



**Northern Periphery and  
Arctic Programme**  
2014–2020



**EUROPEAN UNION**

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# **Annual Implementation Report**

**within the European Territorial Cooperation goal for the**

## **Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme**

### **2014-2020**

**Reporting year 2020**

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## 1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

CCI	CCI2014TC16RFTN004
Title	Interreg V-B Northern Periphery and Arctic programme
Version	2.0
Reporting year	2020
Date of approval of the report by the monitoring committee	2021-05-21
Date of approval of the report by the European Commission	2021-12-08

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME

*Key information on the implementation of the operational programme for the year concerned, with reference to the financial and indicator data. (Max length 7 000 characters)*

After approval of 8 projects of the 7th Call in December 2019, the start of 2020 focused on contracting these. All 7th Call Lead partners gathered at Lead partner seminars in Copenhagen in February and December, for training and introduction into reporting and claiming, and project communication.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the activities in 2020. During spring the programme administration took several immediate actions. Guidance was given about the eligibility of costs related to cancelled events. Projects close to finishing were offered an extension, to avoid jeopardising the successful wrapping up of activities and outputs. New projects were offered a later start date.

When COVID-19 restrictions continued after the summer, ongoing projects required adjustments to their work plans, and in some cases, budgets. The JS conducted a survey in October where projects expressed concerns about less engagement with stakeholders, pilots or clinical trials that could not be carried out, or staff was furloughed. In particular tourism and food related projects were hit hard. On the other hand, projects indicated that COVID had increased the need for the project solutions, in particular solutions for digital marketing, business support and eHealth. Most projects were granted a 3-6 month project extension to catch up and finalise their project successfully.

Another development was that the NPA COVID-19 response group was established, a group of experts established to better understand responses to the pandemic in the NPA area. This is an informal group of experts who have participated in NPP or NPA e-health project. The group was established by Dr. David Heaney, and quickly gained momentum with currently 139 experts from almost all NPA regions, Canada, the USA and New Zealand. (Sadly, on 16th July 2020, Dr. David Heaney suddenly passed away).

In response to the initiative, the programme designed a call to provide small project funding. The MC agreed to earmark 300 000 EUR with a lump sum funding mechanism to be able to act fast. By the call deadline in September, the programme received 19 applications, of which 7 were approved covering all themes identified by the response group. In addition, an overarching umbrella project "CoRE" was funded to coordinate the work of the thematic projects and collate the information and learnings. The new knowledge gained will inform target groups as well as the new NPA programme.

By the end of the year, 53 693 580 Euro or 95,2% of the total NPA funding for projects was allocated, when taking into account de-commitments from finalized projects.

After 7 calls, the allocation is somewhat unevenly distributed across the funding sources. Of the ERDF funding, 95% was committed, whilst 97% of the Norwegian, 100% of the Icelandic and 88% of both the Faroese and the Greenlandic funding to projects was committed.

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.

Seen in relation to the four programme priority axes, by the end of 2020, the highest commitment rate is in Axis 3 (Energy) with 10 main projects and 18 preparatory projects approved and 104% of the ERDF funding committed, followed by Axis 1 (Innovation) with 19 main projects and 26 preparatory projects approved and a commitment rate of 98%. Axis 2 (Entrepreneurship) is the third most popular theme with 17 approved main projects and 14 preparatory projects, and a commitment rate of 94%. The commitment rate for Axis 4 (Sustainability) is at 82% and 12 main and 8 preparatory projects have been approved.

The overall payment rate of the ERDF by the end of 2020 was that 62% of the total NPA budget had been paid, broken down by Priority Axis as follows: PA1 63%, PA2 60%, PA3 59%, PA4 68% and PA5 (TA) 58%.

The NPA addresses the Arctic Dimension as a cross cutting theme. The integrated European Union policy for the Arctic mandated the NPA in 2016 to have a leading role in bringing together a network of managing authorities and stakeholders from cooperation programmes in the European Arctic. In 2020, a wide range of activities was organised jointly by NPA, Interreg Nord, Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, Kolarctic and Karelia CBC ENI.

The network's main activity during 2020 was a joint Q&A session during the EU Regions Week, entitled "*Programme Cooperation in the Arctic - How to cooperate across programmes: experience from the Interreg-ENI CBC Arctic collaboration*". Due to COVID-19, this became a virtual session, giving a brief history of the Cooperation, and presenting the benefits and success factors of the cooperation from a programme's perspective, Arctic clustering project's perspective, and finally an evaluator's perspective. The session was attended by 44 participants, including participants from DG Regio and other Interreg programmes. A post-event survey showed positive interest in the session topic, and appreciation for its quality. In addition, the Arctic Cooperation had a stand in the EU Region Week's virtual exhibition.

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the Arctic Awards project competition was launched in April. In the category *Arctic Entrepreneurial Spirit*, the winner of the 2020 Arctic Award was the project BRIDGE, Barents Region Initiative for Development Growth and Employability, funded by the Kolarctic ENI CBC programme. In the category *Overcoming Critical Mass*, the winner was the project FUTURE CLEANTECH SOLUTIONS, funded by the Interreg Botnia-Atlantica programme. The category winners have been selected by a jury representing all programmes. Due to COVID-19, it was not possible to organise a physical award ceremony. Instead, all 15 participating projects were promoted on the Arctic Cooperation's social media channels ending with announcing the winning projects in December, through a short video.

Analysing the programme achievements in relation to targets in the operational programme, it became evident quite early in programme implementation that forecasts of project outputs deliveries were high in relation to target values set by the programme. By the end of 2020, milestones set for 2018 had been reached for all output indicators as well as the final targets for the year 2023. Through Project Closure Seminars, the MA and JS provide extensive guidance on how projects should provide robust evidence for their achieved results. As a result, indicator values have decreased somewhat, but not to the extent originally anticipated. For this reason, the MC approved a revision of output indicators, which was put forward as a programme modification in 2021.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

#### 3.1 Overview of the implementation

ID	Priority axis	Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems. (Max length 1 750 characters)
1	INNOVATION	<p>Nine main projects have been approved in relation to Specific Objective 1.1 (Increased innovation and transfer of new technology to SMEs) under Priority Axis 1. The supported projects are addressing all prioritised actions mentioned in the Cooperation Programme document.</p> <p>Ten main projects are addressing Specific Objective 1.2 (Increased innovation within public service provision) under Priority Axis 1. The supported projects are addressing all prioritised actions mentioned in the Cooperation Programme document.</p>
2	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	<p>Nine main projects are addressing Specific Objective 2.1 (Improved support systems tailored for start-ups and existing SMEs) in Priority Axis 2. In this specific objective, all actions have been fulfilled.</p> <p>Eight main projects are addressing Specific Objective 2.2 (Greater market reach beyond local market for SMEs) under Priority Axis 2. The supported projects are addressing all prioritised actions mentioned in the Cooperation Programme document.</p>
3	RENEWABLES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY	Ten main projects have been approved in this Priority Axis. The supported projects are addressing all three types of prioritised actions mentioned in the Cooperation Programme document.
4	PROTECTING, DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	Twelve main projects have been approved in this Priority Axis. The supported projects are addressing all prioritised actions mentioned in the Cooperation Programme document.

5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	<p>The Technical Assistance budget consists of the below programme bodies and cost items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint Secretariat</li> <li>- Managing Authority</li> <li>- Certifying Authority</li> <li>- Audit Authority</li> <li>- MC meetings</li> <li>- Regional Contact Points</li> <li>- Greenland Travel Fund</li> <li>- Other costs (including seminars and networks, promotion material, partenariats, IT, database and monitoring system and evaluation)</li> </ul> <p>All cost related to technical assistance are transmitted into the accounts of and reported by the Managing Authority.</p> <p>In the first years of NPA 2014-2020 implementation, the NPP 2007-2013 budget was used for the programme closure. This fact, in combination with vacancies at the Managing Authority, delayed invoicing from some of the programme bodies and for the development of the monitoring system (eMS) contributed to an underspending in the first years of programme implementation. The TA spending has caught up and is expected to be accurate over time even though the Covid -19 pandemic has had an effect on the TA activities as well, with all travels being cancelled.</p> <p>The rate of payments has increased over the years after having made the first payments in November 2016 and is at a satisfactory stage. In total 31,1 million EUR, or 62% of the allocated funding (including TA), has been paid by the end of 2020.</p> <p>There have not been any problems experienced in relation to TA expenditure. At its meeting in December the Monitoring Committee was informed that approximately 57 % of the total TA budget had been spent.</p> <p>For the coming years it is foreseen that the extensions of projects due to the Covid-19 crisis will impact the programme administration. Many projects will run until September 2022 and by this time a new NPA programme should be underway in parallel.</p> <p>At the same time, during this period when programme activities are foreseen to be quite intense, the yearly TA budget for the years 2021-2023 will decrease. Underspending from the early stages of programme implementation will be used to secure that the full Programme Administration can be maintained also for the final years of programme implementation.</p>
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## 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators

Information on common and programme specific indicators per priority axis are reported on yearly, these are displayed in table 2<sup>1</sup>.

In table 2 the cumulative value of outputs to be delivered by selected operations is equal to the expected results of approved projects at application stage, a forecast provided by beneficiaries. The 2020 values for outputs delivered by operations are actual achievements, values reported by all projects by the end of 2020.

The Monitoring Committee has decided on several updates to the cooperation programme document over the past years in regard to target values for output indicators and to align these better with actual achievements as the targets set originally were reached already at a very early stage of programme implementation. The programme administration did however not formally submit these requests for changes to the Commission until in February 2021 because it has been considered relevant to wait if further changes would be necessary.

The proposed updates were updates to target values for the common and programme specific output indicators as well as the performance framework of the priority axes as displayed in tables 2 and 3. The Commission approved the request for programme update in March 2021 and the target values displayed in the tables in the following sections are the revised ones.

For Technical Assistance output indicators, target values were for the first time established in the programme modification in March 2021, thereby the values reported in 2020 cover all years up until this time.

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<sup>1</sup> The numbering of tables follows the numbering in the Commission electronic system SFC.



**Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators**

	ID	Priority	Investment priority	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value <sup>2</sup> (2023)	CUMULATIVE VALUES	
							2015-2019 T	2020 T
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C001	INNOVATION	1B	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	200	142	152
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C001	INNOVATION	1B	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	200	72	72
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C026	INNOVATION	1B	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	321	223	237
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C026	INNOVATION	1B	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	321	320	321
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C001	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3A	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	1 520	1 082	1158

<sup>2</sup> Targets are optional for technical assistance priority axes

Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C001	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3A	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	1 520	664	664
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C028	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3A	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	100	75	75
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C028	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3A	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	100	49	49
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C001	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3D	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	380	248	269
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C001	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3D	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	380	88	116
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C028	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3D	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	200	117	138

Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C028	ENTREPRENEURSHIP	3D	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	200	93	123
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C031	RENEWABLES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY	4C	Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	4 803	4 552	4671
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C031	RENEWABLES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY	4C	Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	4 803	4 803	4803
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	C042	PROTECTING, DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	6C	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, trans-national or interregional research projects	Organizations	67	18	56
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	C042	PROTECTING, DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	6C	Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects	Organizations	67	45	55

Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	4	PROTECTING, DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	6C	Number of organizations introducing a decisionmaking tool or governance concept facilitating sustainable environmental management	Organizations	24	10	22
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	4	PROTECTING, DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	6C	Number of organizations introducing a decision-making tool or governance concept facilitating sustainable environmental management	Organizations	24	39	40
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of simplification measures implemented	Simplification measures	4	5	5
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of simplification measures implemented	Simplification measures	4	4	4

Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of project development support activities	Events and activities	14	21	24
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of project development support activities	Events and activities	14	12	14
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of information and communication activities	Information and communication measures	18	17	23
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of information and communication activities	Information and communication measures	18	15	17
Outputs delivered by operations (achievement)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of employees (full-time equivalents) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Full-time equivalents	5	6	6
Outputs to be delivered by selected operations (forecast)	5	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		Number of employees (full-time equivalents) whose salaries are co-financed by TA	Full-time equivalents	5	6	6

### 3.3 Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

Milestones and targets defined in the performance framework are reported in annual implementation reports from 2017 onwards<sup>3</sup>. The figures for the years are values achieved, cumulative values both for output indicators and financial indicators.

Values in table 3 should be understood according to EU 2018/276: “The milestone and target for an output indicator shall refer to the values achieved by operations, where all the actions leading to outputs have been implemented in full, but for which not all the related payments have necessarily been made, or to the values achieved by operations which have been started, but where some of the actions leading to outputs are still ongoing, or to the both.”

**Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework**

Priority Axis	Indicator type	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018 T	Final target (2023) T	2016-2019 T	2020 T	Observations (if necessary)
1	Output	C1	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	6	200	142	152	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03-30
1	Output	C26	Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions	Enterprises	3	321	223	237	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03-30
2	Output	C1	Number of enterprises receiving support	Enterprises	6	1 900	1 330	1 427	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03--30
2	Output	C28	Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	Enterprises	3	300	192	213	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03-30
3	Output	C31	Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Households	50	4 803	4 552	4 671	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03-30.

<sup>3</sup> In table 3 break down by gender is to be used in the relevant fields only if it has been included in the Table 6 of the OP. Otherwise use T = total

Priority Axis	Indicator type	ID	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018 T	Final target (2023) T	2016-2019 T	2020 T	Observations (if necessary)
4	Output	C42	Number of research institutions participating in crossborder, transnational or inter-regional research projects	Organizations	2	67	18	56	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03--30
4	Output	Programme specific	Number of organizations introducing a decision-making tool or governance concept facilitating sustainable environmental management	Organizations	4	24	10	22	Target values updated and approved by the Commission on 2021-03--30
1	Financial		Total certified expenditure for Priority axis 1 (ERDF + national contribution)	EUR	3 267 506 (15% of final target)	21 783 372	11 013 265 (50,6% of final target)	13 845 767 (63,6% of final target)	
2	Financial		Total certified expenditure for Priority axis 2 (ERDF + national contribution)	EUR	3 267 506 (15% of final target)	21 783 372	9 969 982 (45,6% of final target)	13 233 063 (60,8% of final target)	
3	Financial		Total certified expenditure for Priority axis 3 (ERDF + national contribution)	EUR	2 178 337 (15% of final target)	14 522 247	5 626 557 (38,7% of final target)	8 641 019 (59,5 % of final target)	The number of approved projects in Priority Axis 3 in the first calls was lower than in others. The MC focused the Third Call exclusively on PA 3 and 4. However, even after that approvals in PA 3 have lagged behind, having consequences for the uptake of funds in earlier years but in 2020 the payments in this priority axis have caught up and are at the same level as other priority axes.
4	Financial		Total certified expenditure for Priority axis 4 (ERDF + national contribution)	EUR	2 178 337 (15% of final target)	14 522 247	7 190 153 (49,5% of final target)	9 924 719 (68,3% of final target)	

### 3.4 Financial data

**Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level**

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
Cumulative data on the financial progress of the operational programme										
Priority axis	Fund	Basis for the calculation of Union support (Total or public)	Total funding (EUR)	Co-financing rate (%)	Total eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR)	Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations (%) [column 6/column 4 × 100]	Public eligible cost of operations selected for support (EUR) [column 6 minus private financing]	Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority	Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries (%) [column 9/column 4 × 100]	Number of operations selected
INNOVATION	ERDF	Total	21 783 372	65%	21 490 105	98,65%	21 234 821	13 845 767	63,56%	45
ENTREPRE-NEURSHIP	ERDF	Total	21 783 372	65%	21 071 286	96,73%	20 214 975	13 233 063	60,75%	31
ENERGY	ERDF	Total	14 522 247	65%	15 256 253	105,05%	14 820 499	8 641 019	59,50%	28
SUSTAINABILITY	ERDF	Total	14 522 247	65%	12 009 194	82,7%	12 009 194	9 924 719	68,34%	20
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	ERDF	Total	6 025 186	50%	6 025 186	100,00%	6 025 186	3 475 726	57,69%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>ERDF</b>		<b>78 636 424</b>	<b>63,85 %</b>	<b>75 852 024</b>	<b>96,46%</b>	<b>74 304 675</b>	<b>49 120 295</b>	<b>62,47%</b>	<b>127</b>



### **Contribution from third countries**

In addition to the ERDF financing in table 4, the non-member state contribution to the programme is 10 409 523 Euro, including 1 199 830 Euro for Technical Assistance. The budgeted ERDF equivalent funding to priority Axes 1-4 is 9 209 693 Euro, of which a total of 8 871 839 Euro or 96 % has been committed by end of 2020, a commitment rate at the same level as the ERDF funding.

The distribution of ERDF equivalent funding between non-member states and priority axis is described below (all figures in Euro):

#### Norwegian ERDF equivalent funding:

Priority axis 1: 1 658 955

Priority axis 2: 1 113 482

Priority axis 3: 353 064

Priority axis 4: 1 557 730

**TOTAL: 4 683 231 Euro**

The total Norwegian budget allocation to the programme for priority Axes 1-4 is 4 840 000 Euro and the intervention rate for Norwegian partners is 50%.

#### Icelandic ERDF equivalent funding:

Priority axis 1: 784 802

Priority axis 2: 587 346

Priority axis 3: 538 189

Priority axis 4: 807 680

**TOTAL: 2 718 017 Euro**

The total Icelandic budget allocation to the programme for priority Axes 1-4 is 2 706 794 Euro and the intervention rate for Icelandic partners is 60%.

#### Faroese ERDF equivalent funding:

Priority axis 1: 67 494

Priority axis 2: 156 296

Priority axis 3: 165 133

Priority axis 4: 261 418

**TOTAL: 650 341Euro**

The total Faroese budget allocation to the programme for priority Axes 1-4 is 735 356 Euro and the intervention rate for Faroese partners is 65%.

#### Greenlandic ERDF equivalent funding:

Priority axis 1: -

Priority axis 2: 559 866

Priority axis 3: 109 148

Priority axis 4: 151 235

**TOTAL: 820 249 Euro**

The total Greenlandic budget allocation to the programme for priority Axes 1-4 is 927 543 Euro and the intervention rate for Greenlandic partners is 65%.

The total ERDF equivalent funding from non-member states is distributed across the priority axis according to the below:

Priority axis 1: 2 511 251

Priority axis 2: 2 416 990

Priority axis 3: 1 165 534

Priority axis 4: 2 778 064

**TOTAL: 8 871 839 Euro**

**Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention for the ERDF (art 112.1 and 112.2 in 1203/2013 and art 5 in 1304/2014)**  
*The table is a print screen of Information entered into the Commission electronic monitoring system SFC.*

PRIORITY AXIS	FUND	INTERVENTION FIELD	FORM OF FINANCE	TERRITORIAL DIMENSION	TERRITORIAL DELIVERY MECHANISM	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	ESF SECONDARY THEMES	ECONOMIC DIMENSION	LOCATION DIMENSION	TOTAL ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	PUBLIC ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE DECLARED BY BENEFICIARIES TO THE MANAGING AUTHORITY	NUMBER OF OPERATIONS SELECTED
1	ERDF	055	01	07	07	01		12	UKM6	1,677,262.62	1,599,889.13	1,648,360.65	1
1	ERDF	055	01	07	07	01		18	IE011	45,000.00	45,000.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	055	01	07	07	01		20	SE33	1,506,987.13	1,506,987.13	1,157,909.07	1
1	ERDF	055	01	07	07	01		20	UKN05	44,989.71	42,533.30	44,989.71	1
1	ERDF	055	01	07	07	01		21	UKM6	45,000.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		02	F193	1,408,682.58	1,408,682.58	74,158.71	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		02	IS	521,426.22	521,426.22	498,723.86	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		02	NO07	175,788.94	175,788.94	175,788.99	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		02	UKM62	50,000.00	50,000.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		02	UKM64	1,660,670.60	1,575,061.60	56,670.00	2
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		07	UKN0	1,904,784.50	1,904,784.50	1,299,464.08	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		11	F1D	84,855.61	82,364.36	84,855.61	2
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		13	UKN04	45,000.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		15	UKM6	27,143.00	27,143.00	27,143.00	1
1	ERDF	062	01	07	07	01		23	F1D	21,000.00	21,000.00	21,000.00	1
1	ERDF	063	01	07	07	01		02	F1D	23,482.31	20,355.64	23,482.31	1
1	ERDF	063	01	07	07	01		02	UKM2	17,322.32	12,698.78	17,322.31	1
1	ERDF	063	01	07	07	01		03	IS	234,631.63	234,631.63	230,073.08	1
1	ERDF	063	01	07	07	01		24	UKN0	1,405,402.88	1,405,402.88	1,405,403.08	1
1	ERDF	064	01	07	07	01		22	IE011	1,592,722.64	1,592,722.64	408,761.06	1
1	ERDF	065	01	07	07	01		22	SE312	36,785.50	36,785.50	36,785.50	1
1	ERDF	065	01	07	07	01		24	F1D	1,631,429.66	1,557,050.43	1,624,660.38	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		13	F1D	39,996.54	39,996.54	39,996.54	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		18	IE01	1,102,630.42	1,102,630.42	1,102,630.67	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		18	IE013	30,041.00	30,041.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	F1D4	89,994.50	89,994.50	44,994.50	2
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	IE02	23,294.00	21,294.00	23,294.00	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	NO07	1,008,848.50	1,008,848.50	1,008,848.63	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	SE33	1,303,458.99	1,303,458.99	1,303,459.20	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	UKM62	236,371.35	236,371.35	0.00	3

PRIORITY AXIS	FUND	INTERVENTION FIELD	FORM OF FINANCE	TERRITORIAL DIMENSION	TERRITORIAL DELIVERY MECHANISM	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	ESF SECONDARY THEMES	ECONOMIC DIMENSION	LOCATION DIMENSION	TOTAL ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	PUBLIC ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE DECLARED BY BENEFICIARIES TO THE MANAGING AUTHORITY	NUMBER OF OPERATIONS SELECTED
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	UKM64	36,995.00	36,995.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	UKN0	44,993.05	44,993.05	44,993.05	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	UKN03	37,122.00	37,122.00	0.00	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		20	UKN04	1,558,870.23	1,555,645.23	191,866.02	3
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		21	F1D	89,919.12	89,919.12	89,919.12	2
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		21	IE011	153,845.93	153,845.93	0.00	1
1	ERDF	081	01	07	07	01		21	UKN0	1,573,356.80	1,573,356.80	1,070,213.95	1
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		01	F1D	1,730,155.27	1,574,724.94	1,726,606.93	1
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		15	F1D	1,044,706.08	1,044,706.08	61,756.38	3
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		15	IE02	986,290.58	822,861.31	950,031.63	1
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		15	UKM6	1,198,691.32	1,198,691.32	1,198,691.57	1
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		23	IE01	1,633,755.16	1,633,755.16	1,633,755.35	1
2	ERDF	066	01	07	07	03		24	F1D	1,690,099.04	1,575,545.29	670,047.07	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		04	NO053	1,114,661.53	1,114,661.53	296,288.96	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		15	F1D	1,007,401.12	999,121.12	464,493.27	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		21	F1D	1,299,302.47	1,299,302.47	1,295,156.97	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		21	IE01	40,788.38	40,788.38	40,788.38	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		23	NO05	925,155.64	777,361.72	925,155.78	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		24	IE01	1,368,601.20	1,292,787.10	1,367,257.65	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		24	IE013	1,143,256.72	974,740.05	136,624.25	2
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		24	SE110	36,210.00	36,210.00	36,210.00	1
2	ERDF	067	01	07	07	03		24	SE33	91,343.00	88,850.00	91,343.00	2
2	ERDF	071	01	07	07	03		22	F1D4	99,430.44	99,430.44	0.00	1
2	ERDF	071	01	07	07	03		22	IE013	45,000.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	1
2	ERDF	071	01	07	07	03		22	UKM6	875,362.43	875,362.43	875,362.52	1
2	ERDF	072	01	07	07	03		03	F1D	26,152.77	26,152.77	26,152.77	1
2	ERDF	073	01	07	07	03		21	UKN0	41,682.95	41,682.95	41,682.95	1
2	ERDF	073	01	07	07	03		24	NO073	17,480.00	17,480.00	17,480.00	1
2	ERDF	076	01	07	07	03		15	UKN05	1,996,688.94	1,976,688.94	811,838.85	2
2	ERDF	076	01	07	07	03		23	SE33	30,463.27	30,463.27	30,463.27	1
2	ERDF	076	01	07	07	03		23	UKM62	22,407.90	22,407.90	22,407.90	1

PRIORITY AXIS	FUND	INTERVENTION FIELD	FORM OF FINANCE	TERRITORIAL DIMENSION	TERRITORIAL DELIVERY MECHANISM	THEMATIC OBJECTIVE DIMENSION	ESF SECONDARY THEMES	ECONOMIC DIMENSION	LOCATION DIMENSION	TOTAL ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	PUBLIC ELIGIBLE COST OF OPERATIONS SELECTED FOR SUPPORT	TOTAL ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE DECLARED BY BENEFICIARIES TO THE MANAGING AUTHORITY	NUMBER OF OPERATIONS SELECTED
2	ERDF	076	01	07	07	03		23	UKM65	999,757.47	999,757.47	0.00	1
2	ERDF	082	01	07	07	03		13	IE013	1,606,442.58	1,606,442.58	468,467.96	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	F1D	3,470,541.16	3,367,294.84	2,849,073.08	6
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	IE01	1,622,847.15	1,622,847.15	1,622,847.47	2
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	IE011	1,218,653.89	1,218,653.89	184,225.72	2
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	IE02	37,546.95	37,546.95	37,546.95	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	IE025	1,096,507.96	1,096,507.96	271,992.14	2
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	NO07	6,927.91	6,927.91	6,927.91	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	UKM61	29,893.56	26,147.03	29,893.56	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	UKN0	26,340.61	26,340.61	26,340.61	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	UKN01	1,850,515.32	1,724,490.53	771,741.64	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		22	UKN04	37,426.24	35,557.36	37,426.24	1
3	ERDF	013	01	07	07	04		24	F1D	34,250.24	34,250.24	34,250.24	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		10	F1D	1,779,836.55	1,779,836.55	763,930.70	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		10	UKM2	1,438,209.51	1,358,280.32	1,434,627.01	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		10	UKM61	1,314,882.82	1,200,944.88	357,519.53	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		22	F193	30,000.00	28,500.00	30,000.00	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		22	F1D	45,000.00	45,000.00	45,000.00	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		22	IE011	1,110,039.40	1,110,039.40	63,383.02	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		22	IE023	35,250.80	35,250.80	35,250.80	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		22	UKM64	39,042.50	33,542.50	39,042.50	1
3	ERDF	014	01	07	07	04		24	UKM62	32,540.00	32,540.00	0.00	1
4	ERDF	085	01	07	07	06		11	UKM6	45,000.00	45,000.00	44,999.99	1
4	ERDF	085	01	07	07	06		18	F1D	1,147,730.11	1,147,730.11	1,128,362.62	1
4	ERDF	085	01	07	07	06		22	F1D	22,890.60	22,890.60	22,890.60	1
4	ERDF	085	01	07	07	06		23	UKN0	1,274,697.06	1,274,697.06	1,274,697.27	1
4	ERDF	085	01	07	07	06		24	IE01	1,076,268.18	1,076,268.18	1,076,268.29	1
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		11	F1D	1,525,592.54	1,525,592.54	1,525,592.84	2
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		18	F1D	27,877.86	27,877.86	27,877.86	1
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		22	IS002	999,014.36	999,014.36	0.00	1
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		22	UKM2	350,743.04	350,743.04	227,546.65	1
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		22	UKN0	1,155,755.14	1,155,755.14	1,155,755.41	1
4	ERDF	087	01	07	07	06		22	UKN03	38,401.40	38,401.40	38,401.40	1
4	ERDF	088	01	07	07	06		22	F1D	945,673.47	945,673.47	648,461.74	1
4	ERDF	088	01	07	07	06		22	SE11	1,195,228.81	1,195,228.81	1,195,229.04	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		15	NO05	3,200.71	3,200.71	3,200.71	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		22	IE013	138,753.42	138,753.42	0.00	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		22	NO07	838,671.94	838,671.94	597,066.01	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		22	SE33	34,600.00	34,600.00	34,600.00	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		22	UKM2	28,173.38	28,173.38	28,173.38	1
4	ERDF	095	01	07	07	06		22	UKM6	1,160,922.31	1,160,922.31	895,594.99	1
5	ERDF	121	01	07	07			18	SE33	5,151,536.00	5,151,536.00	2,971,747.17	1
5	ERDF	122	01	07	07			18	SE33	120,504.00	120,504.00	69,514.69	1
5	ERDF	123	01	07	07			18	SE33	753,146.00	753,146.00	434,464.50	1

**Table 6: Cost of operations implemented outside the programme area (the ERDF and the Cohesion fund under the Investment for growth and jobs goal)**

*The table is a print screen of Information entered into the Commission electronic monitoring system SFC.*

1 OPERATION(S)(2)	2 THE AMOUNT OF ERDF SUPPORT (1) ENVISAGED TO BE USED FOR ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA BASED ON SELECTED OPERATIONS (EUR)	3 SHARE OF THE TOTAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION LOCATED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA (%) (COLUMN 2/TOTAL AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO THE SUPPORT FROM THE ERDF AT PROGRAMME LEVEL*100)	4 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE OF ERDF SUPPORT INCURRED IN ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA DECLARED BY THE BENEFICIARY TO THE MANAGING AUTHORITY (EUR)	5 SHARE OF THE TOTAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION LOCATED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA (%) (COLUMN 4/TOTAL AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO THE SUPPORT FROM THE ERDF AT PROGRAMME LEVEL*100)
A:Eye	3 475,00	0.01%	3 475,00	0.01%
ADAPT Northern Heritage	227 982,97	0.45%	147 905,30	0.29%
AET	3 680,00	0.01%	0,00	
AINNPA	5 248,90	0.01%	5 248,90	0.01%
ARCTIC CLUSTER	3 250,00	0.01%	3 250,00	0.01%
ARCTIC PACER	6 207,50	0.01%	0,00	
ARCTISEN	173 323,00	0.35%	105 567,93	0.21%
Adapt	18 312,70	0.04%	18 312,69	0.04%
BCE	325 869,11	0.65%	75 679,28	0.15%
CEREAL	13 296,84	0.03%	5 971,39	0.01%
CINE	201 425,04	0.40%	184 256,08	0.37%
COAST	133 530,00	0.27%	0,00	
COVID-WATCH	7 475,00	0.01%	0,00	
CRR	3 935,00	0.01%	0,00	
Circular Ocean	198 344,00	0.40%	198 040,42	0.39%
Connected North	9 674,00	0.02%	9 673,95	0.02%
Covid & Economics	11 910,00	0.02%	0,00	
Craft Reach	147 793,92	0.29%	147 793,89	0.29%
Drifting Apart	238 300,00	0.47%	237 354,84	0.47%
EMERGREEN	159 905,20	0.32%	41 825,20	0.08%
Energy Pathfinder	181 131,92	0.36%	42 061,57	0.08%

1 OPERATION(S)(2)	2 THE AMOUNT OF ERDF SUPPORT (1) ENVISAGED TO BE USED FOR ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA BASED ON SELECTED OPERATIONS (EUR)	3 SHARE OF THE TOTAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION LOCATED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA (%) (COLUMN 2/TOTAL AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO THE SUPPORT FROM THE ERDF AT PROGRAMME LEVEL*100)	4 ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURE OF ERDF SUPPORT INCURRED IN ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION IMPLEMENTED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA DECLARED BY THE BENEFICIARY TO THE MANAGING AUTHORITY (EUR)	5 SHARE OF THE TOTAL FINANCIAL ALLOCATION TO ALL OR PART OF AN OPERATION LOCATED OUTSIDE THE UNION PART OF THE PROGRAMME AREA (%) (COLUMN 4/TOTAL AMOUNT ALLOCATED TO THE SUPPORT FROM THE ERDF AT PROGRAMME LEVEL*100)
FOBIA	179 899,80	0.36%	91 159,56	0.18%
FREED	260 834,00	0.52%	243 900,25	0.49%
H-CHP	109 525,00	0.22%	21 095,61	0.04%
HUGE	92 727,70	0.18%	13 632,71	0.03%
LECo	178 093,15	0.35%	97 032,80	0.19%
Making it work	201 032,00	0.40%	161 860,06	0.32%
N-EEC	5 265,00	0.01%	5 265,00	0.01%
NEES2	6 463,59	0.01%	6 463,59	0.01%
Option	5 838,91	0.01%	5 838,91	0.01%
PAL	3 225,00	0.01%	3 225,00	0.01%
Pre-Lighthouse	4 903,57	0.01%	4 903,56	0.01%
ReewiseVillage	3 900,00	0.01%	3 900,00	0.01%
RemoAge	92 508,00	0.18%	57 876,70	0.12%
SCITOUR	128 112,00	0.26%	0,00	
SECURE	65 991,70	0.13%	63 532,14	0.13%
SHAPE	51 368,18	0.10%	36 788,39	0.07%
SMARTrenew	120 575,00	0.24%	0,00	
SPARA2020	255 341,54	0.51%	184 470,84	0.37%
STRATUS	25 887,71	0.05%	0,00	
SW-GROW	217 750,76	0.43%	0,00	
StoryTagging	45 722,30	0.09%	0,00	
WATERPRO	130 068,36	0.26%	63 197,98	0.13%
WaterPro ,Prep	2 925,00	0.01%	2 925,00	0.01%

## **4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS**

*Synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the programme that have become available during the previous financial year, including the name and reference period of the evaluation reports used.*

*Max length 10 500 characters.*

In 2018, an impact evaluation of the NPA was carried out by the European Policies Research Centre (EPRC) at the University of Strathclyde and Nathalie Wergles, an EPRC associate. The final evaluation report was approved by the Monitoring Committee in January 2019.

The Annual Implementation Report 2019 described the main findings of the report and how its recommendations were acted on, in particular in the design of the Seventh Call.

During 2020, the evaluation report continued to be relevant, mainly as a useful tool in discussions about the future programme NPA 2021-2027, in particular, the recognition of the Programme's contribution to the EU Arctic Policy.

No evaluations were carried out during 2020.

## **5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN**

### **5.1 Issues which affect the performance of the programme and measures taken**

*Max length 7000 characters*

No major problems have been identified in relation to the performance of the programme and expected results. The audit authority has not highlighted any serious problems in conjunction to their procedures according to article 124.2 in EU regulation 1303/2014.

Extensions previously granted to projects from earlier calls and delays in reporting meant that in 2020, projects from 6 calls were up and running at the same time. Besides late final payments for projects, the impact of the delays can also be felt in the workload for the Joint Secretariat, Managing Authority and the First Level Controllers.

When in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe, this had significant impacts on ongoing and new projects alike. The programme administration took several immediate actions. Guidance was added to the programme website about the eligibility of costs related to cancelled events. In addition, projects finalising during the spring were offered an extension until the end of 2020, to avoid jeopardising the successful wrapping up of pilot activities and main outputs, as well as final conferences. Seventh Call projects were offered a later start date.

When COVID-19 restrictions were continued after the summer, projects from later calls expressed a need for adjustments to their work plans, and in some cases, budgets. To capture the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ongoing projects, the JS conducted a survey in October. Projects



expressed concerns that the restrictions resulted in fewer face-to-face partner meetings, and less engagement with stakeholders. In some cases, pilots or clinical trials could not be carried out, or at least, not in the original format, or staff was furloughed. Some sectors were also harder hit than other ones, in particular tourism and food related projects. On the other hand, some projects indicated that COVID has increased the need for the project solutions, in particular digital marketing solutions, and business support solutions in general, as well as eHealth solutions.

The majority of projects required a 3-6 month project extension to be able to catch up and finalise their project successfully. The impact for the programme administration is that the workload related to projects will stretch further into the programme lifetime than originally anticipated.

As a result, project closure occurred at a slower pace during 2020, with 8 projects receiving their final payment in 2020, reaching a total of 26 finalised projects by the end of the year. This represents close to half of the approved main projects.

Besides this, the end of 2020 meant an end to the Brexit transition period. Although Brexit is not expected to have any major impacts on the implementation of programmes and projects under the 2014-2020 MFF, the programme administration shared a list of Questions and Answers on the NPA website at the request of Scottish Government on behalf of Scotland and Northern Ireland. These questions dealt with very practical matters from eligibility of bank fees to data sharing and the possibility for having a .eu domain. The programme administration has not received many questions from applicants and projects related to Brexit.

So far, the delays had no serious impacts on the achievement of the performance framework, and programme spending targets.

## **5.2 An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.**

*Max length 3500 characters*

In 2020, the number of ongoing projects implementing at the same time remained at a similarly high level reached as during 2019, 33 projects. During 2020, 8 new main projects from the 7<sup>th</sup> Call were contracted.

Currently, progress being made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment. The number of projects and allocation of funds in 2020 is at a satisfactory level. The quality of applications is considered to be good and the projects are expected to contribute to the programme targets.

Delays in the implementation of projects from earlier calls meant that during 2020, projects from calls 2 to 7 were implementing at the same time. In order to ensure a smooth final reporting process and to instruct projects how to provide robust evidence for the achieved project outputs, the Joint Secretariat and Managing Authority continue the practice of organising closure seminars for each call. However, due to the numerous project extensions in connection to COVID, the closure seminar for projects from calls 5 and above has been postponed until summer/autumn 2021.

In relation to the performance framework, delays in implementation in the early stages of the programme period, in particular in priority axes 3 and 4, were caught up during 2020. By the end of December 2020, the certified expenditure for PA3 was at 60% of the final target, very well in line with other PAs. And for PA4 the certified expenditure was at 68%, somewhat higher than in the other PAs. In the early years of programme implementation final targets for the year 2023 were exceeded for PA 1-3 and met for PA4. Particularly high were the reported values for the output indicators *Number of enterprises receiving support* in Priority Axis 2, where 4 459% of the 2023 target had been achieved as reported in the Annual Implementation Report for 2019. Also for the indicator *Number of households with improved energy consumption classifications* in Priority Axis 3, high values were reported, ie 1 868% of the 2023 target had been achieved by end of 2019.

The high values are explained by the fact that forecasts beneficiaries make about expected results at application stage are generally high in relation to the target values set by the programme. It has been the belief of the JS/MA that projects had been too optimistic, but that reporting on actual achievements as compared to forecasts will not show the same high values since the evidence asked for in interim reports and even more so in final reporting is more robust. At this point of implementation, however, there are few indications of the values decreasing significantly in final reporting. For this reason, the MC approved a revision of output indicators in 2019 and 2020, which was put forward as a programme change in 2021.

During the programme period, a number of simplification methods have been applied to make the project implementation for partners smoother. At this stage these methods, such as small project funding with a simplified application procedure and selection process, establishing hourly rates for hours worked in projects using the standard 1 720 annual hours per year, a 15% flat rate for office costs based on staff costs, and payments based on lump sums and assessment and payment based on milestone achievements are a natural part of project and programme execution. Originally the programme also offered the option for a 20% flat rate for staff costs, but this was not viewed of interest for beneficiaries and has stopped being promoted for this reason.

## 6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 6.1 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

*As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, recital 19, article 8(3)(d) on the "Content, adoption and amendment of cooperation programmes" and article 14(4) 2nd subparagraph (c) "Implementation reports", this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:*

The NPA lies at the fringes of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy (EUSBSR), thereby links to the EUSBSR are limited by the different territorial features specifically addressed in the Northern Periphery and Arctic. The areas of shared interest between the NPA and EUSBSR, as identified in the cooperation programme, are innovation and management of natural resources. However, the programme did not preclude projects from identifying other areas for contribution.

On the other hand, the programme chose not to select further EUSBSR objectives and horizontal actions in its Cooperation programme. The reason for this is to encourage projects to focus on NPA territorial features, thereby concentrating NPA funding towards relevant actions.

The programme links to the EUSBSR via its projects, who state their direct link with the macro-regional strategy at the application and closure stage. As part of the project development support activities for the generation of high quality projects, the Joint Secretariat (JS) informs the potential applicants about the EUSBSR objectives and policy areas. At the selection stage, the Joint Secretariat's assessment criteria include an analysis of the proposals' alignment with the EUSBSR.

The programme built in a coordination mechanism in its selection procedure: each proposal is assessed by a group of regional representative (RAGs) who are informed about EUSBSR as well as mainstream operations in their region and therefore include this dimension to the NPA transnational assessment carried out at the Joint Secretariat.

At closure, projects are requested to complete the Typology report, a document describing the type of results achieved (tangible vs intangible) as well as the type of impact they have had/ are likely to generate. In this report they also specify the connection with the EUSBSR.

Out of the 8 projects finalized in 2020 (26 in total), 4 indicated a direct link to a macro regional strategy (EUSBSR and Atlantic SBS) bringing the total up to 7; while 3 have a thematic or geographical overlap with either strategies, totaling 15 projects.

In general 27% of the finalised NPA projects contributed to the EUSBR objective "Exploiting the full potential of the region in research, innovation and SME".

The majority of projects finalized in 2020 have a link to the EUSBSR objective of Education, research and employability. These projects developed training and learning products for upskilling organizations. An example of this is the project BUSK. The project developed a GIS based system to incorporate indigenous people traditional knowledge in the land use decision making processes. Many indigenous people are reindeer herders concerned with the animals' migration paths being disrupted by infrastructure such as highways and railways. The BUSk project mapped the migration paths so that bridges for reindeers could be built above highways to allow animals crossing without interrupting the traffic flow. Such initiative became so popular to receive an own name: "renoducts", from reindeer and viaducts, and be featured on Swedish and international media such as [The Guardian](#).

The majority of projects finalized in 2020 have a link to the **Atlantic SBS** objective "Sharing knowledge between higher education organizations, companies and research centres". This brings the total of NPA projects contributing to this objective to 54%.

The Irish partner of the WATERPRO project expressed the benefits of knowledge sharing from participating to the project: "Participation on the Water Pro project has enabled our team to work with some of the leading Northern European countries on water quality. It helped develop new practical tools and models for good water quality management".

The below sections are screenshots of the survey on the programmes' contribution to macroregional strategies to be completed in the Commission monitoring system SFC:

**EUSBSR**

Please specify the objective(s), policy area(s) and horizontal action(s) that your programme is relevant to:

Objectives	
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - Save the Sea
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - Connect the Region
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3 - Increase Prosperity
Policy areas	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.1 - Bioeconomy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.2 - Culture
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.3 - Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.4 - Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.5 - Hazards
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.6 - Health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.7 - Innovation
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.8 - Nutri
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.9 - Safe
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.10 - Secure
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.11 - Ship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4.12 - Tourism
<input type="checkbox"/>	4.13 - Transport
Horizontal actions	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5.1 - Capacity
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.2 - Climate
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.3 - Neighbours
<input type="checkbox"/>	5.4 - Spatial planning

## What were the actions or mechanisms used to better link the programme with the EUSBSR:

A. Are macro-regional coordinators (mainly National Coordinators, Policy Area Coordinators, Horizontal Action Coordinators, or members of the Steering Committees/Coordination Groups) participating in the Monitoring Committee of the programme?

Yes  No

B. In selection criteria, have extra points been attributed to specific measures supporting the EUSBSR?

Yes  No

C. Has the programme invested EU funds in the EUSBSR?

Yes  No

Does your programme plan to invest in the EUSBSR in the future? Please elaborate (1 specific sentence)

Nothing besides the allocated funding to projects that are in line with the strategy.

D. Please indicate the obtained results in relation to the EUSBSR (n.a. for 2016)

Out of the 8 projects finalized in 2020 (26 in total), 4 indicated a direct link to a macro regional strategy (EUSBSR and Atlantic SBS) bringing the total up to 7; while 3 have a thematic or geographical overlap with either strategies, totaling 15 projects. In general 27% of the finalised NPA projects contributed to the EUSBR objective "Exploiting the full potential of the region in research, innovation and SME". The majority of projects finalized in 2020 have a link to the EUSBSR objective of Education, research and employability. These projects developed training and learning products for upskilling organizations. An example of this is the project BUSK. The project developed a GIS based system to incorporate indigenous people traditional knowledge in the land use decision making processes. Many indigenous people are reindeer herders concerned with the animals' migration paths being disrupted by infrastructure such as highways and railways. The BUSK project mapped the migration path

## ATLSBS

Please specify the priority(s) and objective(s) that your programme is relevant to:

	Priority	Objective
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation	1.1 - Sharing knowledge between higher education organisations, companies and research centers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation	1.2 - Enhancement of competitiveness and innovation capacities in the maritime economy of the Atlantic area
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation	1.3 - Fostering adaptation and diversification of economic activities by promoting the potential of the Atlantic area
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment	2.1 - Improving maritime safety and security
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment	2.2 - Exploring and protecting marine waters and coastal zones
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment	2.3 - Sustainable management of marine resources
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment	2.4 - Exploitation of the renewable energy potential of the Atlantic area's marine and coastal environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 - Improve accessibility and connectivity	3.1 - Promoting cooperation between ports
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 - Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development	4.1 - Fostering better knowledge of social challenges in the Atlantic area
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4 - Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development	4.2 - Preserving and promoting the Atlantic's cultural heritage

What were the actions or mechanisms used to better link the programme with the Atlantic SBS:

*A. Are the Sea Basin Strategic coordinators (mainly National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators or members, and/or Objective coordinators or members) participating in the Monitoring Committee of the programme?*

Yes  No

*B. In selection criteria, have extra points been attributed to specific measures supporting the ATLSBS?*

Yes  No

*C. Has the programme invested EU funds in the ATLSBS?*

Yes  No

*Does your programme plan to invest in the ATLSBS in the future? Please elaborate (1 specific sentence)*

Nothing besides the allocated funding to projects that are in line with the strategy.

*D. Please indicate the obtained results in relation to the ATLSBS (n.a. for 2016)*

The majority of projects finalized in 2020 have a link to the Atlantic SBS objective "Sharing knowledge between higher education organizations, companies and research centres". This brings the total of NPA projects contributing to this objective to 54%. The Irish partner of the WATERPRO project expressed the benefits of knowledge sharing from participating to the project: "Participation on the Water Pro project has enabled our team to work with some of the leading Northern European countries on water quality. It helped develop new practical tools and models for good water quality management".

## 7. CITIZENS SUMMARY

*A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual and the final implementation reports shall be made public and uploaded as a separate file in the form of annex to the annual and the final implementation report*

# The Northern Periphery and Arctic programme in brief

## Information about progress in the year 2020



### 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 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, in particular indicator 3, 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.

## Progress in 2020

The Annual Implementation Report 2020 gives an overview of the implementation of the Programme in 2020. The following summarizes some key points in the report:

### Project Implementation

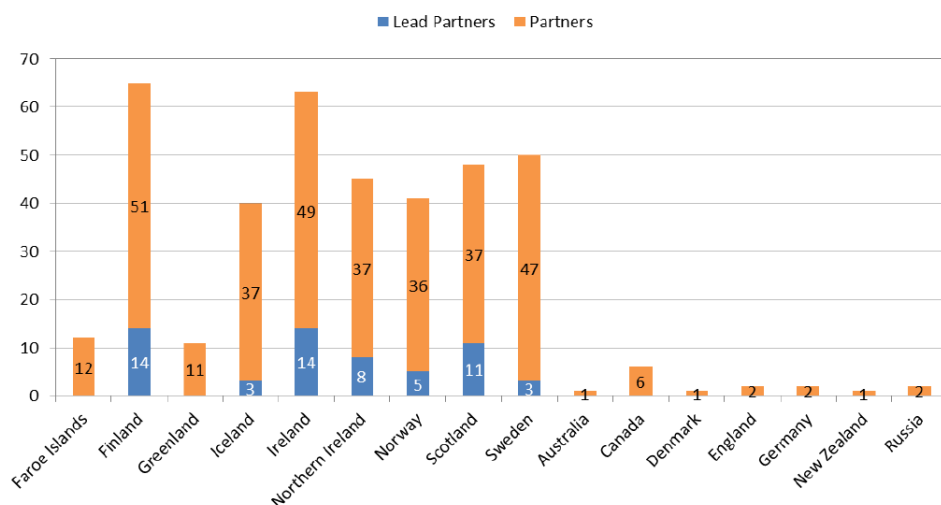
During 2020, 8 new main projects from the 7<sup>th</sup> Call were contracted, which means 58 main projects were approved in total from the start of the programme reaching above the target of 54. The fifty-eight approved projects are distributed evenly across the four programme priority axes. The most popular theme is Axis 1 (Innovation) where 18 projects are approved. Axis 2 (Entrepreneurship) follows with 16 approved projects while Axis 3 (Energy efficiency) so far only has 10 approved projects and Axis 4 (Sustainability) has 12 approved projects.

Delays in the implementation of projects meant that during 2020 projects from calls 2 to 7 were implementing at the same time. Therefore, in 2020, the number of ongoing projects implementing at the same time reached the peak of 33.

By the end of the year, a total of 53 693 580 Euro or 95,2% of the NPA funding for projects has been allocated, including preparatory project funding and taking into account recent decommitments and COVID-19 project allocations. The allocation is somewhat unevenly distributed across the different funding sources, although converging as the funds are running out overall.

Of the ERDF funding, 95% was committed, whilst 97% of the Norwegian, 100% of the Icelandic, 88% of the Faroese and 88% of the Greenlandic funding to projects was committed.

The 390 project partners are very well divided into the three geographical zones, across 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.



## Impact of COVID-19

When in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit Europe, this had significant impacts on ongoing and new projects alike. The programme administration took several immediate actions. Guidance was added to the programme website about the eligibility of costs related to cancelled events. In addition, projects finalising during the spring were offered an extension until the end of 2020, to avoid jeopardising the successful wrapping up of pilot activities and main outputs, as well as final conferences. Seventh Call projects were offered a later start date.

When COVID-19 restrictions were continued after the summer, projects from later calls expressed a need for adjustments to their work plans, and in some cases, budgets. To capture the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ongoing projects, the JS conducted a survey in October. Projects expressed concerns that the restrictions resulted in fewer face-to-face partner meetings, and less engagement with stakeholders. In some cases, pilots or clinical trials could not be carried out, or at least, not in the original format, or staff was furloughed. Some sectors were also harder hit than other ones, in particular tourism and food related projects. On the other hand, some projects indicated that COVID has increased the need for the project solutions, in particular digital marketing solutions, and business support solutions in general, as well as eHealth solutions.

The majority of projects required a 3-6 month project extension to be able to catch up and finalise their project successfully. The impact for the programme administration is that the workload related to projects will stretch further into the programme lifetime than originally anticipated.

In parallel, another development took place. A group of experts from the NPA programme area and the Joint Secretariat decided to work together to better understand what can be done in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the NPA area. The NPA COVID-19 response group was created as an informal group of experts who have participated in, or led an NPP or NPA e-health project. The group was established by Dr. David Heaney, Lead Partner of several NPP and NPA healthcare projects, and quickly gathered a large group of interested health experts based in the Northern Periphery and Arctic programme area and beyond. The group currently has 139 experts from almost all NPA regions, Canada, the USA and New Zealand. (Sadly, on 16th July 2020, Dr. David Heaney suddenly passed away).



In response to this spontaneous initiative, the NPA Secretariat designed a call to provide a modest amount of funding for the group to explore these topics further, and combine the information. The MC agreed to earmark 300 000 EUR with a lump sum funding mechanism to be able to act fast. The COVID-19 Call was open as an ongoing call from April until 30<sup>th</sup> September. The programme received 19 applications in total. Of these, 7 have been approved covering all themes identified by the response group, plus an "Emerging theme" for project ideas that fit in the rationale of the call, but do not fall within the themes outlined at the time the Call announcement. In addition, an overarching umbrella project "CoRE" has been funded, to coordinate the work of the thematic projects and collate the information and learnings produced by the projects. It is intended that this collaboration will detail all new knowledge obtained through the thematic projects, which will in turn inform our target groups, and the future NPA projects, as well as the new NPA programme.

### Arctic Cooperation

The NPA addresses the "Arctic Dimension" as a cross cutting theme, and the integrated European Union policy for the Arctic mandated the NPA to have a leading role in bringing together a network of managing authorities and stakeholders from cooperation programmes in the European Arctic.

The highlight of 2020 was the organisation of a joint Q&A session during the EU Regions Week in October, entitled "*Programme Cooperation in the Arctic - How to cooperate across programmes: experience from the Interreg-ENI CBC Arctic collaboration*". Due to COVID-19, this became a virtual session, giving a brief history of the Cooperation, and presenting the benefits and success factors of the cooperation from a programme's perspective, Arctic clustering project's perspective, and finally an evaluator's perspective. The session was attended by approximately 44 participants, including participants from DG Regio and other Interreg programmes. A post-event survey showed positive interest in the session topic, and appreciation for its quality. In addition, the Arctic Cooperation had a stand in the EU Region Week's virtual exhibition.

The fourth edition of the Arctic Awards project competition was launched in April, with a deadline late May. The 2020 categories were "Arctic Entrepreneurial Spirit" and "Overcoming Critical Mass". The category winners have been selected by a jury representing all programmes.

Due to COVID-19, it was not possible to organise a physical award ceremony. Instead, all 15 participating projects were promoted on the Arctic Cooperation's social media channels one-by-one as a campaign. At the end of this campaign, which ran until early December, the winning projects were announced online. For this purpose, the NPA developed a short video about each winning project with a thank you message from the projects.

In the category *Arctic Entrepreneurial Spirit*, the winner of the 2020 Arctic Award was the project BRIDGE, Barents Region Initiative for Development Growth and Employability, funded by the Kolarctic ENI CBC programme. In the category *Overcoming Critical Mass*, the winner of the 2020 Arctic Award was the project FUTURE CLEANTECH SOLUTIONS, funded by the Interreg Botnia-Atlantica programme.

On behalf of the network, the NPA was invited to present the Arctic Cooperation during the plenary session of DG Regio's Interreg annual event on 16<sup>th</sup> October. The purpose was to provide inspiration about cross-programme coordination. Besides this, the Arctic Cooperation was mentioned at a

recent NSPA virtual round table webinar organised in cooperation with 2 MEPs, Elsi Katainen (FI) and Erik Bergkvist (SE), as well as at a Scottish Arctic Connections webinar by Michael Mann, the new EU Arctic Ambassador participated.

#### Examples of funded projects

Two examples of funded projects from the 7<sup>th</sup> Call and Covid-19 response call are listed below. These examples address core themes within the NPA Programme:

#### **COAST - Sustainable Resilient Coasts**

The project addresses Priority Axis 4, Specific Objective 4, Increased capacity of remote and sparsely populated communities for sustainable environmental management. The project will run from March 2020 until February 2022.



The project brings together five partners and six associate partners from Iceland, Finland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland. It came about in response to the shared challenges faced by our coastal communities, including climate change, loss of biodiversity and cultural heritage, and the sustainable exploitation of natural resources such as fisheries. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA). The coast is one of the most significant unifying habitats in the region.

The COAST project seeks to establish the NPA region as a demonstration of how to deliver the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) for the coast. COAST will take a new approach to these challenges with a focus on local authorities as a target audience.

The project aligns with, extends and operationalizes [Our Coastal Futures](#) the open source method designed by [Future Earth Coasts](#) to facilitate coastal resilience and capability building. The approach will be applied to four demonstration cases across the partner regions and will address specific challenges associated with sparsely populated, remote coastal communities.

The project will provide a roadmap for protecting, promoting and developing the cultural and natural heritage of sparsely populated and remote coastal communities. In addition, the project will produce a COAST Toolbox for local authorities, focusing on SMART Blue Growth, which is based on principles of sustainability, mitigation, planning, adaptation, resilience and transition. The Toolbox will include practical guidance to support local authorities in the protection, promotion and development of the unique natural and cultural heritage of the coastal zone within and beyond the NPA.

#### Main achievements:

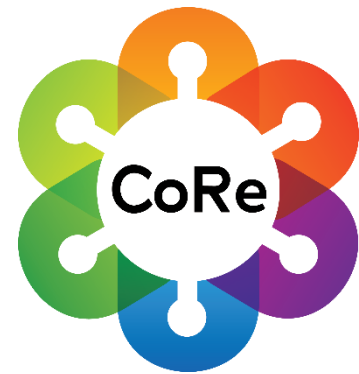
- The development and circulation of an online survey in all countries on the usage of drone technology by local authorities for sustainable development and ICZM.
- In addition, the publication of a report on the applications of drone technologies for the sustainable development of the coastal zone: A literature review.

- The submission of an academic paper to the open access journal 'Anthropocene' on the research undertaken. Besides this, the project was featured in an article in the Icelandic Agricultural Newspaper.
- In November 2020, the project organised an online seminar to share knowledge and experiences in building sustainable resilient coasts, focusing on SMART Blue Growth.
- In March 2021, the COAST project published its 2nd Deliverable Report titled "Drone Surveying for the Protection of Natural and Built Heritage Sites". The report describes a six-step process that guides local authorities through the considerations that need to be taken before, during, and after conducting drone surveys.

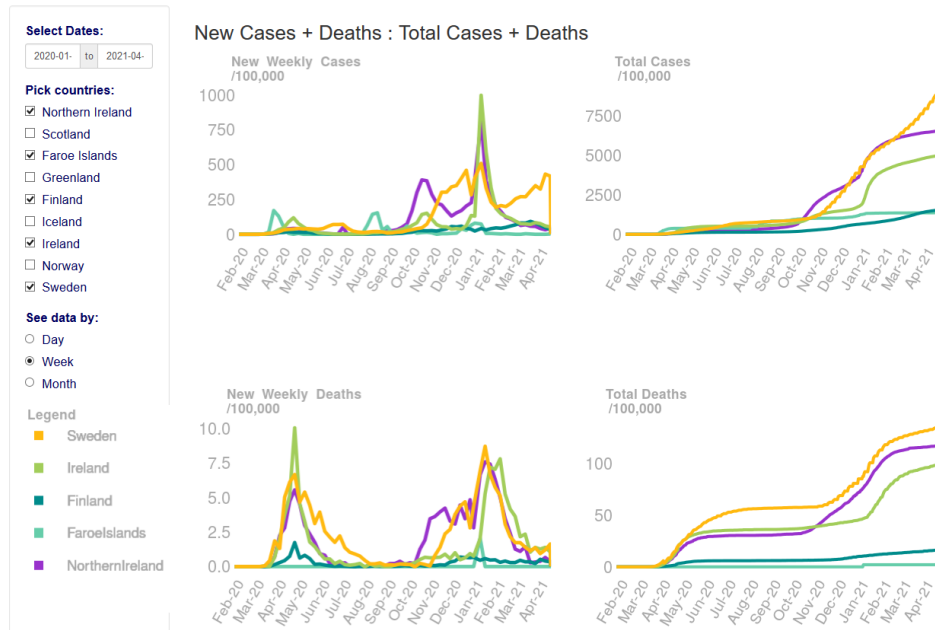
For further details: <https://coast.interreg-npa.eu>

## COVIDWATCHEU-NPA

Increasingly, Open Data approaches are being utilised by countries to ensure transparency and accountability. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused huge disruption globally, yet some countries have fared better than others, both economically and from the population health perspective. Using Open Data, and input from clinicians and non-clinicians based in the Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) Programme 2014-2020 countries, the project **COVIDWATCH EU NPA sought to learn lessons from national responses to this virus over the past year and contribute to the public health response against COVID-19 across the region.**



This project formed a representative team of clinicians and policy experts from across the NPA regions and beyond and designed, delivered and launched a purpose-built interactive **website updated in real-time of weekly comparative COVID-19 case, death and testing data from across EU and NPA regions:** <https://covidwatchnpa-eu.shinyapps.io/covid/>



This combined clinical, technical, academic and policy expertise has allowed COVIDWATCH EU NPA to publish weekly comparative data across EU and NPA countries since the beginning of the project on the project website updated in real-time and across social media. The reach of the project in terms of the general public has averaged 50,000 per week and a total of over 700,000 across all dissemination platforms (website, Twitter, Facebook) for the 6-month lifetime of the project.

In addition, the project has mapped the public health responses and interventions used by different NPA regions and countries in the first wave of the COVID-19 and explored how these measures have influenced the individual pandemic curves and economic outlook of these countries.

### Main achievements

COVIDWATCH EU NPA has made a significant contribution to the public health effort in terms of **individual behaviour change across the NPA regions** and has provided learnings and recommendations to **inform countries and regions** as they try to navigate their way through the next phases of the COVID-19 pandemic including the following:

- High COVID-19 cases correlate with societal restrictions, economic damage and COVID-19 deaths. When examined at a regional level, NPA designated-regions within larger countries, which tend to be more sparsely populated, experienced approximately half the COVID-19 deaths that more urbanised non-NPA regions within the same countries.
- Countries in the NPA programme can be largely based into 2 groups - countries that achieved near-elimination between smaller outbreaks, and those that did not. When COVID-19 activity is high, which is more likely in larger and more connected countries, overall negative consequences for the region will be more severe.

- Important aspects of a country's response include the rapidity of that response, the establishment of an adequate testing and tracing system, control of borders, involvement of regional health authorities and clear communication about the ongoing pandemic to the general public.

As countries struggle to plot the best way forward, COVIDWATCH EU NPA has provided a mechanism for transnational working and cooperation and the sharing of data and learnings from the pandemic. With a large team of partners across NPA regions the project has engaged with, and fed back to, relevant health, public health and government stakeholders. Perhaps most strikingly, **COVIDWATCH EU NPA provided evidence how due to a variety of protective factors, NPA regions have often fared better in public health and economic terms during the COVID-19 pandemic.** This provides much hope for the future and an opportunity to re-imagine lives and livelihoods in such rural and remote regions.

For more information : <https://core.interreg-npa.eu/>