losing funds through the automatic de-commitment rule, which places targets on expenditure each year.

The JPS and Paying Authority would like to thank all projects that submitted interim payment claims in November 2005, which helped the programme to meet its financial targets.



Paying Authority staff were on hand to advise projects on claims at the latest NPP Lead Partner Seminar

EXPERT ADVICE PROVIDED AT COMMUNICATION SEMINAR

Effective communication is essential to the success of all projects and although many projects are aware of the need to disseminate project information and results, they are not always sure of the best ways to achieve this. It is also vital to ensure that information reaches the correct target audience across the programme area and beyond.

In order to help projects fulfil their dissemination and communication aims, the most recent Lead Partner Seminar had a special focus on communication and media issues. The event was held in Tromsø, Norway and over 70 people participated in the 3-day event.

Pinnacle PR, a public relations company with international and INTERREG experience, provided training and facilitated the workshops. Lead Partners were able to benefit from their expertise and actively participate in the practical workshops, which focused on: writing skills and the core principles of good writing; messaging and creativity; and media relations and publicity tools.

Practical examples of effective and simple public relations campaigns were highlighted and the importance of clear project messages was stressed. This helped projects to focus on the way that they communicate information in press releases, project websites, newsletters, etc.

In addition, the seminar began with an introductory session for new projects on how to manage an NPP project with advice from the Northern Periphery Programme's Paying Authority and Joint Programme Secretariat. The third day was then split into two sessions with advice for new project leaders and final reporting guidance for more experienced project leaders.

Feedback from the seminar was extremely positive and participants particularly welcomed the training and focus on a crucial topic that can be difficult to address effectively.

COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

A Communications Guide was provided to each of the participants at the seminar and contains useful advice on the topics discussed, such as PR tools, press kits, writing skills and non-media tactics.

If any Lead Partners did not receive a copy of the guide, then please contact [Claire Matheson](#) at the Joint Programme Secretariat for a free copy.

ERDF ALLOCATION TO PROGRAMME

	Total ERDF priority 1	Total ERDF priority 2	Total ERDF priority 3	Total ERDF priority 4
Budget	4.893.000	9.583.111	6.586.497	1.569.042
Committed	4.551.072	9.863.393	6.678.370	1.569.042
% of budget	92,8%	102,8%	101,4%	100,0%
Funds remaining	341,928	0	0	0

NON-MEMBER STATES' ALLOCATION TO PROGRAMME

	Total Norway in NPP	Total Iceland in NPP	Total Greenland in NPP	Total Faroe Island in NPP
Budget	5.500.000	1.970.000	378.667	375.000
Committed	5.522.706	1.670.011	370.577	372.502
% of budget	100,4%	84,7%	97,8%	99,3%
Funds remaining	0	299.989	8.090	2.498



Jennifer Hardie from Pinnacle PR assists Lead Partners with their key messages

VACANCY AT JPS

The Joint Programme Secretariat of the Northern Periphery Programme is currently looking for an intern to work at its offices in Copenhagen for a 3-month period from April 2006.

The successful applicant will be responsible for analysing and assessing how NPP project results are helping to meet the programme's objectives and strategic European targets. They will work closely with staff from the Joint Programme Secretariat to achieve this.

Further information on the vacancy can be found on the NPP website:

www.northernperiphery.net

48 MAIN PROJECTS NOW APPROVED

The Northern Periphery Programme has now funded 48 main projects that contribute to the balanced development of the region. Three new projects and a partner extension of an existing project were approved at the most recent Steering Committee meeting on 15th December 2005. The programme has now committed all available funds in both Priority Two and Priority Three. There are, however, limited funds remaining in Priority One.

The three new projects that were approved are particularly innovative and focus on ICT, transport and business development. Details can be found below:

Scandinavian MAYHEM
(Music, Arts, Youth, Harmony, Entertainment & Media)

Measure: Access to information society

Project area: Northern Sweden, Northern Finland and Iceland

Lead Partner: Kulturfrämjandet, Sweden

This innovative project idea was developed at the NPP Youth Partenariat in Skellefteå, Sweden and focuses on the following topics:

- Encouraging networking among young people working in the creative industries within the NP area and fostering a new business and cultural market that benefits the whole region.
- Creating a bridge between culture and ICT technology - access to information society.
- Developing new business models by integrating the cultural sector and ICT technology.
- Co-operating with active partners in both the business and public sectors.
- Using state of the art technology when creating media content (HDTV).
- Creating content for existing infrastructure, such as broadband and 3G networks.
- Using ICT technology as an instrument to create new art and cultural content.

Contact: nicke@kulturframjandet.com

ROADEX III

Measure: Transportation, logistics and transport infrastructure

Project area: Northern Sweden, Northern Finland, Northern Norway, Highlands & Western Isles of Scotland, Iceland, Greenland

Lead Partner: Swedish National Road Authority

ROADEX III a 2-year transnational collaboration across the Northern Periphery to disseminate and implement the roads management related information, practices and innovation gathered under the ROADEX project to date. It will also continue pilot trials of prototype solutions on the rural road networks of the Partner areas. A framework will be created for disseminating results of future research after this project.

The main objectives of the "ROADEX III" project are:

- To continue and strengthen the professional links within the existing ROADEX network.
- To disseminate and use the current ROADEX knowledge that has been gained in the ROADEX projects to date. This will involve translations of reports and results, conferences, workshops, lecture packs, web-based information and forums and testing of results in different regions in the Northern Periphery area.
- To continue to research, apply and trial promising techniques on the rural road networks of the Partner areas and report the results.
- To widen the ROADEX network into Greenland, Iceland and the Faeroe Islands.

Contact krister.palo@vv.se



Nicke Lundmark, project co-ordinator of Scandinavian MAYHEM, at the youth partenariat where the project idea was developed

Rural Expertise in the North

Measure: Business innovation & development of human resources

Project area: Northern Sweden, Northern Finland, Highlands & Islands of Scotland

Lead Partner: Micropolis Ltd, li Municipality

The REN project will create innovative management practices and develop new tools relevant for smaller communities with activities in the fields of advanced technologies. The project will combine the know-how and expertise gained through technology development projects in the NPP region, especially in Finland, Sweden, and Scotland. It will help the participating regions develop innovative instruments, in order to keep advanced technology expertise within the regions. The project acts as a tool to benchmark the developed practices with other rural regions facing similar challenges.

The key objectives of the REN project include:

- Creating tools and methods to develop competence, "Know how" and entrepreneurship in high technology businesses outside regional centres in sparsely populated and remote areas.
- Introducing and testing new instruments to catalyse the growth and success of the smaller technology centres in North Europe, especially in sparsely populated and rural areas

Contact Ari.Alatossava@micropolis.

Project Extension: Extreme Weather Conditions

Measure: Business innovation and development of human resources

Project area: Northern Sweden, Northern Norway, Northern Finland Highlands of Scotland, Faroe Islands

Lead Partner: Centre for Emergency & Disaster Medicine, Sweden

The objectives of the project concern the development of existing and new business opportunities within extreme cold conditions. The extension allows for an additional partner from the Faeroe Islands to be added to the project partnership and for a new work package to be undertaken called 'Innovation Concept Outline for Light Transport Vehicles'. Further info is available on the project website:

www.ewcp.org



PNASTINA-project

Promotion of natural stone industry in the northern areas

EXPANDING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS EUROPE

The Northern Periphery Programme area is rich in natural resources and natural stone, as a local resource, provides opportunities for long lasting industrial activity and employment for the local work force.

The PNASTINA project has been working to promote and develop opportunities within this important sector for the past 2 ½ years. An important part of the project has been the development of a database of natural stone resources in the project area to help companies develop their operations and to assist authorities in planning land use. This also helps ensure the sustainable development of the industry: a key objective of the project. In addition, PNASTINA has exhibited some excellent results and successes, particularly in the development of local companies and in helping them to expand their markets across Europe and beyond. Some of these include:

- A large world-class soapstone deposit has been identified and investigated in Norway. This deposit can be used for natural stones, minerals for industrial use and also in the production of talc.
- A small quarry company called Greenland Production AS has started on Greenland and produces soapstone for local use. This development has meant that soapstone no longer needs to be imported into Greenland.
- Through the PNASTINA project, the Swedish company Lapplands Natursten has made contact with an Italian company and is now supplying them with high quality stones. This has resulted in increased sales of mylonite blocks from Sweden to Italy and has allowed the Swedish company to enter this exclusive market.
- The PNASTINA project has established contact with a Polish stone industry company called Murkam, which has requested a test delivery of a new type of stone discovered through the PNASTINA project in Ammarnäs, Sweden.
- The University of Heidelberg in Germany has established co-operation with the project. They have even contributed their time and experience with two students and one assistant carrying out 6 weeks worth of work each. In addition, a PhD student has spent approximately 2 weeks testing a new type of instrument for non-destructive rock stress in some areas of the PNASTINA project.
- Test deliveries have been carried out from a quarry in Malå, Adakliden to a Swedish company based in Piteå, Northern Sweden. This stone will be used for future developments and new methods of polishing will allow it to be used for flooring when renovating residential properties in Umeå, Sweden.

These are just a sample of some of the results achieved by the PNASTINA project so far, but further information can be found on their project website:

www.pnastina.se



PROJECT EVENT

ICT – Tools for Providing Information, Advice and Services for Rural SMEs?

6th – 7th of April 2006, Oulu, Finland

The RuBIES (Rural Business Information Exchange System) project has been running since September 2003 and provides assistance and support to rural businesses and SMEs in the Northern Periphery. It also aims to solve problems of information exchange and provide new solutions and methods from the demand driven point of view. This includes the undertaking of a mapping exercise on the supply of information compared to the demand for that information.

The RuBIES seminar will present the latest information on the possibilities of ICT solutions delivering information and advice to rural SMEs in a European context. It will also present the results of the RuBIES project and initiate discussion and international co-operation on how to tackle the challenges presented.

The seminar will focus on one of the most acute questions in the sector of business advice in rural areas: how is it possible to deliver external information to micro enterprises in remote, rural areas in a way that can actually enhance business decisions and operations in practise? Presently there is a lot of information available, but one of the main questions to be solved is, how and in which form the information could be mediated more effectively to assist rural SMEs.

Further information:

E-mail: anne.matilainen@helsinki.fi

PROGRAMME EVALUATORS HIGHLIGHT NPP'S CONTRIBUTION TO GROWTH & JOBS TARGETS

The Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas are key strategies of the European Commission to help deliver stronger, lasting growth and the creation of more and better jobs. The Northern Periphery Programme has recently undergone an evaluation that highlighted how the programme corresponds to the core elements of these strategies and addresses these topics through the programme priorities and projects.

The Update of the Mid-Term Evaluation was undertaken by the European Policies Research Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Their analysis focused on an assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Programme on the basis of experience up to mid-2005 and the implications for the future.

In this context, the Programme is consistent with the main elements of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. This is shown through the focus of the priorities and the types of projects that can be funded under each measure. The project examples indicate further how the agendas' characteristics of sustainable environment, job creation, skills development and business environment are implemented and are linked to each other to contribute to achieving the Programme's objectives. This is also reflected in the NPP's Programme Document and Complement, which correspond well to the two EU agendas.

The Programme priority that relates most to the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas is Priority 2: Strengthen sustainable economic development, which has simultaneously been the priority most in demand. Examples of projects that make an active contribution are: Young Entrepreneur Factory; Integrate to Innovate in the Northern Periphery; and Eco House North.

The evaluators also stated that the overall impression of Programme implementation is of a well-organised and efficient Programme. Programme targets have been met and even exceeded under indicators such as complex partnerships, transnational cooperation, spatial development and improved functionality.

An important aspect of the Northern Periphery Programme is the scope provided for Member States and Non-Member States to work together. The NPP covers three Member States and four Non-Member States, allowing for an excellent combination of project partnerships across a wide geographical area. This co-operation is particularly valued and the widening geography of the next programme will allow even greater exchange of experience and expertise between both Member States and Non-Member States.

Another key component of the evaluation is a suggested outline of the strategic options for changes in strategy, objectives and management of the future programme. Although the programme is said to be performing well with a strong administration, there is scope for simplification and opportunities for improvement in a future programme. These recommendations will help feed into the development of the future programme and will contribute to the discussions currently underway.

For further information on the Mid Term Evaluation and its findings, please contact the Joint Programme Secretariat.



PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENTS

2006 Calendar

The Northern Periphery Programme recently published a desk calendar for 2006 that highlights an NPP project each month. There are limited copies of these still available, so if you would like to order one please send an e-mail with details of your postal address to: claire.matheson@npp2.net

Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation on NPP Website

The topic of Maritime Safety has been identified as being an important global issue that requires transnational co-operation to address it effectively. The Northern Periphery Programme is therefore participating in the Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation (MSUO), which is a cross programme initiative between four different INTERREG IIIB programmes. A new webpage has been added to the [NPP website](#) under Programme Info and includes useful information and links related to the co-operation.

Project Publications Reminder

Last year a new facility was added to the NPP website that allows projects to display their publications on the NPP website. This can be a useful source of information on a project and its activities. However, not all projects have taken advantage of this opportunity. Projects are reminded to send copies of their publications to the JPS for inclusion on the NPP website.

Events Calendar

The NPP website includes an events calendar, which can also be found under the news heading. Projects can take advantage of this by sending information to the JPS on forthcoming project events. Details of future conferences and important seminars are particularly welcome. Please send a short description of your project event, date and location to [Claire](#) at the JPS.

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