



## **The Northern Periphery and Arctic programme in brief**

### Information about progress in the year 2018



#### **About the programme**

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014–2020 covers a huge area that corresponds to 75% of EU's area. The Programme comprises a cooperation between 9 Programme partner countries; the EU-Member States of Finland, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Scotland and Northern Ireland) in cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Norway. Besides that, Russia and Canada have been offered the status as observers in the Monitoring Committee. This means that the Programme area encompasses the Euro-Arctic zone, parts of the Atlantic zone and parts of the Barents region, with neighbouring areas in Russia. Despite geographical differences, the large Programme area shares several common features, such as low population density, low accessibility, low economic diversity, abundant natural resources, and high impact of climate change. This unique combination of features results in joint challenges and joint opportunities that can best be overcome and realised by transnational cooperation.

The Programme's vision is to help to generate vibrant, competitive and sustainable communities by harnessing innovation, expanding the capacity for entrepreneurship, and seizing the unique growth initiatives and opportunities of the Northern and Arctic regions in a resource-efficient way.



The development needs and potentials of the Programme area, together with the policy and historic context, have resulted in 4 priority axes to achieve the Programme vision:

1. Using innovation to maintain and develop robust and competitive communities.
2. Promoting entrepreneurship to realise the potential of the Programme area's competitive advantage.
3. Fostering energy-secure communities through promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency.
4. Protecting, promoting and developing cultural and natural heritage.

The sparsely populated communities of the Programme area are the focal point of all 4 priority axes. The development of the Arctic has had and still has a growing attention at national level as well as in international cooperation, which is also expressed by the EU communication on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic. Therefore, in addition to the four above mentioned priority axes, the NPA addresses the "Arctic Dimension" as a cross cutting theme. This is done by including partners from the Arctic part from the Programme Area and by supporting cooperation, innovation and transfer of knowledge, and technology within themes of specific significance for the Arctic territories. The overall intention is that NPA projects shall foster changes that are of importance to people, including indigenous peoples, living in the Arctic area.

During the period 2014–2020, the Programme will allocate approximately 56 million Euros of programme funding to a target of 54 projects with a maximum total project budget of 2 million Euros per project including match funding.

In terms of monitoring results at programme level, result indicators, baseline values and targets for the six programme specific objectives were developed and approved by the Monitoring Committee during 2015.

Due to the lack of data covering the programme area, the Programme has decided to work with panels of regional experts, who were asked to describe and assess the regional status-quo in quantitative and qualitative terms in 2015 (baseline values), and then to assess the progress towards the achievement of objectives in 2017, 2019 and 2023. Rather than monitoring the entire programme area, a sample of three regions, defined on NUTS3 level, was selected and an expert panel was constituted for each of the six result indicators.

The baseline assessment provides the NPA Programme with a rich data set covering various quantitative-qualitative dimensions that give a detailed and varied picture of the status quo in the sample regions as a basis for monitoring the impact of the Programme's interventions. The 2019 update of the baseline values for the result indicators shows that most of the values have developed in line with the expectations in 2015. Even though three out of 6 values are a little below the expectations, in particular indicator 3, the regional experts are still optimistic with regard to reaching the target values in 2023. For three indicators, the 2019-update is higher than expected.

In terms of output indicators, two common indicators have been selected for priority axis 1 and 2. One common indicator has been selected for Priority axis 3 and a common, and a programme specific output indicator have been selected for Priority axis 4.



## Progress in 2018

The Annual Implementation Report 2018 gives an overview of the implementation of the Programme in 2018. The following summarizes some key points in the report:

During 2018, the programme reached what is expected to be the peak of its implementation. In June 2018, the Monitoring Committee approved 9 projects out of 29 submitted in the Fifth Call, bringing the total of approved main projects to 44.

Distance and costs are often obstacles to the development of a strong and well balanced project partnership, due to the dispersed geography of the NPA Programme area. For that reason, preparatory projects are a programme specific tool developed to bring potential project partners together and to generate high-quality main project applications. During 2018 another 23 preparatory projects were approved, bringing the total number of preparatory projects to 56.

By the end of the 2018, 47 885 003 or 85% of the total NPA funding for projects was allocated. After 5 calls, the allocation is unevenly distributed across the funding sources. Of the ERDF funding, 84% was committed, whilst 102% of the Norwegian, 92% of the Icelandic, 97% of the Faroese and 93 of the Greenlandic funding to projects was committed.

The project beneficiaries are distributed as follows across the three geographical zones of the programme area: 129 partners in Finland, Sweden and Norway, 120 partners in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland and 50 partners in Greenland, Iceland and Faroe Islands, and other countries 14. When looking at the geographical distribution of Lead Partners, the distribution between the three zones is more uneven, mainly because Greenlandic and Faroese partners cannot be Lead Partners. The NPA addresses the “Arctic Dimension” as a cross cutting theme, and the integrated European Union policy for the Arctic mandated the NPA to have a leading role in bringing together a network of managing authorities and stakeholders from cooperation programmes in the European Arctic. In 2018, a wide range of activities was organised jointly by NPA, Interreg Nord, Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, Kolarctic and Karelia CBC ENI, such as the second Arctic Awards project competition with an award ceremony in conjunction with the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arctic Project Clustering event which took place in Rovaniemi, Finland.

When analysing NPA achievements in relation to targets set for the programme, it can be concluded that all targets have been reached or exceeded already at this stage of the implementation. In 2018 an impact evaluation of the programme was carried out, results of this are described in the report “An impact evaluation of the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020”.

The evaluation report describes a range of impacts of NPA interventions, such as new SME links to R&D institutes/public sector supporting economic development, new business growth opportunities, improved service provision to remote communities, changing attitudes and perceptions, future oriented strategic partnerships and transnational links as well as growing local capacity to engage with macro development issues. The evaluators conclude that the NPA delivers impact for a range of beneficiaries at a variety of different levels and the transnational dimension brings a distinct added value to stakeholders.



At the occasion of its 2018 Annual Conference, the programme realised a video series called “People of the North” which tells through the stories of three projects how their transnational work brings about change:

- Cereals - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmYcW5sG3IU>
- RYE Connect - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwYk0mLZgGM>
- Remoage - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vh1\\_q\\_KqmM&t=35s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vh1_q_KqmM&t=35s)

### Examples of funded projects

Two examples of funded projects from the fifth call are listed below. These examples address core themes within the NPA Programme:

**W-POWER** - Empowering women entrepreneurs in sparsely populated communities

The project addresses Priority Axis 2, Specific objective 2.1

Improved support systems for SMEs

The project objectives are to:

1. Foster capacity building of women entrepreneurs in relation to transnational networks, new business models and transversal business skills (e.g. innovation skills). Transnational learning empowers the women entrepreneurs and motivates to develop their business.
2. Improvement of gender-related business advisory services eg. tools for gender-sensitive business support and diversity management. Also, new service providers will start their business based on tools created during the project.
3. Encouragement for self-employment in sparsely populated communities. An innovation platform piloted in the project provides a tool for new business ideas and innovations, with support system.



W-POWER aims for equal growth and increase in the contribution of women to regional economy in sparsely populated Northern and Arctic communities, as women leaving the North is one of the main challenges to beat in the region. All project partner regions suffer from similar challenges caused by peripherality, which creates a strong argument for transnational cooperation.

The partnership is led by a Finnish partner and involves partners from Ireland, Finland, Iceland, Scotland and Sweden. The partnership consists of research institutes and business support agencies. For further details: <http://w-power.interreg-npa.eu/>



**Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme**  
2014–2020



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**ARCTISEN - Culturally Sensitive Tourism in the Arctic**

The project addresses Priority Axis 2, Specific objective 2.1

Improved support systems for SMEs

The project objectives are to:

1. Enhancing capacities to improve the conditions of Arctic tourism business environment
2. Developing a cluster for culturally sensitive Arctic tourism business to transfer knowledge



ARCTISEN's approach is to enhance transnational cooperation among a wide range of tourism stakeholders in the project area to support sustainable local tourism business development, economic diversity, self-determination and maintaining and recovering of cultural livelihoods.

The support system in the making will enable tourism start-ups and existing SMEs to learn from each other and to take advantage of expertise offered by scholars and practitioners specialized in culturally sensitive development of tourism business. Cultural sensitivity is a new concept in tourism development and the novelty of ARCTISEN lies in it. It is exactly what is needed when utilising Northern Indigenous and other local cultural resources in tourism business. It enhances stakeholders' self-determination, intra- and intercultural understanding, respect, empowerment and inclusion together with economic development solutions.

The project adapts existing tools of tourism development, such as toolkits, benchmarking, workshops and co-creation, to a new level: developing culturally sensitive tourism business.

The project builds on existing best practices and business solutions, such as, cultural certification system SápmiExperience in Sweden and a culturally sustainable marketing approach in Greenland. What is also new is that instead of developing Sámi tourism in one country or between the Scandinavian countries and Russia, also other Indigenous peoples are included in the project in order to learn from their experiences and practises. At the same time, new cooperation and networks will be built together to support the development of culturally sensitive tourism business in all project countries. For further details: [http://sensitivetourism.interreg-npa.eu/?ADMCMD\\_editIcons=1](http://sensitivetourism.interreg-npa.eu/?ADMCMD_editIcons=1)