

PRE-ANNOUNCEMENT AND DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

First Call for Main Project Applications

Background

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014 - 2020 was successfully implemented and has led to continued commitment to developing a new successor programme that is expected to run until 2027. Preparations are ongoing for the new Programme, and the priorities and objectives of the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic 2021 – 2027 Programme (Interreg NPA) are established.

The Interreg NPA Programme is part of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective supported by the European Regional Development Fund. The programme contributes to and aligns with the European Cohesion strategy of a Greener and Smarter Europe, and a Europe closer to citizens, National and Regional policies and development strategies, macro regional and sea basin strategies, and other programmes covering parts of the geographical area. Furthermore, an increased interest and rapid developments in Arctic regions has resulted in a more explicit recognition of the programme's regional development contribution to the EU's Arctic Policy.

Terms of Reference

The programme's vision is a Northern Periphery and Arctic area where communities cooperate with each other to harness opportunities, find common solutions to shared challenges and together become more prosperous and resilient.

In order to ensure that the new NPA Programme begins its implementation pro-actively, the Monitoring Committee of Interreg NPA would like to announce and encourage main project applicants to start to develop their main project ideas, explore potential partnership and investigate match funding sources.

Expected outcomes

Main projects are expected to develop concrete and durable project outputs, leading to a positive impact on the project's target groups in the Programme area. An output should be captured by an output indicator, and directly contribute to the achievement of the result envisaged by the programme objectives, as outlined in the annexed Programme and project logic.

The Monitoring Committee is looking to fund projects in the following Priorities.

PRIORITY 1: Strengthening the innovation capacity for resilient and attractive NPA communities

1.1 - Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

1.2 - Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities and

1.3 - Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments

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PRIORITY 2: Strengthening the capacity for climate change adaptation, and resource sufficiency in NPA communities

2.1 - Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions

2.2 - Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account ecosystem based approaches and

2.3 - Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy

For all Priorities, the following is highlighted:

- All projects are expected make a special effort to include end users in their project proposals. End user involvement can be demonstrated by the composition of the partnership (e.g. involvement as full project partners, or associated partners), the involvement of end users as described in dedicated work package activities, or by attaching letters of support from end users.
- In all activities that are approved by the NPA programme, there should be an integration of the horizontal criteria. This means that the activities should strive for sustainable development, with equal opportunities for men and women, non-discrimination and accessibility and inclusion of underrepresented groups, including indigenous peoples and other culturally and linguistically distinct groups originating from the NPA area. Activities should be carried out with respect for fundamental rights.

Project Budget – An average main project is expected to have a budget of 1.500 000 EUR.

Project duration – Main projects: 3 years for project activities.

Project structure – Main projects involve partners from at least 3 programme partner countries, at least one of which from an EU Member States. Partnerships are recommended to include at least 2 of the 3 geographical zones of the programme area: Finland-Sweden-Norway; Ireland; Faroe Islands-Greenland-Iceland.

Partners from other countries such as Russia, Canada, and the UK are also invited to consider their participation ¹.

In addition to expectations outlined in the Interreg Regulation (Article 26, Regulation 2021/1059), Lead Partners have to meet the following criteria:

- They are a public sector organisation They are based in the NPA Programme area, unless they have a national remit that covers the Programme area.

¹ **Disclaimer:** When a project involves one or several partners located in a country not represented in the Programme, the Managing Authority needs to have a written acceptance by this country to reimburse any amounts unduly paid to partners located there, or another type of guarantee. In addition, a system of second level control for audits needs to be in place, prior to the issuing of the Grant Offer Letter by the Managing Authority. Participation of external partners is limited to: EU countries outside the NPA area, Russia, the UK, and Canada.



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TIMELINE

Pre-announcement/“Save the date”	1 st February 2022
OPENING OF 1st CALL:	17 th March 2022
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	20 th June 2022
DECISION DATE:	29 th September 2022
FURTHER INFO:	Available and published on the programme website and circulated as widely through Regional Contact points

March 17th, 2022 First Call launch event and “How To Apply” webinar.

May 11th, 2022 “How To Apply” webinar.

Further information

If you are interested in applying, we recommend that you are in touch with the Regional Contact Point in your region, click [here](#) for contact details. Alternatively, you can contact Christopher Parker at the Programme Secretariat, christopher.parker@interreg-npa.eu.

Details of the main project application call and the application pack including guidance materials will be published on www.interreg-npa.eu.

General information about the Interreg NPA 2021-2027 can be found at this link: <https://www.interreg-npa.eu/interreg-npa-2021-2027/>.

DISCLAIMER: Main project applications decisions for commencing operation are subject to final approval of the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic 2021 – 2027 Programme by the European Commission.