

Interreg NPA Call for Youth projects

See it, shape it, make it work!

Background

The Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) area is full of contrasts and challenges. Long distances, small populations, harsh weather, and limited access to services make everyday life different - and sometimes difficult - for the people who live here. From rural Ireland to northern Finland, from Greenland to the Faroe Islands, communities across the North share many of the same realities.

The Interreg Northern periphery and Arctic programme exists to enable these communities to work together on matters that are relevant to them. It helps people and organisations to share ideas, test new approaches, and build solutions that work across borders. Cooperation is essential here - because no single community can solve these challenges alone.

Why cooperation matters in the Northern Periphery and Arctic

The regions of the Northern Periphery and Arctic are at the frontline of major global changes, from digital transformation to the impacts of climate change. Innovation is needed to help small and remote communities access research, technology, and business opportunities that are often out of reach. Through Interreg NPA projects, local authorities, small businesses, researchers, and communities can work together to test smart and digital solutions that make life easier - such as telemedicine in remote areas, digital tools for education, or new business models that create local jobs.

At the same time, the Northern Periphery and Arctic must also adapt to a changing climate and use its natural resources more wisely. Interreg NPA projects can support this by developing renewable energy systems suited to Arctic conditions, promoting circular economy ideas that reduce waste, and helping communities prepare for environmental changes before they become crises.

Now it's time for youth cooperation

Building on this spirit of cooperation, the Programme now invites projects that put young people at the centre. The Interreg NPA Youth Call gives youth a stronger voice and real opportunities to shape their future in the Northern Periphery and Arctic.



Northern Periphery and Arctic

Youth projects should connect organisations working with or for young people across regions, helping them learn from each other and co-create solutions that respond to real needs in their communities.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Themes | 3 |
| Project duration..... | 4 |
| Project budget | 4 |
| Start-up payment..... | 4 |
| Following payments | 4 |
| Note for partners from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and Norway..... | 5 |
| Project partners..... | 5 |
| Project activities and outcomes | 5 |
| Youth criteria | 7 |
| Mandatory attachments..... | 8 |
| Application process..... | 8 |
| Support and events planned..... | 8 |
| Part 1 | 9 |
| Part 2 | 9 |
| Activities not supported by Interreg NPA Programme | 10 |
| Further information | 10 |

Themes

Interreg NPA asked young people in an online survey what topics are important to them. Based on the answers, the programme will support projects in the following themes:

Resilient communities

This theme focuses on helping communities in the NPA region become stronger and better prepared for challenges, including climate change, disasters, and other social or economic pressures. It supports projects that build local knowledge, capacity, and cooperation to ensure communities can adapt, recover, and thrive in changing conditions.

Natural and Cultural heritage

This theme focuses on protecting, conserving, and celebrating the Northern Periphery and Arctic natural and cultural heritage, including biodiversity, climate (change), and sustainability. It highlights the importance of heritage and healthy ecosystems as foundations for wellbeing and supports projects that promote environmental action, conservation, and sustainable living.

Mental health & wellbeing

This theme focuses on promoting mental health and overall wellbeing, supporting preventative measures and activities that help young people in the NPA regions lead healthier, more balanced lives.

Youth skills and entrepreneurship

This theme focuses on developing skills and preparing young people for jobs or entrepreneurship, addressing youth unemployment and helping NEETs (those not in employment, education, or training) to gain the talents needed to thrive and contribute to their regions.

Community development

This theme supports projects where young people actively shape their communities, take part in local and regional planning, and influence policy-making, helping create more positive, inclusive, and engaging regions. Projects can also focus on bringing innovation and digitization into public services.

Peer learning & mentorship

This theme supports projects where young people share skills and experiences with peers from their own and other regions, with guidance and ongoing mentorship to help them grow, learn, and support each other. Projects can design their peer-learning and mentorship activities around the issues and themes that young people consider meaningful and relevant.



Project duration

Applicants in the Interreg NPA Youth Call can select one of the following project durations:

- 6 months
- 12 months
- 18 months

Project durations do not include the final reporting period. The final report must be submitted within three months after the project activities end.

All projects are expected to begin in February/March 2027.

Project budget

The project budget depends on the project duration.

- 50.000 EUR for 6-month projects
- 100.000 EUR for 12-month projects
- 200.000 EUR for 18-month projects

These are the maximum project budgets, including both Interreg NPA funding and the partners' own contributions. For most partners, the Interreg NPA grant covers 65% of the total budget, with partners contributing 35%. For Norwegian partners, the Interreg NPA grant is 50%, and partners' own contribution is also 50% of the total budget.

Start-up payment

Projects will have the possibility to receive a start-up lump-sum of up to 35.000 EUR or 50% of the total project budget, whichever is smallest. Of this lump sum, the Interreg NPA grant covers 65% (or 50% in case of Norwegian partners). This payment is intended to help partner organisations cover initial project costs until the first period payment.

Following payments

After the start-up payment, projects must submit a project report every six months, confirming the agreed deliverables or outputs for that period. Once the report is approved, a lump-sum payment is released. The amount of each lump sum payment is agreed with the Programme at the beginning of the project, based on the project budget submitted.

Northern Periphery and Arctic**Note for partners from the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and Norway**

The Interreg NPA distributes grants that combine resources from EU funds and non-EU funds. A considerable part of the non-EU funds has already been consumed; therefore, the EU funds will be used to finance also non-EU partners.

Please note, participation of **Norwegian** partners depends on the availability of national funds only. For this reason, applicants are recommended to contact the [Norwegian Contact person](#) for more information.

All applicants are recommended to check for any national rules or recommendations on budgets and co-financing, either via national websites or their [Regional Contact Point](#).

Project partners

The Youth Call is open to all types of organisations - public or private, experienced, or new to Interreg NPA projects. Any organisation working with or for young people (up to 35 years old) can participate, as long as they allow youth to have a meaningful role in delivering the project. Read more about the [Partnership](#) and types of partners in the Programme Manual.

For any project, the Lead Partner must be a public organisation based in the Interreg NPA Programme Area, or with a national remit covering the region (e.g. National Agency, Environmental organisations, etc.).

The following minimum requirements for partnerships apply:

- **6-month projects** - involve partners from at least 2 programme partner countries, at least one of which from an EU Member State. Partnerships are recommended to include at least 2 of the 3 geographical zones of the programme area: 1) Finland-Sweden-Norway; 2) Ireland; 3) Faroe Islands-Greenland-Iceland.
- **12- and 18-month projects** - involve partners from at least 3 programme partner countries, at least one of which is from an EU Member State. The partnership is clearly of a transnational character. Partnerships are recommended to include at least 2 of the 3 geographical zones of the programme area: 1) Finland-Sweden-Norway; 2) Ireland; 3) Faroe Islands-Greenland-Iceland.

Project activities and outcomes

Youth projects should connect like-minded organisations across the NPA regions, explore cooperation opportunities, and exchange knowledge, skills, and

Northern Periphery and Arctic

experiences. The goal is to both increase the cooperation capacity of public organisations and stakeholders, and to co-create solutions that respond to real needs in remote communities.

6-month projects – See it!

Projects with 6 months duration are ideal for organisations with little or no experience in transnational cooperation. These projects are best suited for building connections with like-minded organisations in other regions. Activities could include identifying relevant organisations, reaching out to them, establishing contacts, mapping their expertise, and holding on average 1 demonstration workshop. The main outcome would be a stakeholder map showing the organisations reached, a preliminary draft of a project idea or a suggestion for future networks & collaborations.

See it!

6-months, up to 50.000 EUR



Build connections with like-minded organisations, exchange ideas, and lay the groundwork for future collaboration.



Stakeholder map, draft project idea, suggestion for future networks & collaborations

12-month projects – Shape it!

Projects running for 12 months are suited to organisations with some experience in transnational cooperation and existing regional connections. Following the "see it" phase, where partners identify like-minded organisations, build connections, exchange ideas, comes the "shape it" phase, where they test whether these ideas can work in their own communities. Activities may include 2-3 exchanges or workshops where partners share and apply knowledge locally. The main outcome is a feasibility study showing how the ideas were adapted, what worked, and what didn't. The project should also outline the next steps for implementing or scaling up

See it!**Shape it!**

12-months, up to 100.000 EUR



Collaborate with partners across regions to test successful ideas from elsewhere, adapt them to local needs, and share knowledge through practical exchanges and workshops.



Feasibility study outlining next steps for implementation or scaling up

the solutions at local, regional, or national levels.

18-month projects – Make it work!

Projects running for 18 months are designed for organisations with experience in transnational cooperation and well-established networks. Covering all three phases, they connect with relevant organisations, learn from them, adapt the ideas to local conditions, and put the solutions into practice at local, regional, or national levels. Projects of this length should also share their results widely, and indicate who they want to reach, how they will do it, and whether the results could be applied in other parts of the NPA area. Activities should include broader or more advanced testing (pilots).

See it!

Shape it!

Make it work!



18-months, up to 200.000 EUR



Learn from others, adapt ideas to local conditions, put solutions into practice, and share results widely.



Policy recommendations

Youth criteria

Since this Call aims at giving youth a stronger voice and real opportunities to shape their future in remote and sparsely populated areas, projects must clearly show how young people will benefit from the project solutions and how they will be actively involved in the project. To ensure that Youth projects deliver **solutions created by youth - for youth** - Interreg NPA has introduced specific youth criteria that all applications must meet. *Note: by young people, the Interreg NPA Programmes understands people age 35 and below.*

All projects must be:

- **Youth-led:** Youth are actively involved in shaping the project - from developing the idea, to implementing activities, to participating in decision-making. Applicants must explain in their application how young people contributed to the project design, how they will take part in activities, and how they will influence project governance.
- **Youth-focused:** The project addresses a challenge or need identified by young people, clearly showing how the solutions developed will benefit them.

- **Youth-inclusive:** At least one partner (including associated partners) must be a youth organisation. A youth organisation is one that actively works on issues relevant to young people in the Northern Periphery and Arctic regions. Examples include *local grassroots youth or community-based organisations, student associations, volunteer or youth-led groups, indigenous youth organisations, cultural or sports organisations involving youth, NGOs focused on youth engagement, youth councils or parliaments, or relevant municipal, regional, or national departments*.

Mandatory attachments

- Lead Partner statement – signed by the legal representative of the partner organisation
- Partner statement - signed by the legal representative of the partner organisation

Mandatory attachments for enterprises submitted with JEMS application:

- The latest certified annual report for the enterprise in the application and
- an extract from an official company register, identifying the enterprise in the application, preferably in English. ([Download guidance](#))

All templates are available in the Programme Manual in the section [Mandatory Attachments](#). These statements must be submitted in JEMS in section Attachments.

Application process

All applications, including mandatory attachments, must be submitted electronically in the Interreg NPA JEMS system by the Call deadline. Follow [Interreg NPA JEMS Manual](#) to learn how to create and submit an application.

The Youth Call will launch online on **21st January with Part 1 concluding on 10th June**. The Youth Call will open in JEMS on **10th June 2026 and close on 2nd October 2026 11:59 CET (noon)**.

Support and events planned

To support applicants throughout the process, the Joint Secretariat (JS) has divided the application procedure into two parts and created a series of support tools, including a dedicated set of practical sessions called the "Youth Track." This step-by-

Northern Periphery and Arctic

step approach guides organisations working with young people to develop their ideas and complete their applications with confidence.

Applicants are also encouraged to book a consultation with an Interreg NPA Desk Officer at any time from January to September 2026 to discuss project ideas and any questions related to Youth Call.

Part 1

In Part 1, the support focuses on ensuring that the applications drafted fit the Interreg NPA scope of work and meet the requirements, including the youth criteria presented earlier in this document. Applicants will be guided on which problems or challenges can be solved under the Interreg NPA programme, to better understand why transnational cooperation is needed to address these challenges, and who are the partners needed to tackle them.

21st January (online) – “Join us to know if this Call is for you!”

An online announcement webinar introducing the Youth Call, including its themes, duration, budget, and expected outcomes. By the end of the webinar, participants should have a clear idea of whether this Youth Call is suitable for them.

24th March (online) - “Let your idea meet Interreg NPA funding!”

An online webinar designed to help applicants shape and refine their project ideas.

20th May - Deadline to share Part 1 draft for feedback (optional)

Applicants, who are interested in receiving a feedback from the Joint Secretariat, Regional Contact Points, Youth observers (Arctic Youth Network and Nordic Youth Council), are encouraged to share their Part 1 templates by 20th May 2026 via email to secretariat@interreg-npa.eu, subject: Youth Call Part 1.

10th June – Feedback provided (optional)

The Joint Secretariat will provide feedback by 10 June 2026 to applicants who submitted their Part 1 application by the deadline. Applicants who missed the deadline can still contact the Joint Secretariat or their country's Regional Contact Point with questions.

Part 2

In Part 2, applicants develop the remaining sections of their application, including the project budget, work plan, and outreach activities. This is also the stage to incorporate any feedback received during Part 1. While an offline Word template will be available, applicants are encouraged to use the JEMS portal, which opens on 10th June 2026, as it is better suited for preparing the budget and work plan.

Applicants are further encouraged to reach out to Joint Secretariat with their questions, or to book an individual consultation with desk officers.

Northern Periphery and Arctic

15th June (online) – “Dive into budget, workplan & outreach”

This webinar will explain how to plan project and outreach activities and connect them to the budget, including guidance on eligible costs and expenses. The aim is to help participants pre-fill their application forms for a smoother start after the summer holiday.

9th September (online) – “Ask us about JEMS”

A Q&A webinar for applicants who are further along in their application and have questions about using JEMS.

Activities not supported by Interreg NPA Programme

The Youth Call is designed to help young people and organisations work together across the Northern Periphery and Arctic regions on shared challenges. It is not meant to replace other education or mobility programmes. Because of this, there are certain types of activities the Interreg NPA cannot fund.

The Youth Call does not support:

- Scholarships or individual grants for studying, internships, or training.
- School exchanges or twinning activities between classes, schools, or individual pupils.
- Formal education programmes, such as courses that lead to a qualification, curriculum development, or regular classroom teaching.
- Activities that duplicate existing EU programmes (e.g., Erasmus+), especially those focused on student mobility or formal education.

Instead, Youth Call supports transnational cooperation projects where (youth) organisations learn from each other and co-create solutions that respond to real needs in their communities.

Further information

Organisations interested in applying, are recommended to reach out to the Interreg NPA Joint Secretariat [Desk officers](#) and schedule an online consultation or reach out to the [Regional Contact points](#) to discuss their project idea in their native language.

