

A QUICK GUIDE TO –

EU NORTHERN PERIPHERY PROGRAMME PROJECT:



“INTEGRATED APPROACH TO NORTHERN WATERCOURSES AND THEIR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT” (NORWAT)

Introduction - the Northern Periphery Programme (NPP)

NPP is a measure under the European Community Interreg IIIB Initiative which aims to prevent national borders from being barriers to the balanced development and integration of the European Union. It promotes co-operation between national, regional and local bodies in the following areas –

- Northern Scotland
- Northern Finland
- Northern Sweden
- Northern Norway
- Iceland
- Greenland
- Faroe islands

The overall objectives are to support sustainable development of communities, promote the wise management of natural resources, and help overcome the disadvantages of remoteness and sparse population.

The Partners to the NORWAT Project

This particular project was approved by the NPP in mid-2004 and takes in four countries and twelve partners –

Scotland

The Highland Council
Scottish Natural Heritage
Spey Fishery Board
Moray Badenoch and Strathspey Enterprise

(with financial support also from the Crown Estate [Glenlivet] and Moray Council)

Finland (who are the lead partner, employing the overall Project Manager)

Jyvaskyla Polytechnic, Saarijarvi, Central Finland
Municipal Authority of Saarijarvi
Forestry Centre of Central Finland
Central Finland Regional Environment Centre
University of Jyvaskyla (Institute for Environmental Research)

Norway

Development Department of Nordreisa Municipality, Troms County
Regional Board of Northern Troms Region

Sweden

Vindel River Association, Vasterbotten

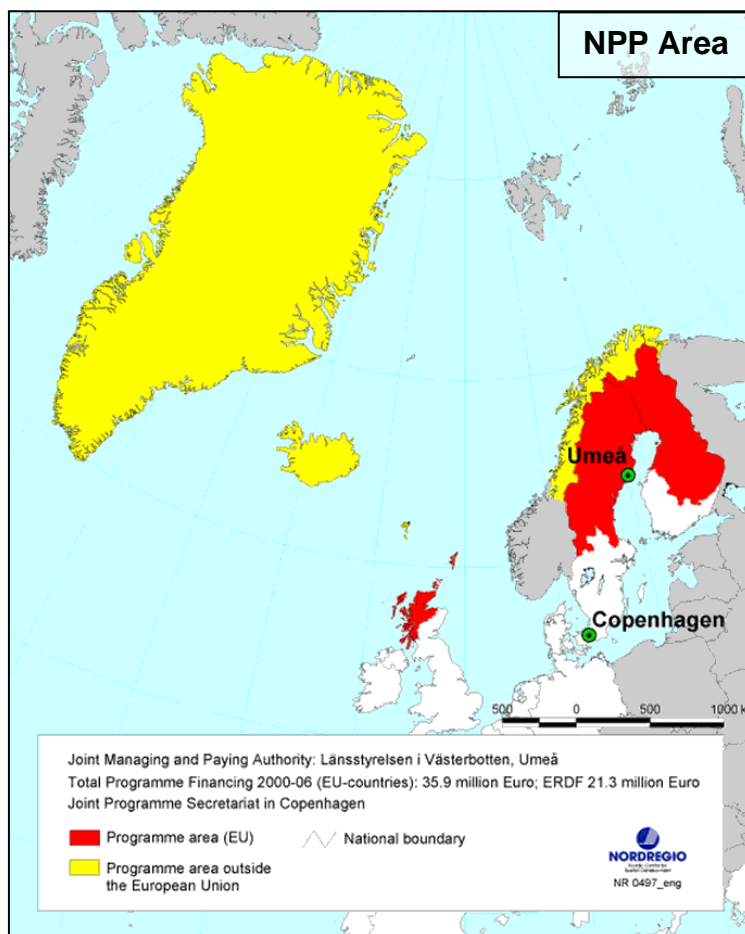
In Northern Scotland the area that this project will relate to will be the River Spey catchment (with the exception of the lowest part of the catchment downstream from about Rothes, which falls outside the EC Objective 1 Transitional Area)

Timescale and Budget

NORWAT will run for three years, from Summer 2004 to Summer 2007.

The total transnational budget for the project (euros) is €1.24 million, with almost 60% being provided as a grant by the NPP. The Scottish share of this is €247460.

In Pounds Sterling the Scottish budget for the three years is about £165,000. The NPP is contributing 60% of this and the remaining 40% is being provided by the Scottish partners and sub-partners either in cash or in kind.



What we aim to achieve within this project

There are four aspects to the project, called Themes, and these are briefly described in turn below. They are numbered 1, 2, 3.1 and 3.2 since the last two are inter-related under the general heading of education –

THEME 1 – “SUSTAINABLE LAND USE MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT”



Central Finland Scenery

The aim here is to work with local communities to consider their future vision for their area and to consider implications in terms of land management and development requirements. This can then be assessed against safeguarding and improvement of water quality in nearby watercourses and lakes. Guidance can then be drawn up to integrate these issues, and good practice demonstration projects can possibly be carried out.

For Scotland it is recognised that much groundwork in this respect has already been carried out through the preparation of the River Spey Catchment Management Plan. Therefore the intention is to focus on a small part of the catchment where the need for careful integration of water quality, development capacity and land management is a significant issue. Consultants will be retained to assess existing water quality and the present pattern of land management and development. Working with local communities and agencies, they would consider future trends, opportunities and pressures, and would consider the implications of this for water quality. In order to help to integrate these factors, best practice to safeguard water quality would be set out, and the project allows this to be learned if relevant from the other partner countries. A particular issue which the consultants will be asked to include is the possible cumulative effect on water quality of individual septic tank and soakaway systems from single houses, and how best practice could help this issue.



Working together with the community and agencies, the consultants will produce a “Community Development Plan” for the pilot study area. This will have no statutory basis but will hopefully be a useful reference document for all those involved in development, land management and water quality. A local seminar will be run by the consultants at the end of their work to disseminate the results to a wide audience.

The study area will be agreed in advance with the relevant Community Council (s) in the Highland Area.

THEME 2 – “WATERCOURSE NATURALISATION TO RESTORE AND ENHANCE NATURAL HABITATS”

In all four partner countries watercourses are extremely important for their fisheries and for the angling that this provides. In the case of the River Spey it is the salmon fisheries and angling that is so important to the area. However there are various practical steps that can be taken to improve the habitats for fish, in particular to increase spawning areas, and this in turn will benefit the local communities through a stronger angling resource. We can learn from each country what techniques they employ to restore and enhance natural river habitats.



River edge in Norway

NPP - Theme 2:
Glenlivet Estate



For the Spey catchment under this theme, the Spey Fishery Board will work with the Crown Estate and Moray Council (Roads Department) within the Glenlivet Estate on various improvement works along the Conglass Water (a tributary of the River Avon). This will include culvert removal and fencing-off of banksides to reduce erosion. Parallel practical work will be carried out along selected watercourses in the other three partner countries, and there will be an opportunity for experiences to be shared and best practice to be set out. In particular there will be an opportunity to visit the other countries to enable the problems and remedial work to be seen first hand.

THEME 3.1 – “DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETATIVE MATERIAL”



This part of the project will be aimed at two primary schools in each partner country alongside a watercourse, and will enable the schoolchildren to learn more about that watercourse not only in terms of its environmental value, but also in terms of the part that it plays in the economic, social and cultural life of the area. The schoolchildren will share what they are learning with the children in the other countries, through email and video-conference (“virtual classroom”) links. One particular

subject will be to learn about and share information on the life cycle of the main fish species in the river (e.g. salmon, pike). Towards the end of the project, there will be an opportunity for children from the three Scandinavian countries to come to Strathspey so that all can meet up together and share experiences directly.

This environmental education work in Strathspey will build upon the existing resources, such as the “River Bank” chest of educational resource material, and the “Salmon Goes to School” tank project of the Spey Fishery Board. There will be an opportunity for a complementary “School Goes to Salmon” component with the help of SFB, to plant out young salmon in burns, study the natural habitat and ecology, and catch and see maturing fish.

The participating teachers across all the countries will work together to prepare a teaching resource manual so that similar environmental education work can take place elsewhere using the knowledge so gained. The project allows the participating teachers to meet up annually in a different partner country.

A priority early stage of the project will be to agree participating primary schools in Strathspey.

THEME 3.2 – “RAISING THE AWARENESS OF WATERCOURSE RESOURCES”

Each of the partner countries will select groupings of people whose work is directly related to the watercourse and where it is important that they understand the range of issues necessary not only for their own work, but also to appreciate better the interests of other users of the watercourse. Joint training courses will be arranged to bring together the range of interests so that participants may learn about a cross section of matters important to the watercourse and may share experience.



Vindael River Winter Trail in Sweden

For Strathspey the following groups have been identified, who work along the River Spay and tributaries –

- Ghillies
- Countryside Rangers
- Water Sports Instructors

A joint training course will be arranged which can be run three times during the project in order to allow number to be kept to a reasonable level. The final training course will coincide with an international seminar of training providers drawing from all the partner countries.

It is anticipated that the Scottish training courses will include modules on river management, river ecology, water quality, and access under the new land reform legislation.

The Outputs and Other Activities of the Project

The main aim is to produce “Best Practice Manuals” for each of the four themes to collate the work in all four partner countries. This will then be available after the end of the project as a resource for any other region wishing to embark upon similar work for watercourses and communities in their area.

In order to pull these manuals together, “Transnational Thematic Working Groups” for each theme will be set up to run during the life of the project. Their work will culminate with the production of the Best Practice Manuals. As the name implies, these working groups will be made up of representatives from each of the four countries, and they will keep in touch with each other regularly through email and video-conference, plus occasional full meetings.

However a very important stage will be when International Transnational Seminars will take place for each theme, when there is an opportunity all to come together in one of the countries to see work and activity on the ground, to share experience and knowledge directly, and to do preparatory work on the Best Practice Manuals. The hosts for each theme will be as follows –

Theme 1	Finland
Theme 2	Sweden
Theme 3	Scotland

In addition however for Theme 2, given that this is all about practical work (which is likely to be quite different in each country), there will also be study visits slotted in as economically as possible to Finland, Norway and Scotland.

A web site will be created for this project, on which will be posted information and outputs. This too would be available for reference after the end of the project.

Further information and contacts

In Scotland the lead partner is The Highland Council and so further information can be obtained from –

James Bromham
Planning and Development Service
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX

Further information in respect of the other partner country areas and organisations can at this stage be obtained through relevant individual web sites as follows –

Finland

www.saarijarvi.fi
www.metsakeskus.fi/ks
www.ymparisto.fi
www.jyu.fi

Norway

www.nordreisa.kommune.no
www.halti.no

Sweden

www.vindelalven.se



**SCOTTISH
NATURAL
HERITAGE**

