

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce these case studies to highlight the way that the European Union's Interreg III B Northern Periphery Programme supports an array of projects to help the most northerly regions of Europe to share and develop ideas that meet the challenges of life in such remote, mountainous and sparsely-populated lands. These ventures funded through Interreg III B bring together communities from Finland in the east to Greenland in the west to make the most of their resources and develop businesses, communications, transport and services.

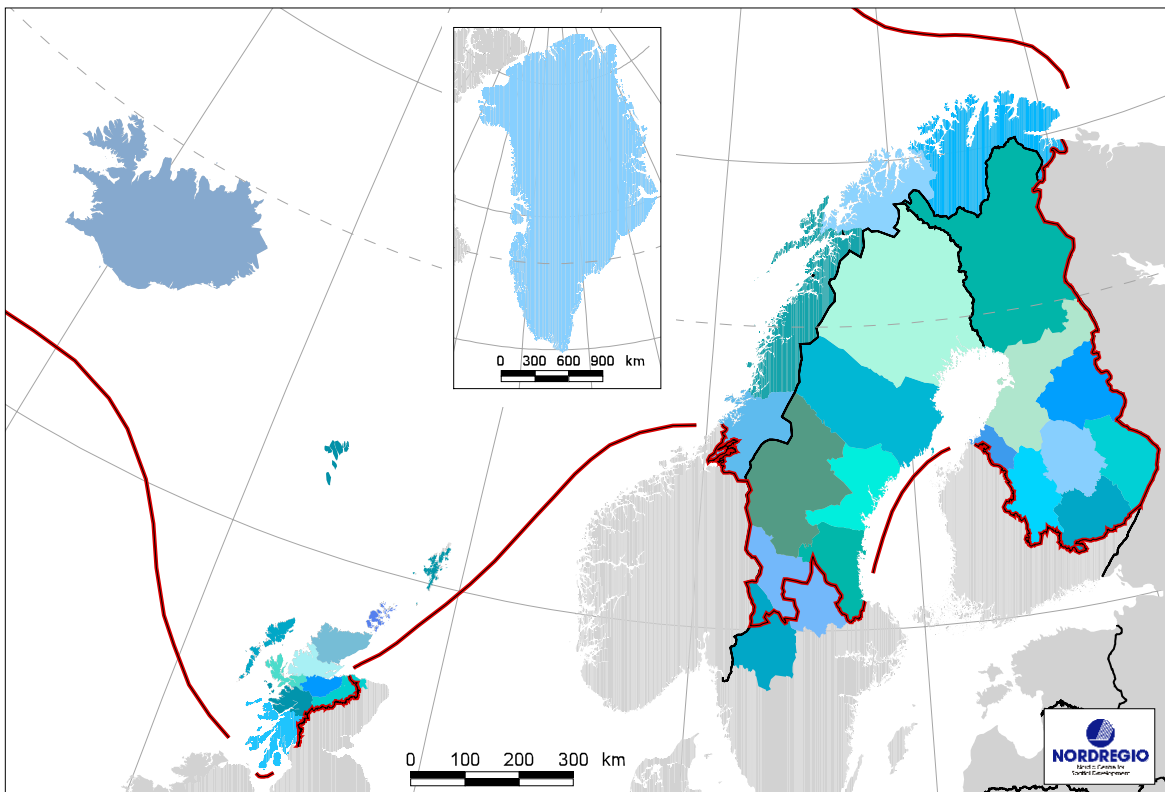
The projects – presented here by the Programme Monitoring Committee – are as diverse as they are innovative. All of them contribute to the Interreg goal of strengthening social and economic cohesion by helping regions to work together across national frontiers. They involve a broad range of participants from the public, private, voluntary and educational sectors, cooperating to foster a balanced development of the area. They show, too, how European Regional Development Funds and non-Member State equivalents can be used to turn unique and difficult circumstances to competitive advantage. As project activity concludes and the concrete results become ever more evident the Programme Monitoring Committee would like to thank all the partners for such an enthusiastic commitment.

Interreg III B Northern Periphery Programme
Programme Monitoring Committee



NPP - Truly Transnational

The Northern Periphery Programme is one of 13 Interreg IIB programmes that encourage and support transnational co-operation between the regions of Europe. It provides the opportunity for people to work together on projects to meet and exploit the challenges of their particular environment. This programme covers a very large geographical area including both European Union Member States and Non-Member States. Project partners come from the northern parts of Finland, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, the whole of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. Partners from Northwest Russia are also participating on a project-by-project basis, using their own financing. A number of projects even involve associated partners from the USA and Canada in the exchange of expertise.



The regions covered by the Northern Periphery Programme area share much in common in terms of climate, sparse populations, natural environment, complicated topography, rich cultural heritage and history. The programme facilitates joint projects that address the unique challenges and priorities for co-operation shared by the participating countries, helping to overcome some of the barriers to a more balanced development.

Addressing the Priorities for Co-operation

The Northern Periphery Programme has been running since 2001 and has supported a wide range of projects targeted at the specific challenges that face the northernmost parts of Europe, particularly their low population density, harsh weather and long distances from main markets. Northern Periphery Programme projects are contributing to the following strategic themes:



Developing Transport and Infrastructure Solutions



Improving Access to Information Society



Making Better Use of Natural Resources



Promoting Business Innovation and Networking



Strengthening Rural Communities



Community Planning for Peripheral Areas

Programme financing

The programme is financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), with an ERDF equivalent from the non-EU member states (Norway, Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands), as well as contributions from all the countries involved. The total budget of the Northern Periphery Programme is 55,861 million Euros. This includes European Regional Development Funds and Member State match-funding of 38,107 Million Euros and Non-Member States funding of 17,754 Million Euros.

Transnationality in the Northern Periphery Programme

The geography of the region covered by the Northern Periphery Programme where – remote from one another – communities nonetheless face common challenges makes it essential that all projects put a special premium on transnationality and on ensuring that it is applied to all aspects of development and implementation. Transnationality is defined to include international co-operation between organisations rather than just the nation states. This can, for instance, be co-operation between private companies, municipalities, development agencies or universities in different countries. In a good transnational project, co-operation begins at the planning stage and continues after drafting the final report.

All projects involve at least 3 countries, one of which must be from a European Union member state. However, the Northern Periphery Programme encourages projects with a stronger transnational focus that extends beyond this minimum requirement. In fact, 68% of approved projects involve more than 3 countries.

Priority is also given to transnational partnerships that involve a broad range of partners. A project often brings together not only single partners from each country but partnerships of their public and private sectors. A good example of this is a project that involves partners from the public, private and educational/research sectors all working together in a so called triple helix partnership. Project partnerships should also be well balanced, meaning that different partners contribute and benefit to a similar extent without the dominance of a single country or partner. This ensures that real transnational co-operation is achieved across borders.

Project Partnerships: Sharing Knowledge Through Transnational Co-operation & Involvement of the Private Sector

The Northern Periphery Programme recognises that many of its strategic themes and priorities can most efficiently be addressed by co-operative efforts combining the resources of both the public and private sectors. The private sector has been considered a valuable asset in project development and the promotion of transnationality and its involvement has been encouraged and prioritised in the scoring process of applications.

The result has been that the vast majority of NPP projects involve small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) either as partners, co-financiers, participants or recipients of project outputs. Furthermore, 50% of the projects approved in 2004 received co-financing from the private sector. Analysis shows that so far only 2 projects do not include SME involvement in some form.

Evidence suggests that projects with concrete, practical tasks and hands-on approaches appear more attractive to the private sector compared with more policy-orientated projects. For many other companies, involvement in the programme through a public-sector partner is often more attractive than full partner participation, as it allows access to project results without the extra commitment. A good example of this is the Northern Maritime Corridor project, which has 90 key private sector associated partners. They work in close co-operation with the main partners, participate in discussions and workshops and benefit from the project results.

The involvement of the private sector in projects has been promoted, recognising the targets of the Lisbon Agenda and the contribution that SMEs can make to rural economies. This has helped ensure that private sector involvement in the programme has remained consistently high and that results are of benefit to a wide range of actors.

Tools for Project Development - Helping to Overcome the Distance

A unique feature of the Northern Periphery Programme area is that it has to contend with the vast distances across the northern parts of Europe. As a result, project meetings and seminars present more of a logistical challenge and expense than elsewhere. The programme has a tool available in the form of Micro & Preparatory project funding to encourage and facilitate the development of good project ideas ahead of a main application for support to the programme.

Micro Project Funding

This type of project is intended to establish first contact and help find potential partners. Micro projects are particularly intended to cover the costs of travel to the new parts of the programme area (Iceland, Greenland and the Faroe Islands). Only one partner is required to make an application, and there is a simplified application form and reporting procedure. The maximum grant to a micro project is 5 000 Euros, up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.

Preparatory Project Funding

Preparatory projects facilitate the drawing up of joint project plans that fulfil the criteria for an NPP project application. These projects also have a simplified application and reporting procedure, and are intended to mobilise a broader, well-balanced partnership. A minimum of two partners is required to make an application and the principal aim is to facilitate the drafting of a main application. The maximum grant to a preparatory project is 15 000 Euros, up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs.

Experience shows that the use of seed financing has been an extremely effective tool, as it allows potential project partners to establish firm working relationships and overcome many of the initial 'teething' problems often experienced at the beginning of a project.

Northern Environment for Sustainable Tourism - NEST

A good example of the use of seed financing is the NEST project, which was initially developed at an NPP partenariat (project development workshop) in Nairn, Scotland. A micro project allowed the Icelandic lead partner to travel and meet other potential partners at this event. The project idea was then further developed at the partenariat where a project partnership was established for a preparatory project. The preparatory project allowed the partners to meet again and finalise the application and partnership for a main project, which was approved in September 2004.

Project Index



Developing Transport and Infrastructure Solutions

ROADEX II

Northern Maritime Corridor

ATSRUAR

SAFETY @ SEA

ROADEX III



Improving Access to Information Society

Community Learning Networks

REMEDY

Northern Potential

Rubies

PICYBU

BIRRA



Making Better Use of Natural Resources

Northern Berries

SMART

Destination Viking

External Timber Cladding

Rural Business Women

PNASTINA

Nature Based Tourism

NORCE

SNOW MAGIC

Eco House North

SIBLARCH

NEST

Northern Wood Heat

Northern Outdoor Recreational Food Project



Promoting Business Innovation and Networking

PROFILE

SCRI

Young Entrepreneur Factory

USEVENUE

BITWON

Extreme Weather Conditions

i2i

SCRI In Action

North Cod

REN



Strengthening Rural Communities

ECOWATSA

DESERVE

Bottom Up Processes

Sustainable Rural Health Care Networks



Community Planning for Peripheral Areas

Small Town Networks

BRANDR

Cultural Community Business

Our Life as Elderly

NorWat

ELAV

Small Towns II

Spatial North