



NORTHERN PERIPHERY PROGRAMME

Transnationality

What does transnationality mean?

Transnationality is a complex term and as such there is no general agreement on one definition of transnationality, instead it has a number of aspects:

- Transnationality deals with international co-operation on a level other than just exclusively between nation states. This can for instance be co-operation between local authorities/municipalities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) or educational and research institutes, located in different countries.
- Transnationality as opposed to cross-border co-operation. The geography of the programme area means that you are not just co-operating with neighbouring countries, but rather with regions that suffer from similar difficulties and problems.

Transnationality in the Northern Periphery Programme

- Minimum definition from the guidelines: a main project application should include three or more partners from at least three different countries, one of which must be from an EU member state.

The above definition is stated in the Programme complement of the Northern Periphery Programme. This means that some projects that only fulfil this minimum requirement could be approved for funding by the Northern Periphery Programme. However, the Northern Periphery Programme aims to encourage projects with a strong transnational component. Projects that involve partners from Scotland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland or Northwest Russia will therefore be given higher priority in the selection process.

Priority is also given to 'complex' transnational partnerships. This is a project partnership that is not only between single partners from each country, but between partnerships of the public and private sectors in each country. A good example of this is a project that involves partners from the public, private and educational/research sectors all working together. This partnership should also be well balanced, meaning that the different partners contribute and benefit to a similar extent without the dominance of one country, or one partner.

A good transnational project has a common starting point and a common conclusion. If pilots are carried out in the project then there should be a real interest from the partner organisations across the area in the outcome of the pilots.

The partner organisations should be from the eligible programme area and the activities must always benefit the programme area. In exceptional circumstances if expertise cannot be found in the programme area, it may be sought outwith the programme area. However, this should always be discussed with the Joint Programme Secretariat of the Northern Periphery Programme beforehand.

When is a project truly transnational?

- When transnationality runs through the project: planning, activities, outcomes, dissemination of outcomes, follow-up etc. Continued co-operation after the project is a sign of 'natural transnationality': the partners really find the co-operation useful.

- When the project is relevant to the transnational strategy of the Northern Periphery Programme as described in the Programme Complement.
- When it has a positive impact in several parts of the whole of the transnational area.
- When the outcome of the project is (expected to be) clearly different from what could have been achieved without transnational co-operation.
- When each partners contribution creates a real added-value to the project results

What is not transnational co-operation?

- Cross-border co-operation
- International co-operation exclusively between the national governmental levels
- A project in which the partners work on their individual subprojects without (the need for) common linkage.
- A partner (or group of partners) in one country gaining expertise and experience from other areas without common or balanced benefits across the project area

Why is transnationality important?

- It can result in new solutions to existing problems much quicker than in the national context
- Many regions face similar problems but apply very different solutions. This gives scope for exchange of knowledge/experience and common pilot activities.
- It strengthens the cohesion of a transnational area, like the Northern Periphery.
- Working together leads to better understanding and thereby lays the foundation for future co-operation.
- Many issues such as communications, nature and transport are increasingly transnational issues and can often be tackled more effectively in a transnational context.
- Some problems are transnational by nature (environment, economy, spatial structure) and require transnational co-operation for 'real' solutions.
- It brings Europe closer to organisations that are not used to co-operating beyond their national borders.
- It helps to put organisations in tune with the latest (international) developments.
- It provides a practical learning opportunity for the staff of the organisations Involved.
- It helps to develop the organisations' capacity to be innovative and responsive to the changing world.
- It is a very practical way to evaluate the way the organisation presently deals with the issue concerned.

What are the pitfalls of transnational working?

- Cultural and linguistic differences: are we really talking about the same thing?
- It takes more time to agree in a transnational context.
- Different holidays, working hours and working methods cause delays.
- International meetings cost more time and money.
- Having too many partners: informing everyone sufficiently and settling financial issues can be complicated and time consuming.
- Having too few partners: some interesting and useful organisations are left out of the project.
- The solutions learned in other countries might be impossible to implement in your own country due to legal, institutional or other obstacles.
- It is important to know and trust your transnational partnership.
- Different levels of commitment/interest among the transnational partnership.
- It is important to set out clear objectives/deliverables from the beginning. This makes it possible to measure the success of the project.