

## CITIZENS' SUMMARY

### The Northern Periphery and Arctic programme in brief Information about progress in the year 2021



#### 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 result indicators showed 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, the regional experts were 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. So far, the achievements of the output indicators are between 74% and 100%, after the output indicator targets in the programme document were updated during 2021.

## **Progress in 2021**

The Annual Implementation Report 2021 gives an overview of the implementation of the Programme in 2021. The following summarizes some key points in the report:

### Project Implementation

During 2021, two small project calls were held, in an effort to allocate the remaining programme funds, improve the uptake of results, and prepare for the new period: a Clustering projects call and a Bridging projects call.

Clustering projects are small projects that combine 2 or more NPA projects, or projects from other Interreg programmes. The Clustering call focussed on diversifying and capitalising on outputs and results; further integrating results, as well as disseminating their impacts. Thus, reaching a wider group of stakeholders, supplementary learning, and capacity building. Out of 9 proposals received, 6 were approved.

Bridging projects are preparatory projects, whose main purpose is to build a project pipeline for future main projects in the new programme, keep momentum, thus allowing for a strong start. Secondly, to explore in practice the different themes proposed in the new programme.

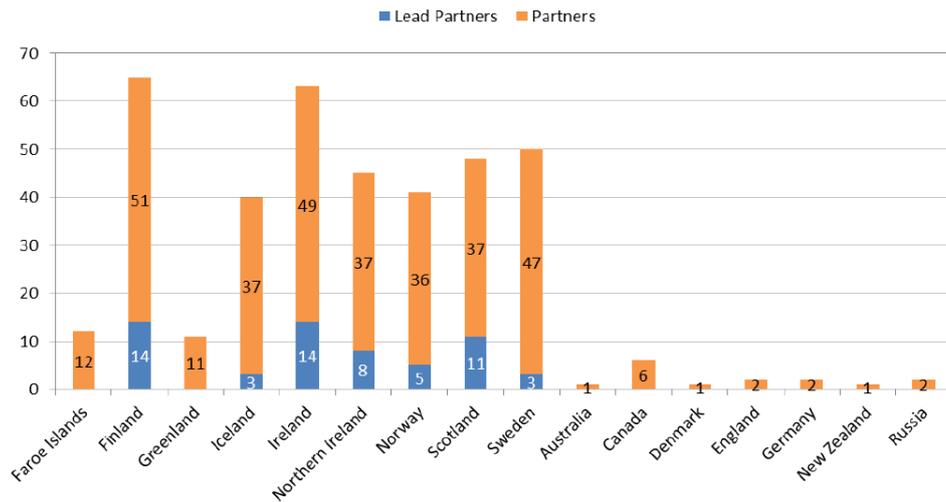
The Bridging Call was open from 16th August to 8th October 2021; out of 25 proposals received, 22 were approved by the Monitoring Committee in December 2021.

Many ongoing main projects remained affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, the majority of projects required a project extension and budget changes in order to finalise their project successfully. During 2021, the programme administration continued working with projects so that by December 2021, 23 projects had received extensions.

By the end of the year, 53 856 917 Euro or 95,5% of the total NPA funding for projects was allocated, when taking into account de-commitments from finalized projects.

The allocation by the end of 2021 is somewhat unevenly distributed across the funding sources. Of the ERDF funding, 96% was committed, whilst 95% of the Norwegian, 97% of the Icelandic and 88% of both the Faroese and the Greenlandic funding to projects was committed.

No further main projects were approved, which is why the numbers below remained unchanged since the previous report. The 390 main project beneficiaries are distributed as follows across the three geographical zones of the programme area: 156 partners in Finland, Sweden and Norway, 156 partners in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland and 63 partners in Greenland, Iceland and Faroe Islands, and other countries 15. 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.



### Arctic Cooperation

The NPA addresses the Arctic Dimension as a cross cutting theme.

In 2021, regular meetings were held between the participating programmes, NPA, Interreg Nord, Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, Kolarctic, and Karelia CBC ENI. Because all programmes are in a similar phase of programme preparation, regular updates on the status and direction of the processes in the other Arctic programmes have been very informative. Both to learn about the thematic focus of the other programmes, as well as the more technical aspects of programme development and adoption, and the new communication strategies.

In October 2021, the new EU Arctic Policy was launched by the Commission, sparking some ideas about the future direction of the Arctic Cooperation. However, decisions about the future Arctic Cooperation need to involve respective Monitoring Committees. In any case, the different programme administrations are committed to continue with the Arctic Cooperation.

## Examples of funded projects

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

### ETRAC Ethical Tourism Recovery in Arctic Communities

Covid-19 is having a profound effect on the tourism sector in the cool north and as the industry starts to move into a resilient, post-pandemic recovery there is an opportunity to look at more sustainable or responsible tourist behaviour and address sustainability challenges in peripheral and arctic areas that have been intensified by the pandemic.

*The aim of ETRAC is to enable short-term business recovery, while exploring options for a more culturally and locally sensitive tourism future.*

The approach is to draw upon the collective experience of the lead partners from four previous or current NPA projects - ARCTISEN, W-POWER, SHAPE and SAINT - to share new approaches with an expanded network of end-users through a dynamic innovation platform.

- SHAPE focussed on the development of practical tools to support the development of ecotourism in sustainable heritage areas. The resulting knowledge and tools were incorporated into a dynamic 'e-service', designed to be used after the project ended.
- SAINT focused on working with tourism SMEs to facilitate new clustering and marketing approaches to support the development of nature-based tourism experiences.
- ARCTISEN focused on creating support systems for tourism SMEs and start-ups it was particularly concerned with how cultural sensitivity, to Indigenous and other local cultures, needs to be a core value in tourism products.
- W-POWER has a broader industry remit as it seeks to increase the contribution of women to sparsely populated regional economies, through capacity building and overcoming structural barriers.

While negative impacts on tourism partnerships are widespread, this is an opportunity to identify where individuals and communities have shown entrepreneurial flair and how these new activities may form part of expanded future networks.

<https://etrac.interreg-npa.eu>



## POPCORN Preventing oil and plastic contamination of ocean regions in the North

POPCORN is a clustering project of the NPA programme, which brings together NPA (APP4SEA, Circular Ocean & Blue Circular Economy) and Baltic Sea Region projects (OIL SPILL), which address maritime pollution issues.



Each of the project focuses either on oil spills or plastic pollution and has supported authorities, organisations and other actors working with these challenges in the Northern waters. POPCORN takes these outcomes and best practices of the individual projects and shares them with the new regions and organisations, in NPA region and beyond.

Individual projects have created, collected and laid out different kind of best practice reports, methods and other tools, which can help experts to upgrade their skillsets to deal with maritime oil spills and plastic pollution. A comprehensive toolkit will be created in POPCORN from the most relevant outputs, and disseminated to new target groups in new regions.

**POPCORN\_NPA @APP4SEA\_NPA · Apr 8**  
Time for some Friday fun and facts as we get back to our [#PlasticsInTheSea](#) campaign. Time to spot our virtual fishing net & find out what is has been up to in the past 4 weeks. The net was spotted last time of the southwest of the coast of 🇩🇰 at 58 degrees north [#DFG](#) [#GhostNet](#)

0:07 24 views

1 2

... Reaching to the general public and informing them about the challenges that oil spills and plastic pollution at sea poses to the environment, is a key objective of the project. POPCORN is running a social media campaign on Twitter called [#PlasticsInTheSea](#) where demonstrating (virtually) how marine litter travels in the sea.

<https://popcorn.interreg-npa.eu>