ARCI[2014=2020]**GUIDE TO ACHIEVEMENTS**





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Foreword

Seven years of cooperation between people, communities, and organisations across thousands of kilometres have made a difference in the Northern Periphery and Arctic regions.

The NPA Programme and its projects have developed products, services, tools, and transferable ideas between the Programme partner countries. These ideas are locally tailored to tackle the specific development challenges in the NPA area. Project partners found it rewarding to collaborate with others thousands of kilometres away who shared similar challenges.

Flip a page and discover how NPA projects improved the lives of people in remote areas in the Arctic and near-Arctic.





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IMPACTS

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What is **Interreg**?

Interreg is an EU initiative supporting regional development through cooperation across borders. It aims to unite communities, regions, and countries in the EU and neighbouring areas to address shared challenges and explore new opportunities through transnational cooperation.

Launched in 1990, Interreg is part of the EU Cohesion Policy, which seeks to reduce imbalances between countries and regions. The Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (NPA) is one of over 100 such cooperation programmes.

What is the Interreg **NPA Programme?**

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme builds on the strengths of communities in remote and sparsely populated areas in the northernmost part of Europe and the Arctic. Sparse population and extreme peripherality from the EU's economic centres are defining characteristics that strongly support cooperation across the territory.

Interreg NPA supports effective cooperation projects to maximise place-based development. Project participants learn from each other's best practices, thereby increasing their capacity to find innovative solutions to improve the quality of life in the area.

The focus of Interreg NPA extends beyond projects, connecting like-minded people, organisations, and regions to cooperate on common and shared issues in ways that recognise their particular needs. This is how cooperation builds lasting connections based on trust and solidarity.

Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020



Investing in your future European Regional Development Fund

EUROPEAN UNION



"From the Faroe Islands, we reach out for international cooperation. Knowledge sharing and collaboration are vital for us and help us implement our policies. This exchange is the primary reason we want to be part of the NPA Programme as a contributor and a beneficiary. NPA is in the Arctic, and we consider ourselves to also be in the Arctic."

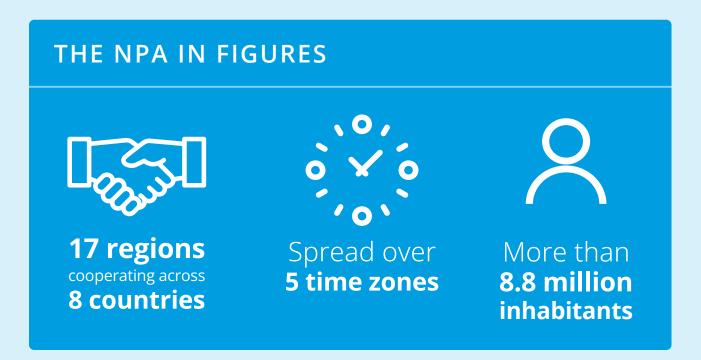
- Margretha Jacobsen, Monitoring Committee member, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in the Faroe Islands

Programme area

The NPA 2014-2020 comprised the northernmost part of Europe, including the Euro-Arctic zone and parts of the North Atlantic and Barents territories, including the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, and Sweden.

The programme area accounts for nearly 70% of EU 28's surface area.









Financing

From 2014 to 2020, the Programme allocated approximately 56 million EUR to 58 main projects and 59 preparatory projects. It was financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contributions from Member States at the time (Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland) and equivalent contributions from non-EU partners (Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Faroe Islands).

Territorial features

The NPA area, characterised by peripherality and a low population density of fewer than seven inhabitants per km² (vs. the EU-28 average of 117), faces unique challenges and opportunities. The regions in this area share more similarities than with their countries' metropolitan areas, making transnational cooperation essential for addressing these distinctive development issues.

THE NPA IN FIGURES



394 partners cooperating in main projects



7 main project calls





Photo: Håvard B. Rødsand

"Many times, collaboration with partners from the NPA is much more productive and natural than with partners from our own countries. For us, the NPA is the only way to work on challenges that are a reality for us."

- Jose Manuel San Emeterio, ERNACT, Ireland

NPA challenges	NPA opportunities		
Peripherality	Abundance of natural resources (minerals, oil, gas, biomass, and renewable energy)		
Low population density	High-quality biophysical environment		
Long distances between settlements	Strong regional centres		
Low accessibility	Sectoral expertise and specialist knowledge		
Unevenly distributed populations	Versatile business sector (SMEs, few but world leading large enterprises)		
Shrinking rural communities	Demographic drivers as high in- migration		
Demographic challenges	Targeted development of local and regional economies		
Governance challenges	Labour market assets as demand for highly skilled workforce		
Labour market challenges	The Green Economy and Blue Growth & capitalising on the opportunities from climate change		
Low economic diversity			
Fragile local economies			
Reduced market access due to the lack of transport connectivity			
High impact of climate change			

Programme Priorities

The NPA Programme supported projects that delivered concrete, innovative, and highly relevant solutions and addressed the development challenges identified within the Programme area. Transnational cooperation is at the core of NPA projects, focusing on transferring models, knowledge, and technology from one region to another, complementing partners' competencies and resources, and combining different regional skill sets.

The programme introduced four Priorities, defined by the territorial characteristics of the Programme area, historical context, regional development needs and potentials, and EU policy goals. These Priorities shaped the focus of the supported projects.

- Priority 1 Innovation
- Priority 2 Entrepreneurship
- Priority 3 Renewables and Energy Efficiency
- Priority 4 Natural and Cultural Heritage



Photo: REGINA - Brønnoy

PRIORITY 1 INNOVATION Bringing innovation to the SMEs and public

service providers

Under **Priority 1 Innovation, 19 projects** significantly impacted SMEs and public service providers, strengthening SME-R&D links, raising awareness of business opportunities, exploring new markets, influencing policies, and creating durable, transferable know-how. NPA projects facilitate knowledge sharing from leading organisations to smaller ones in remote areas, providing small businesses and communities access to high-quality innovation and support otherwise out of reach.



Photo: Target - Brødrene Karlsen

sustainability.

For instance, Axon Power and Controls in Northern Ireland utilised the diagnostic tool to identify bottlenecks in logistics and improve business expansion. Similarly, Lough Erne Cakes in Enniskillen reduced energy consumption and costs by using hybrid vehicles and low-energy lighting with the help of a mentor and the newly developed tool.

New technologies and innovations for rural manufacturers



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The TARGET project aimed to enhance manufacturing companies' capacity to embrace new technologies and innovation in the NPA region. The partnership involved six universities and business development organisations from Northern Ireland, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Iceland and Sweden. Together, they developed a toolkit offering various instruments to assess and introduce innovation in SMEs, improving their business performance and



Discover more Innovating manufacturing

PRIORITY 2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP Developing business ideas and marketing concepts

Under Priority 2 Entrepreneurship, 17 main projects supported SMEs in developing business ideas, marketing concepts, and models. These projects facilitated knowledge transfer and developed transnational business support strategies, enabling start-ups and SMEs to expand markets, enhance sustainability, and acquire digital and communication skills.

The NPA projects also gave small businesses the skills and networks necessary to access global markets. Through cooperation, they efficiently reach more customers amidst increasing global digital competition.



Photo: SCITOUR - Ari Laakso

and Scotland.

Pioneering sustainable scientific tourism in the Arctic



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The SCITOUR project saw new opportunities arising from growing Arctic tourism, as well as the risks connected to it. To sustainably benefit small tourism companies in remote areas, the partnership created a new brand rooted in local, traditional, and scientific knowledge, integrated with sustainable and culturally sensitive approaches. SCITOUR introduced the concept of "scientific tourism", garnering interest from small tourist businesses in NPA regions. The project markets these businesses jointly by leveraging digital innovation via the Wonderseekers platform. This collaboration involves museums and universities in Finland, Greenland, Iceland,



Watch the video The Scientific Tourism Initiative

Discover more Learning by watching, doing, & experiencing

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Discover more **Exploring scientific** tourism

PRIORITY 3 ENERGY Unlocking the renewable energies potential

Regions in the NPA Programme area face disparities in renewable energy use due to differences in resource endowment and public awareness. To address this, **ten main projects under Priority 3 Energy** were funded. They aimed to raise awareness and develop transnational models for accessing renewable energy solutions and energy-efficient concepts for housing and public infrastructure.

NPA projects helped communities in NPA regions efficiently utilise abundant renewable energy sources, empowering them to become self-sufficient with green energy. These projects educated communities on options, technologies, and costs, enabling active participation in decision-making.



The LECo project brought together expertise from three universities and three local communities in Finland, Ireland, Sweden, and Norway to address the sustainable energy needs of remote communities. The project successfully engaged local communities through networking, empowerment, and capacity building. "Now we also know more about the renewable potentials beyond hydropower and how different options for development interfere with each other", says a speaker for Vuollerim Folkets Hus.

Photo: LECo

Uncovering the green energy potential in Vuollerim





Watch the video LECo – Pilot projects in Sweden



 \mathbf{Z} Discover more Vuollerim – an energy hub

PRIORITY 4 HERITAGE

Addressing the environmental, economic, and social impacts of climate change and rapid socio-economic developments

These impacts often exceed the capacity of individual communities. Therefore, cooperation is vital for disseminating sustainable environmental practices, protecting natural and cultural heritage, and ensuring their long-term use for community growth. Priority 4 funded 12 main projects focused on facilitating the transfer of good practices, developing decision-making tools, and pooling expertise through strategic partnerships. The objective was to prepare local communities to handle land use conflicts, adopt inclusive decision-making processes, and increase the capability to manage changes affecting cultural and natural heritage.



Including local knowledge in land-use planning brings more value to the community

Photo: BusK

BusK, Building Shared Knowledge **Capital to Support Natural Resource** Governance in the Northern Periphery, is a project that brought people from Finland, Sweden, Greenland, Faroe Islands, Ireland, Norway, and Iceland together to discuss land use planning and natural resource governance in a way that considered both scientific and local knowledge.



Watch the video **Busk project winner of** the Arctic Award 2019

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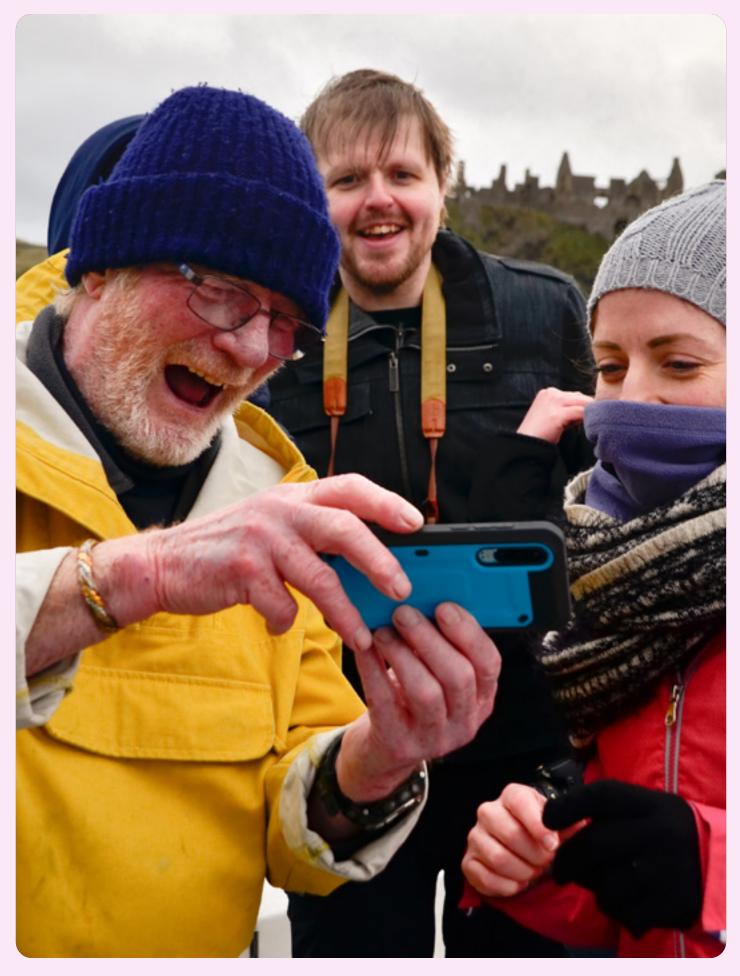


Discover more **Ecoduct for reindeers**

Explore the impacts of **Interreg NPA** 2014-2020 projects

The products and services developed by NPA projects positively impact communities in the Programme area and bring measurable changes. Impact can be defined as a marked positive effect on targeted individuals or organisations benefitting from the project's activities or outputs. These effects can be tangible, such as better service availability in remote areas, saved time, reduced costs and CO2 emissions, or newly opened businesses. They can also be intangible, like influencing policy making, changing attitudes and behaviours, or raising awareness.

In the following pages, you will discover the areas where the NPA projects had the most impact.



"Trust, commitment, and achievement. These are three words that describe the NPA **Programme.** The NPA has achieved quite a lot in its programming area and the wider context. Building on the trust and commitment of the people implementing the programme is the key to achieving the results and having a successful programme."



- Pekka Jounila, DG REGIO, European Commission

Photo: DRIFTING APART

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

76% of the main projects reported that they contributed to the business growth of local and regional SMEs.

The NPA Programme has a thriving, diverse business sector dominated by SMEs and micro-SMEs. Key areas include circular, green, and blue economies, the emerging bio-economy, and creative industries like design, games, and tourism. NPA projects engaged in these sectors to enhance the local economy's diversity, resilience, and adaptability.

STORIES

SYMBIOMA: Transforming Food Industry Waste into Valuable Resources

Based on the principle that one man's trash is another man's treasure, SYMBIOMA explored how waste products in the food industry can be further used as raw materials. Bottenvikens brewery produces 1 ton of wet spent grain per week. Instead of throwing it away, they use the grain to grow mealworms. The necessary heat is obtained from a nearby data centre. Once the worms are grown, they are used to feed chickens at the local farm instead of imported feed, and the drier spent grain is used as an organic fertiliser in greenhouses or sold to conventional shops. "We have had the opportunity to explore ventures for which we would not have the resources without the project. For instance, we made trials to grow mealworms in our spent brewer grains. The opportunity here was to explore how we locally could produce proteins for the chicken industry, thus making use of our brewery waste and essentially becoming a supplier for other food industries."

– Mattias Bergström, Bottenvikens Bryggeri AB, Luleå 于







Watch the video SYMBIOMA kick-starting a circular transformation in rural areas

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New fishing areas

Discover more



Discover more
Benefits of networking



IMPROVED ACCESS TO SERVICES

71% of the main projects reported that they enhanced access to services in peripheral and sparsely populated regions.

Residents of these areas often face long travel distances for hospitals or public services, compounded by low accessibility, outmigration, and low population density. Improved service delivery benefits various societal groups. Many projects utilised information and communication technologies to overcome these challenges, transforming peripherality into a development strength.



STORIES SENDOC: Enhancing Remote Healthcare Through Wearable Sensor Technologies

Rapidly developing technology has brought new possibilities for healthcare delivery. Telehealth solutions, wearable technology, and sensors can improve access to care for people living in remote areas and support elderly people's independent living. The SENDoc project has, throughout 13 demonstrator projects, tested whether wearable sensor technologies can be used for prevention, diagnosis, and rehabilitation purposes. The findings from these studies and direct feedback from participants have been used to develop two models for home-based rehabilitation service delivery. One shows how the traditional rehabilitation programme could be delivered using wearable sensors. The second model shows how the need for rehabilitation intervention can be delayed/mitigated by using wearable sensors in daily life.

"The transnational trial collected real end-user opinions of wearable technology and analysed the barriers that exist in making telehealth/remote rehabilitation a reality. The project has shown that, as well as the device's accuracy being key, device comfort is especially important for elders. The elders were very pleased to participate and enjoyed learning something new that could help them. Trials like this help introduce technology and inspire confidence."

Photo: SENDoc

– Debbie Caulfield, Manager of Eglinton Community Hall 🕌

PAGE| 14



Watch the video (SENDoc highlights in brief: 2017-2020



Discover more Heat transfer to prevent heat loss



RAISING AWARENESS

90% of the main projects reported that they raised awareness about certain topics among a wider public.

Cooperation projects provide an excellent platform for bringing a topic to the attention of a wider public. Through its communication and dissemination activities, the projects can bring a socially relevant theme to the public's and politicians' attention, such as plastic pollution, increased marine traffic, sustainable tourism, or youth entrepreneurship.



Photo: ARCTISEN - Louise Romain, Monika Luthje

STORIES ARCTISEN: Promoting Culturally Sensitive Tourism in the Arctic Region

The Arctic region is rich in natural and cultural resources. As the interest in travelling and exploring the Arctic has increased in recent years, tourism companies and SMEs are competing to offer the most authentic experience to visitors or sell the most traditional indigenous products. The ARCTISEN project approached current tourism development in the Arctic through the lens of cultural sensitivity. Culturally sensitive tourism, i.e., tourism that respects local cultures and people, has not yet been established as a concept in all NPA countries. Based on the interviews with local people, tourism-oriented SMEs, benchmarking trips, and learnings from other regions, the project developed guidelines, online courses, videos, and a quiz to increase the awareness of the concept of culturally sensitive tourism among tourists and service providers.

"My understanding of culturally sensitive tourism has not changed because of the project; I had a clear idea before. The project has, however, shown me what others think of it. I have noticed that it is not clear to everybody what it is. Some display culture in ways I find inappropriate."

••••••••

– Katariina Guttorm, Sámi Duodji Association, Inari



Watch the video ARCTISEN trip to Greenland, Nuuk



Discover more Filling the gaps in Arctic oil spill preparedness



Discover more

Growing entrepreneurship spirit 

CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

83% of the main projects reported that they challenged the way people think about something and influenced how people behave and what decisions they make.

Transnational cooperation is a great opportunity to share new concepts and practices, break stereotypes, and inspire others to challenge their ways of life.



STORIES

W-POWER: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs in Rural Areas

Women are less likely to become entrepreneurs than men. And if they do, they are more likely to work part-time and face cultural assumptions and stereotypes. The W-POWER project focused on changing these often stereotypical perceptions towards women entrepreneurs in rural areas. Thanks to its gender-sensitive coaching concept, some business advisors are now better equipped to recognise the special needs of underrepresented groups (women, Indigenous people, immigrants) and can provide more appropriate and motivating coaching in the future. Through its activities and media appearances, the project strived to change how women entrepreneurs are seen and highlighted their challenges, possibilities, needs, and achievements.

"W-Power has had a very positive impact on my business. I have had financial and business support and, through the Shetland Realise group, emotional support, and friendship. W-Power has provided an unparalleled opportunity to engage with women in business in different countries, learn from them and form invaluable networks. Many self-employed women work alone, and therefore, it is even more important for them to have access to a wider network of like-minded people."

Photo: W-Power

– Cheryl Jamieson, Glansin Glass, Unst



scover more nclusive recruitment strategies

Discover more

Drone pilot training for s on Rathlin Island

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INFLUENCING POLICIES

88% of the main projects reported that they influenced policymaking by building political support and momentum.

International cooperation enhances this influence by strengthening policy recommendations and project visibility. While Interreg NPA projects primarily impact local and regional policymaking, some address highly relevant and cross-level topics, reaching national policymaking levels.



STORIES

C.L.I.M.A.T.E: Award-winning climate adaptation plan

Extreme weather conditions, such as heatwaves, heavy rainfalls, and floods, are more frequent due to climate change. As municipalities have recognised that early preventive actions are less costly than disaster response efforts, adaptation planning has become an important part of their work. The C.L.I.M.A.T.E. project developed an International Best Practice Climate Adaptation Model (IBPM) to guide municipalities and councils in preparing their climate adaptation plans and strategies. Derry City & Strabane District Council prepared its Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2020-2025 based on this model. Following that, local and central government agencies committed to embedding climate action in the "Inclusive Strategic Growth Plan for Derry and Strabane" (City Deal) infrastructure projects.

"C.L.I.M.A.T.E. transformed the course of climate action in Northern Ireland (NI), including the knowledge and experience here at Climate Northern Ireland. Every other council in NI has signed up to develop their own plans through the Local Government Climate Action Network as a direct follow-on from C.L.I.M.A.T.E. This marks the beginning of strategies which will increase the resilience and cohesion among communities and institutions across NI and help us develop a clearer picture of the barriers both in NI and the wider NPA region." •••••••

– Stephen Jones, Climate Northern Ireland

Photo: C.L.I.M.A.T.E.



Watch the video **Climate change** – Derry Strabane Council $\mathbf{\Sigma}$



Discover more

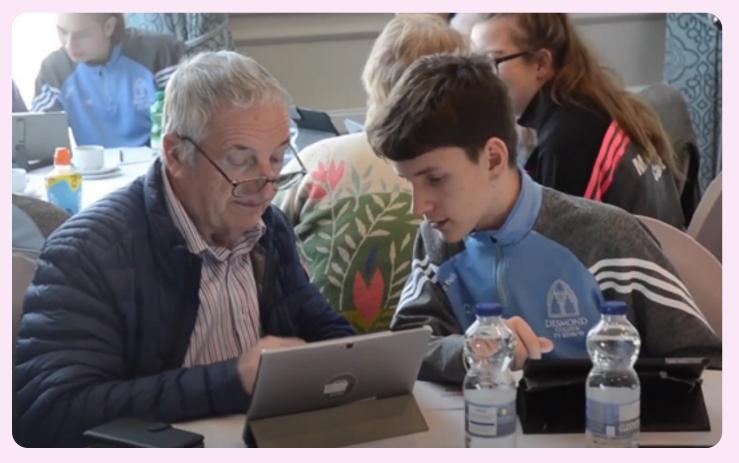
Upskilling locals



IMPROVING SOCIAL COHESION

86% of the main projects reported that they mitigated the challenges related to outmigration and an uneven age structure of the population in rural areas.

Social cohesion is vital for community well-being, especially in remote NPA areas where outmigration and ageing populations pose threats. Various NPA projects aimed to enhance social cohesion by involving minority groups, like youth and Indigenous people, in local development and land-use planning.



STORIES

Societal exclusion and loneliness are increasingly frequent in remote and sparsely populated regions and have significant negative impacts on physical and mental health. To contrast these phenomena, the PLACE-EE project provided opportunities for younger and older generations to meet, share, learn, break down barriers and raise awareness of unique experiences and skills across generations. Through the series of intergenerational workshops, the project removed some of the harmful stereotypes and helped to build connections, trust, and empathy among the participants. In Limerick County (Ireland), young participants taught elderly how to use smartphones or tablets for online activities, boosting their independence, inclusion, and ability to connect with families and friends.

"PLACE-EE was an ambitious, transnational partnership that provided the opportunity for public health agencies, local authorities, academics, and ICT experts to work together to improve the quality of life for older people. An innovative and exciting programme, it fostered relationships and solutions and exemplifies how to build capacity, resilience, connectivity, and engagement for and with rural communities."

Institute of Public Health, Newcastle West

Photo: PLACE-EE

PLACE-EE: Bridging Generational Divides

Natch the video **PLACE-EE: A Limerick** Perspective

Discover more

Sustainable mining

Locally responsible tourism +-

Discover more

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Fostering cooperation in the Arctic

In response to the EU's call for more coordinated cooperation across the Arctic expressed in the EU's Joint Arctic Communication 2016, "An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic", five Interreg Programmes operating in this region - Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, Interreg Nord, Kolarctic CBC, and Karelia CBC and the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme - joined efforts and started working together more closely, coordinated by the Interreg NPA.

Clustering activities took place between projects funded by these five different Arctic cooperation programmes dealing with the same theme or projects addressing the same territorial challenges. The objective of the cluster projects was to develop a cross-programme collaboration, support the implementation of macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, and ensure better implementation of the cooperating projects, more efficient use of the funding, better results, and their wider dissemination. Four Arctic Clusters projects were supported in the 2014-2020 Programming period.





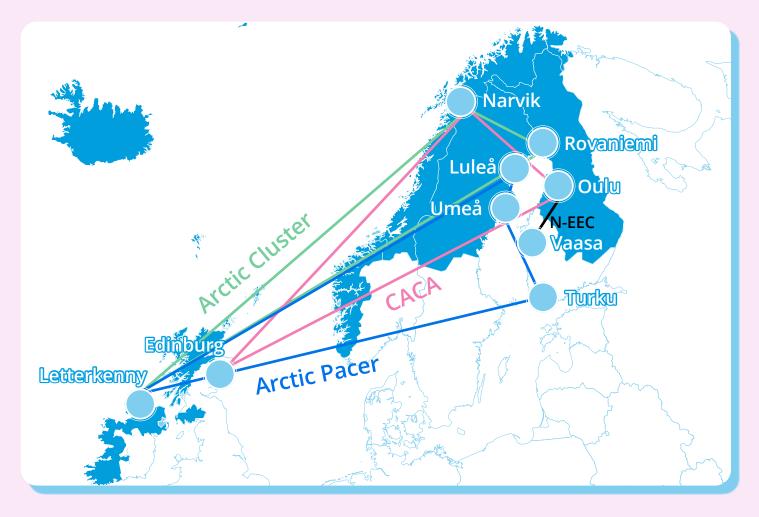




Enabled partners across Europe, Canada, and the Russian Federation to exchange their good energy practices and increased community awareness of energy solutions.

Explored innovative solutions for delivering quality and sustainable public services in remote and sparsely populated areas.

This map shows connections established by **Arctic Clusters projects.**



Gathered best practices concerning energy use in buildings, retrofitting of public buildings, carbon footprint and life-cycle assessment of buildings.

Developed an Eco-City Game for 11-18-year-old students who want to learn how environmental science and technology can be used in building cities.

In the words of ARCTIC PACER project manager Jose Manuel San Emeterio from ERNACT

"We believe that ARCTIC PACER must be considered a very good value-for-money project. The cooperation of the 4 Lead Partners representing 5 projects made it possible to have a manageable project that indirectly involved 30 partners from 20 regions and 7 countries. This was translated into effective, focused sessions that considered the inputs of a significant number of organisations across the Arctic."

Discover more NPA impacts

The examples featured in this publication are only a few stories from the NPA projects. You can browse more in the Impact database and on the Online map of results.

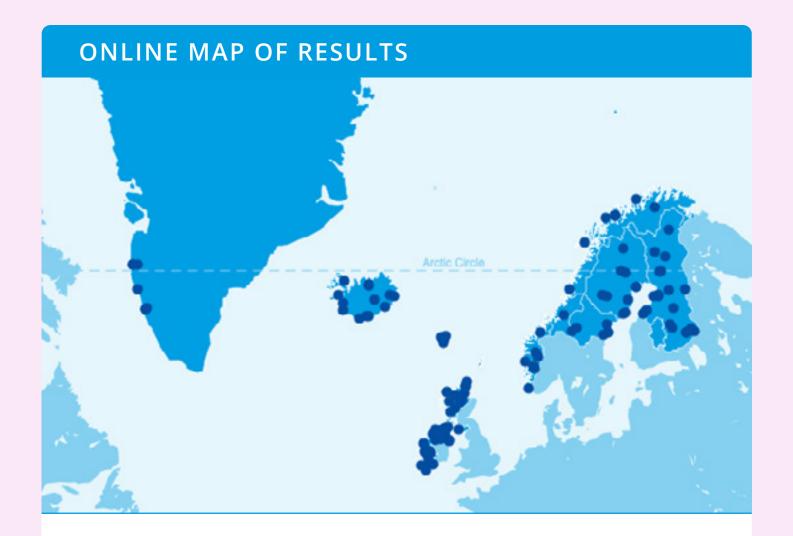
THE IMPACT DATABASE

Project database

Fulltext search		All Acronyms	٥	All Types	\$
All Themes	¢	All Objectives	¢	All Partner Countries	¢
All Target Groups	\$	Tangible Impacts	\$	Intangible Impacts	\$
Select one or more price	orities	Order by			
1 Innovation		 Acronym 			
2 Entrepreneurship		O Start			
3 Energy		O Name			
		O Budget		SEARCH SE	LECTED

The Impact database allows you to filter projects according to impacts, location, priority, or beneficiaries and provides links to products and services.

To the impact database



On the online map, you can discover more than 130 stories of people who benefitted from NPA projects.

To the online map of results

One big NPA community

NPA projects developed products and services, also called outputs, which positively impacted local and regional communities, businesses, employees, and visitors in the NPA area.

Who benefits from **NPA projects?**

Universities and research institutions comprise most NPA project partners and are essential for developing project outputs. The program also engages local and regional public authorities, supporting a bottom-up approach to community-inclusive solutions. Business support organisations, acting as intermediaries between universities and SMEs, are valuable partners as they can reach numerous SMEs and participate directly in transnational mentoring services.

"One of the strengths of the NPA is the network of people and organisations who collaborate. We are like a big NPA family. In this vast region, there are not many organisations that are able to do this type of work. It is very precious that you can find your mates from different countries and do things together."

- Helena Puhakka-Tarvainen, Karelia University of Applied Sciences

Where do NPA partners come from?



Other countries: 15

158 157 64

Type of partners in main projects	Number
Higher education and research	151
Local public authority	82
Regional public authority	40
Interest groups including NGOs	31
Business support organisation	19
SME	17
National public authority	17
Sectoral agency	13
International organisation, EEIG under national law	6
Infrastructure and (public) service provider	5
Education/training centre and school	3
Other	10

Ensuring a project's correct mix of transnational partners is crucial for achieving successful results. From 2014 to 2020, 394 main project partners benefitted from the NPA funding.

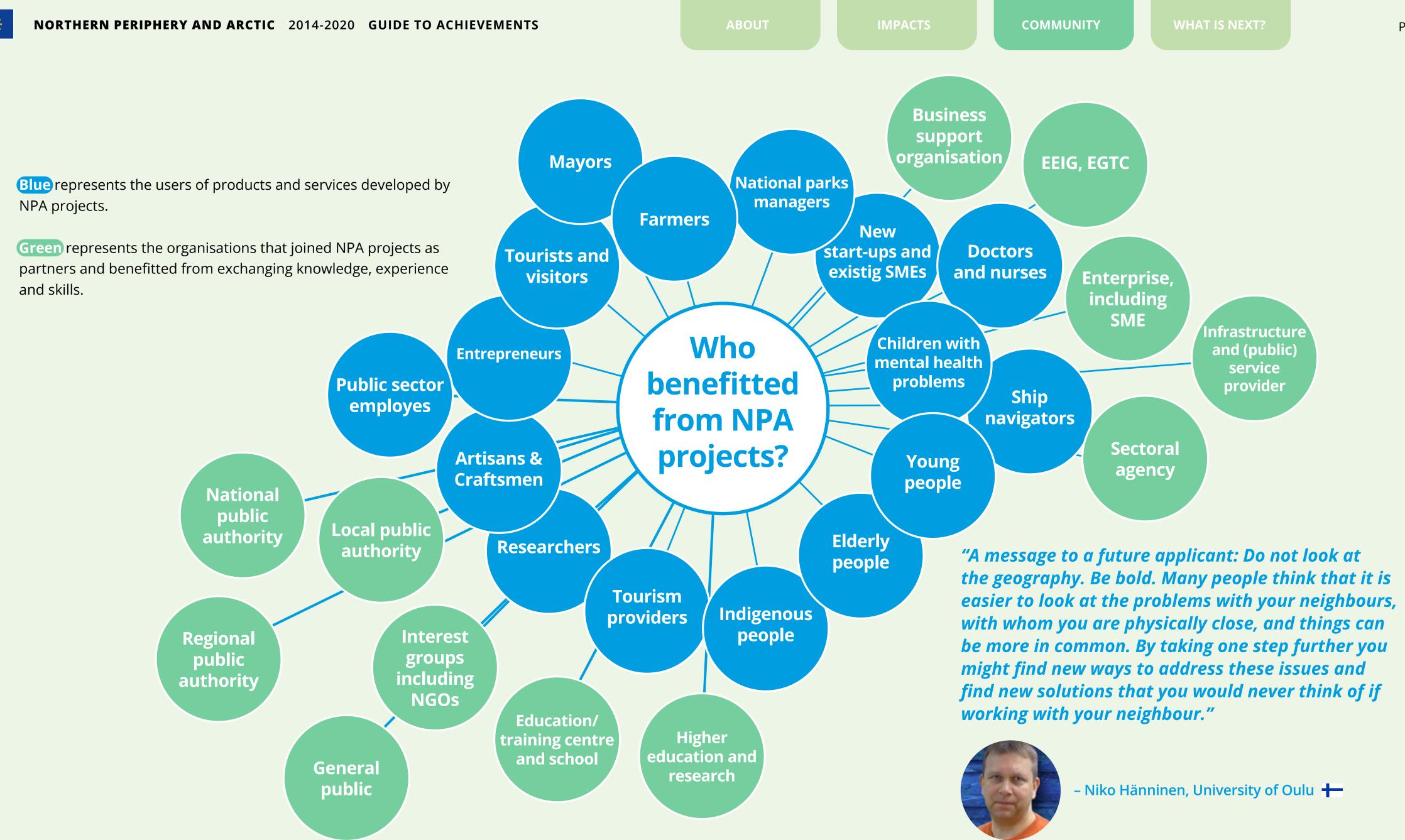


Photo: APP4SEA



Photo: C.L.I.M.A.T.E.

Continuing to bring change

All NPA projects have reported contributing to 16 tangible and intangible impacts. The most frequently reported effect has been the projects' ability to raise awareness and influence attitudes and behaviours. While these impacts may not always be quantifiable, they demonstrate how cooperation unites people behind shared values, empowering them to drive change toward a common vision.

The Interreg NPA Programme continues to make a difference and impact the lives of people in remote areas. Follow the 2021-2027 programming developments to discover what else NPA projects have achieved.

Discover more cooperation opportunities

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