

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Sixth Call for 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. The Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2021-2027 was approved by the European Commission on 8th September 2022, thereby the priorities and objectives of the Interreg NPA 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.

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.

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.

Besides main projects in Priorities 1 and 2, the Interreg NPA Monitoring Committee is looking to fund main as well as small-scale capacity building projects in Priority 3. The purpose of small-scale projects is to strengthen the organisational capacity among NPA communities to make better use of cooperation opportunities and thereby develop more resilient communities. This includes working with natural and cultural heritage to protect, promote and develop these important features for the programme area and developing wider territorial synergies and links to the benefits of the programme area.

In addition, this type of project is aimed at building up cooperation capacity and experience for representatives of specific underrepresented groups (e.g. young people, and indigenous peoples) in the programme area. The ambition is that partners become better suited for engagement in main projects as partners in the future.

Northern Periphery and Arctic

Priority 3 was created to help to build the capacity of stakeholders in the NPA area, also knowing the NPA Programme has the potential to bring strong regional and territorial development perspectives to the EU Arctic Policy, as well as other territorial strategies.

Actions in this priority will develop and transfer capacity building concepts to engage stakeholders in cooperation based on local knowledge, supporting them to implement strategies for Northern Periphery and Arctic regions.

In this call, the Monitoring Committee especially encourages applications from projects addressing the following topics:

1. **Climate change:** Adaptation to climate change measures, and prevention and management of climate risks (e.g. floods, landslides, storms, drought). This includes awareness raising, civil protection, and disaster management.
2. **Nature and biodiversity:** Nature and biodiversity protection, natural heritage and resources, green and blue infrastructure and
3. **Energy transition:** sustainable renewable energy generation and energy efficiency solutions suitable for cold climates and remote communities. Also, using place-based energy surpluses and development of smart energy management concepts in remote communities.

Concurrently, the Monitoring Committee continues to encourage Priority 3 projects to build capacity in cooperation around specific topics, outlined below.

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

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

PRIORITY 3: Strengthening the organisational capacity among NPA communities to make use of cooperation opportunities

- 3.1 – Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders to implement macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, as well as other territorial strategies

Note: In Priority 3, the Monitoring Committee invites **both main and small-scale projects** to build capacity in cooperation focusing on the following topics and target groups.

Increase preparedness and resilience of NPA communities.

Projects in this topic will share experience and build capacity towards one or more of the following subjects: Operations of search & rescue, building preparedness of local communities, and security of supplies. Municipalities and networks of municipalities were seen by the MC as target groups of particular relevance in these fields.

Preserve and experience the unique heritage of the NPA regions.

Projects in this topic will share experience and build capacity towards one or more of the following subjects: culture and cultural heritage, natural heritage, as well as traditional knowledge and minority languages, local food resources and how to increase their awareness and use, as well as tourism. Networks of Sami and Inuit communities were seen by the MC as target groups of particular relevance in these fields.

Increase the wellbeing of people living in the NPA regions.

Projects in this topic will share experience and build capacity towards one or more of the following subjects: improve health and healthcare/care services in the community; as well as mental health including addressing isolation and loneliness. Underrepresented groups such as young people, vulnerable people, and indigenous communities were seen by the MC as target groups of particular relevance in these fields.

Attract skills and talents needed in the NPA regions.

NPA regions have driven innovation, capacity, and leadership in Green technologies and solutions with significant investments in innovation in the industrial, transport and building sectors, as well as efforts towards behaviour change.

Projects in this topic will share experience and build capacity towards one or more of the following subjects: job and skills demands in the transformative processes of the green and just transition, meet the needs of transforming communities, attraction and retention of different skills and talents.

No specific target groups were specially highlighted by the MC, but a broad involvement of different stakeholders is expected.

Enable youth to shape the NPA regions.

Projects in this topic will share experience and build capacity towards one or more of the following subjects: increasing youth participation in regional development processes, establishing valuable youth networks/initiatives in view of impacting on regional and local development, connecting youth councils/ indigenous youth organisations across peripheral areas.

Youth organisations and organisations working with youth engagement were seen by the MC as target groups of particular relevance in these fields.

For all Priorities, the following is highlighted:

- All projects are expected to 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, gender equality, 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

A **Main project** is expected to have an average total budget of 1.250.000 EUR. Exceeding this amount should be well justified and proportional.

Capacity building small-scale projects applying under Priority 3 have a total budget of no more than 200.000 EUR. The support to the beneficiaries will be handled as a lump sum based on a draft budget established on a case-by-case basis and agreed ex ante by the Managing Authority.

Special note for partners from Non-Member State countries!

Interreg NPA Programme funding in Non-EU Member States is nearly fully allocated. To ensure that future Interreg NPA projects can have wide transnational partnerships, the Interreg NPA EU Member States have agreed to use ERDF funding for approved Non-Member State project partners from the **Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland**.

NOTE: When applying, Non-Member State project partners are expected to firstly select their own programme country funding source in the JEMS Application Form. It is important to highlight that the existing project selection process still applies, meaning that projects are in competition with each other for funding, and only good quality projects with reasonable budgets are likely to be approved. In other words, there are no guarantees to receive funding, and this decision does not change that.

Applicants from Non-Member States are still advised to check if there are any national restrictions to or recommendations for budget levels and programme match funding, for example by checking national information websites, or by contacting their [Regional Contact Point](#).

Please be aware that the participation of **Norwegian partner organisations** is subject to the availability of national funds only.

Project duration

Main project: 30 months for project activities, excluding final reporting.

Capacity building projects: 18 months for project activities, excluding final reporting.

Project structure

Main projects and capacity building small-scale projects in Priority 3 must involve partners from at least 3 programme partner countries, at least one of which is from an EU Member State. 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.

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.

For information about eligible partners, please see the Programme Manual, chapter 2.2.1.

Mandatory supporting documents to be submitted with JEMS application:

- PDF of signed Lead partner statement ([download template](#))
- PDF of signed Project partner statements ([download template](#))

Mandatory application 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](#))

Timeline

OPENING OF 6th CALL:	1st October 2025
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	2nd February 2026 12:00 (noon) CET
DECISION DATE:	3rd June 2026

Project development support events

1st October 2025, NPA 6th call launch for project applications at Interreg NPA 25th anniversary conference in Bodø, Norway

During October to February, individual online project clinics and in-person meetings with an NPA Desk Officer on request.

“How to complete a Jems application”

- Register [here](#) for November 11th, 2025 webinar via Zoom, 13:00 – 15:00 (CET)

Q & A session

- Register [here](#) for January 14th, 2026 Q & A session, 2026 13:00 – 15:00 (CET)

Read more about these and other programme events at this [link](#).

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 the [programme website](#).

Guidance and information about how to apply to Interreg NPA 2021-2027 funding can be found at this [link](#).