

Scotland Europa Membership Response to the Public Consultation on EU Funds in the area of Cohesion



Introduction

Scotland Europa welcomes the opportunity to respond to the European Commission's public consultation on EU Funds in the area of Cohesion. This response brings together the input from our membership, which takes a key interest in Cohesion policy and funding. (See Annex I for a full list of contributing member organisations.)

Our joint members' response outlines where there is a shared members' view and narrative to contribute to the EU-level gathering of evidence. Some of our member organisations have also submitted individual responses to this consultation.

Scotland Europa and our membership believe it is of great importance to contribute to this consultation, to share the lessons learned from a Scottish perspective, providing continuity to the learning and sharing knowledge from and with our European partners. Additionally, we intend to maintain our knowledge of future developments, so that Scotland may continue to engage with EU institutions and our European regional partners.

Scotland remains committed to European regional collaboration and the value that it brings to us and our partners. We recognise the value that such collaboration has brought to Scotland over the years – be it on regional policy and European Structural and Investment Funds, rural development, Smart Specialisation or research and innovation - in terms of exchange of good practice and the avoidance of bad practice, of policy learning and improving implementation, and developing relationships and networks that deepen and strengthen our capacity and ability to deliver in partnership. Scotland remains committed to working with European partners in these areas of engagement, and to continuing to add value to their work in doing so, as well as our own.

[Scotland's Economic Strategy](#) recognises that a more cohesive economy improves the opportunities, life changes and wellbeing of citizens. European Structural and Investment Funds programmes, and collaboration with EU partners, have contributed to inclusive growth in Scotland, which has become the overall policy objective for Scotland.

In September 2017, Scotland Europa organised a conference on future EU Cooperation and Innovation for Scotland with the EU, on behalf of its membership. [The main conclusions](#) from this successful conference are summarised in this paper, with specific reference to European Territorial Cooperation (ETC). ETC has brought significant value to Scottish beneficiaries and is an area where we believe there is the most to benefit from continuity in cooperation. (Annex II contains case studies demonstrating the value these programmes have brought to Scotland.)

Scotland Europa attended a dialogue on 22 January between DG REGIO and EURADA (European Association of Economic Development Agencies)¹. This contribution outlines the main evidence from the Scotland Europa membership, in addition to the main issues raised by Scotland during that dialogue. The headings below highlight areas where Scotland has experienced value from Cohesion Policy and where we believe improvements to the programme framework could be made from our experience.

¹ Scotland is represented in Eurada through our enterprise agencies Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

European Territorial Cooperation

ETC has brought significant value to Scotland and is the area where we see the most benefit in continuity with our European partners. Scotland would advocate strongly for this continuity and eligibility for Scotland's participation in the programmes where possible, we believe Scotland has both a lot to offer and to gain from our European partners through these programmes.

“Learning and sharing with other EU partners pays much bigger dividends than the financial funding from these projects.” (TRES project – Europe IVC Programme)

We have outlined in this section the most salient points from Scotland's experiences, to contribute to the improvement of the framework and implementation of the programmes.

Firstly, it is well known that the ETC programmes are a stable, long-running source of funding with multi-annual planning, which means that as a small country, Scotland can participate on equal terms with our European Partners. The programmes and projects address areas of high strategic added value. For example, the Northern Periphery and Arctic programme links Scottish partners to geographically similar regions in far northern Europe and the Arctic region, whilst the North Sea Programme delivers strategic value to Scotland in relation to the energy, transport and blue growth sectors – with high levels of interdependence, offering significant development opportunities. The framework provides Scotland with the opportunity to assess its position and performance relative to that of other regions, a useful tool for Scotland's continued economic growth and development.

Additionally, ETC can fund niche and novel policy areas, around shared spaces and resources. This combined with the ability to pool resources and knowledge, enables the delivery of new opportunities and initiatives of cooperation, and provides funding for actions that do not necessarily fall within the remit of nationally based or sectoral policies.

*“Programmes such as this highlight the value of working with partners which have a well-developed specialisation or particular expertise, and, there is a breadth of knowledge and experience available”
(Northern Connections – INTERREG North Sea Region)*

The creation of transnational project partnerships and programme engagement helps widen and deepen policy links and influence across all stakeholder groups from government departments and other public authorities to academia, private sector, voluntary organisations and civil society. These partnerships also ensure that the results of the project have a real impact in the partner countries through encouraging greater dissemination of good practice, and widening the scope for successful enterprises and supply chain mechanisms to proliferate across the region. The extensive reach of this also facilitates and strengthens regional and local relationships, partnerships and networks, a far-reaching and highly beneficial outcome of Scotland's participation to date in the ETC programmes.

However, as competition grows more intense, the need to cooperate will intensify too. The opportunity for longer term planning across different programmes, in a sequenced and synergistic way, has proved extremely beneficial. It allows operations at scale with the potential to become globally competitive, an ever-growing necessity within Europe. This is particularly significant in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with a small business base and a sparse population. There are substantial gains to the region through collaboration with regions facing similar challenges, e.g. business support for SMEs and micro

enterprises in the remote regions of Northern Norway, Sweden and Finland, as well as in southern Europe, as well as facilitating greater partnership working across regional partners. This has led to gains which would not have been achievable without the international dimension. ETC project cooperation widens engagement and networks for smaller organisations, allowing them to punch above their weight in wider policy environments and take initial steps into international collaboration.

Despite this support and considerable effort in 2014-2020 programming, it remains difficult to engage SMEs as partners in ETC programmes. SMEs are difficult to attract due to reduced intervention rates in some programmes, lengthy payment procedures, confusion about unfamiliar public procurement procedures and burdensome paperwork to verify their status and financial solvency in others. Furthermore, given the pilot nature of Interreg, the uncertainty that there will be a big enough and consistent market to justify effort and investment can be a challenge to SME participation. We would welcome efforts by the European Commission to standardise the approach taken with SMEs across the ETC programmes. SMEs' main tool for engagement with EU programmes tends to be with Horizon 2020, and the more interoperability ETC systems can build with the participants' portal, for example for verification of status, the better.

Scotland has seen significant differences in terms of engagement across different ETC programmes. Preparatory work for the 2014-2020 ETC programmes saw a lot of effort by the secretariats and Interact to create more commonality between the programmes' application processes, forms and other areas. The outcome was that the standard form ended up longer than necessary trying to incorporate every eventuality and many programmes chose not to use all the common templates. The differences are seen not just from the perspective of eligibility but also on participation and implementation. For example, in-kind costs are eligible for IVA but not IVB. This often causes confusion for beneficiaries who may wish to participate in more than one ETC programme. It is our view that there is more to be done here, more commonality of rules across programmes in general, but specifically with ETC, without creating additional red tape. Scotland would advocate for the introduction of greater harmonisation of processes, rules etc. across the programmes, so that once a beneficiary understands how to participate in one programme, they can in theory participate in any of their choosing. Additionally, more clarity of First Level Control jurisdiction in Interreg programmes is needed.

“[A key benefit of the project has been] the merging of complementary skills across Europe, the creation of a more unified approach to policy and management across Europe, in addition to the unique experience in learning from partners at an EU and international level.”
(IBIS – INTERREG IVA Cross border programme)

Cohesion Policy

This section looks at Cohesion Policy as a policy instrument and the lessons Scotland has learned through participation.

Cohesion Policy remains a small part of economic and social development budgets in most Member States. However, a key strength of EU regional policy after four decades of delivery remains the partnership approach, where stakeholders have a vested interest in how the funds are delivered, focused and managed. This sharing of ownership of the policy agenda provides added-value. While the partnership approach is not always guaranteed to be well implemented, it is an area where Scotland feels it has many lessons to share.

The framework provided by Cohesion Policy of long-term sustained investment plans are of considerable importance to stakeholders. The 7-year programming period which goes beyond domestic parliamentary terms and changing political priorities and instability during periods of electoral change is highly valued providing the right conditions for achieving structural changes.

There are very few Member State funds and policies which take a holistic approach to both social and economic development needs within their strategy, and although the Scottish Government has taken great effort to deliver this through Scotland's Economic Strategy, Cohesion Policy brings that essential additional value. European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) have been part of the story which has accompanied the transformation of Scotland's economic strategy from being largely reactive to one focussed around key sectors, resulting in considerable activity and achievements. The considerable investments made by the structural funds have made significant differences to regional economic development of Scotland. This is evidenced by the direct outputs of the projects and the wider changes they stimulate within the region. Therefore, it is often the case whereby European Structural and Investment funds provide projects with leverage that without which it would be difficult to secure Member State/Regional funds to deliver.

As Scotland prepares for the loss of ESIF through Brexit, stakeholders have become reflective of the aspects of the EU's regional policy we value. Undoubtedly, its strongest asset is the fact the policy is designed and centred around a place-based strategy. The combination of social and economic development provides coherence to the policy where often Member State policies are often more transactional or delivered in departmental silos. With public sector finances in the UK less plentiful than in the past and taking into consideration the broad range of policy covered by ESIF, some stakeholders anticipate that this might have the effect of moving UK policy away from a focus on regions towards more transactional programmes. This could include an overt (and non-geographic) focus on "Growth Opportunities", rather than as part of an overarching and cohesive regional policy programme, with delivery and programming devolved to the regions and nations of the UK. It is likely that the current regional policy focus of ESIF would be diluted, with a reduced role for local delivery structures, which would also be lamentable.

Smart Specialisation Strategies

Scotland has welcomed the Smart Specialisation agenda, as the concept aligns closely with our existing economic development approach, expressed in Scotland's Economic Strategy and delivered through government and other public-sector partners and stakeholders across Scotland. Furthermore, Scotland's innovation direction has long encouraged an outward focus, seeking to understand and engage with global actors. Our experience has been that Smart Specialisation has generated the most added value as a mechanism for inter-regional collaboration, co-creation and co-investment.

*"Smart specialisation is an effective approach for scaling up regional initiatives into European wide value chains, closing the gap with the markets and implementing EU priorities on the ground."
Vanguard Initiative Declaration*

For example, Scotland is a founder member of the Vanguard Initiative for New Growth Through Smart Specialisation, collaborating with other regions to support regional and European internationalisation and innovation ambitions. The implementation of the bottom-up cooperation projects generated by this partnership, and through similar work undertaken through EU networks and EU-funded projects, requires a flexible approach to policy and funding. The policy and funding framework should adapt to meet the needs of these projects, where they are demonstrating results, rather than the projects meeting the needs of the policy. More broadly, the European Commission could play a greater role in supporting collaboration between regions with similar Smart Specialisations, whilst also ensuring that support recognises the time-frames needed to bring higher-risk demonstration projects in often-developing industries and markets to fruition.

Another area for reflection is the need for flexibility in adapting Smart Specialisation to suit distinct circumstances. Scotland Europa members have made progress in recent years, collaborating with other sparsely populated regions through the S3 platform, and Scottish Enterprise, working alongside our partners in the Vanguard Initiative Pilot in Advanced Manufacturing for Energy and the Marine Renewable Energy Partnership as part of thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on Energy. Work through the Vanguard ADMA Energy Pilot has underlined that large-scale projects are inherently difficult to get off the ground, not only due to the large cost but also the high risk that is associated with such investment. Furthermore, a significant development in the investment market in recent years has been a marked shift of commercial investment away from the kind of capital investment required for major industry infrastructure, and greater consideration could also be given to the merits of joint investments vis-à-vis coordinated investments at a regional level, given the nature of the regulatory, financial and political barriers existent in cross-border investments for managing authorities and implementation bodies.

Regulatory Framework

Whilst the regulation for the European Structural and Investment Funds provides a common framework, the regulation is seldom interpreted by all Managing Authorities in the same way. There is a need for more reassurance for Managing Authorities that their interpretations are correct, before delivery has started. The prospect of changing parameters during a programme period can be demoralising and the experience of our members in Scotland is that our MA and Audit Authority errs on the side of caution for fear of failing to implement in the correct regulatory parameters as viewed by the European Commission and European Court of Auditors during delivery. This situation has resulted in programmes concentrating efforts on activity which can be compliantly delivered rather than what the strategy, economy, and operational programmes (OPs) really need partners to deliver.

Risk averse MAs can avoid investing in areas where the greatest market failure exists, such as innovation, in turn losing the added value of the programme.

Ensuring MAs and audit authorities have common interpretations of EU rules before delivery commences is essential. The focus of an OP should be delivery of the strategy aims not what can be delivered safely within a complicated compliance regime.

Additionally, more developed regions require greater flexibility to choose a limited number of the 11 thematic priorities to focus their OPs around. The approach taken for ETC where at least, 80% of the budget for each cooperation programme should concentrate on a maximum of 4 thematic objectives among the eleven EU priorities could be extended to the domestic regional programmes.

Management & Control Systems

It would be useful to have a standard process across all EU programmes for verification, with a standardised template for timesheets for Member States across all EU programmes. The differing processes create an additional layer of burden for beneficiaries to understand each individual process for the programmes they wish to participate in.

A common usage of the Participant Portal approach developed for innovation programmes where applicants sign up to the Beneficiary Register and appoint a Legal Entity Appointed Representative for all EU programmes would be beneficial. This would include evidencing of SME status which some ESIF programmes ask SME applicants to verify separately. As much as possible it would be useful to standardise online portals across all EU programmes – utilising the Participant Portal as a model. It was a missed opportunity not to fully implement electronic signatures during 2014-2020. There is a need to move to electronic verification of expenditure and result/output achievements for 2021-2027.

SMEs

It can be very difficult to get small organisations to participate in the ESIF programmes due to the cash-flow issues caused by delayed payments – other than where their participation is guaranteed by larger organisations. Taking this into consideration, new ways to involve small organisations, including SMEs, would be a welcome addition to the programme framework. Utilising flexibility in the programmes to encourage SME participation through GBER could be a welcome addition harmonised across all programmes.

Simplification

Often attempts at simplification can end up yielding the opposite result. Aiming for simplification and alignment between programmes is highly desirable from a transparency and governance point of view. An excess focus on audit and securing evidence for financial transactions held back attempts to shift focus towards achieving beneficial outcomes, undermining the achievement of strategic objectives, with a significant effect on delivering impact.

Scottish partners developed the [EU Funding Portal](#) during the 2014-2020 programming period where we have details of EU programmes, calls open to Scotland and projects awarded to Scottish partners. The work to develop a common approach across the EU programmes in order to list them on a common system was considerable given the non-standard terminology used by each EU programme. We would be delighted to speak to the European Commission about our experiences of delivering this project with the aim of improving synergies and common language across EU programmes in the future. Lack

of a common language across all EU programmes (beyond ESIF) is a barrier to understanding a programme's distinctiveness from an applicant's perspective.

Scottish regional programmes set up a Joint Programme Monitoring Committee between ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, with a dotted line to EMFF whose PMC is delivered at UK level. This improved awareness of each programme at a strategic level but it was found that in-depth discussions were still needed at individual programme level with representatives with the in-depth knowledge of their programme subject area.

Simplified Costs

Simplified costs and outcome approaches were introduced during 2014-2020. However, few (if any) regions managed to successfully introduce them for ERDF (some ESF unit costs were used in other regions where a national unit cost methodology already existed). Some Scottish partners successfully utilised unit costs within the ESF programme and the Cross-border programme with Northern Ireland and Ireland, which was a real step forward to the added value simplified costs can bring to project implementation. However, it remains that this was difficult to implement for many, which is disappointing and may have helped overcome issues of a focus on areas which can be compliantly delivered at the expense of more experimental and innovative areas of investment.

Annex I

Scotland Europa is a membership-based organisation that promotes Scotland's interests across the institutions of the European Union and to the representatives of Europe's regions and nations. We help Scottish organisations foster successful European relationships, providing guidance on European policies, funding and networks. We manage Scotland House in Brussels, which is also home to the EU offices of the Scottish Government and other Scottish and European partners.

www.scotlandeuropa.com

Scotland Europa Member Contributors

Scottish Enterprise (SE) is Scotland's main economic, enterprise, innovation and investment agency. SE's goal is to stimulate sustainable growth of Scotland's economy. To achieve this SE helps ambitious and innovative businesses grow and become more successful and works with public and private sector partners to develop the business environment in Scotland. SE delivers a range of dedicated support services locally, nationally and internationally. To build a world-class economy, SE is interested in industries that have real competitive advantage in Scotland. SE work in partnership with universities, colleges, local authorities and other public-sector bodies to achieve its goals.

www.scottish-enterprise.com

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is an ambitious organisation with a unique remit that integrates economic and community development. HIE works in a diverse region which extends from Shetland to Argyll, and from the Outer Hebrides to Moray, covering more than half of Scotland's land mass. HIE is the Scottish Government's economic and community development agency for the north and west of Scotland. HIE's purpose is to generate sustainable economic growth across the Highlands and Islands.

www.hie.co.uk

East of Scotland European Consortium (ESEC) is a local authority membership organisation with a political board which collaborates on a shared EU agenda as it affects and supports economic development in the area. ESEC's agenda is mainly concentrated around EU policy developments and associated lobbying activity but also EU funding opportunities and strategic projects.

www.esec.org.uk

Highlands and Islands European Partnership (HIEP) (*Com-pairteachas Eorpach na Gaidhealtachd's nan Eilean*) is a partnership between key public agencies in the Highlands and Islands who are involved in the economic development of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland and the delivery of the Structural Funds Programmes. It is made up of all seven local authorities within the Highlands and Islands (Argyll and Bute Council, Highland Council, Moray Council, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, North Ayrshire Council, Orkney Islands Council, Shetland Islands Council), the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) is the United Kingdom's leading integrated university encompassing both further and higher education. It is not a traditional university. It is part of a new breed of tertiary institutions, the only one in Scotland and one of only a few in Europe. Based in the



Highlands and Islands of Scotland, its distinctive partnership of 13 independent colleges and research institutions is locally based and rooted in communities, but with national and international reach, as part of a regional university structure.

www.uhi.ac.uk

Annex II

As part of organising the “EU Cooperation and Innovation - delivering value from our European partnerships” event held in Edinburgh on the 29th of September 2017, we have collated case-studies of EU funded projects, which help tell the story of the importance Scotland sees of EU Cooperation.

We invited a broad range of organisations to submit case-studies, which were self selected by their project managers.

The views expressed within the case-studies are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Scotland Europa or its members and partners.

- Towards Regional specialisation for Smart growth spirit (TRES)
- Create Converge
- Sustainable Accessibility between Hinterlands and Gateways around the North Sea (SustAccess)
- Strategic Transnational Cluster Cooperation - unlocking the potential for regional innovation (Northern Connections)
- Integrated aquatic resources management across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland (IBIS)
- Recruitment and Retention of Health Care Providers and Public Service Sector Workers in Remote Rural Areas (Recruit & Retain)
- Creating a leadership for maritime industries - New industries in Europe (CLIPPER)
- Building a local digital innovation culture (LIKE!)
- Implementing Transnational Telemedicine Solutions (ITTS)
- Slow Adventure in Northern Territories (SAINT)
- Hydrogen Transport Economy (HyTrEc)
- Circular Ocean
- Enhancing policies through interregional cooperation: New industrial value chains for growth (S34Growth)
- City Logo

Towards Regional specialisation for Smart growth spirit (TRES)

INTERREG Europe IVC Programme

PARTNERS

Tecnalía (Spain)
Regional Development Agency of the Basque Country (SPRI)
(Spain)
Pannon Business Network Association (Hungary)
Scottish Enterprise (Scotland)
Valga County Government (Estonia)
Piedmont Region (Italy)
Bucharest-Ilfov Regional Development Agency (Romania)
Lubelskie Voivodeship (Poland)
The Baltic Institute of Finland (Finland)
Stuttgart Region Economic Development Corporation (Germany)

OVERVIEW

For Scotland, it has helped shape the thinking and development of:

- Customer driven innovation which led to the development of a Seek and Solve initiative to support SMEs working as solvers with large companies as seekers of solutions
- How to extend business Innovation support and how this can be developed and delivered in partnership through Wider Innovation
- Open innovation which led to the development of an Open Innovation programme through which companies are supported to developing a culture of innovation, leading to demand for innovation
- How you can work more intensely on innovation capability with a group of businesses and the core elements of an Innovation Strategy which is now part of the Innovation Master Class series
- Public procurement innovation which saw the launch of the first NHS SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative) in Scotland

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The value from this collaborative EU engagement has been the opportunity to understand and examine how some of the other leading innovation regions in Europe are developing their policies to support regional economies, what works and why. This has directly contributed to the evolution of innovation policy in Scottish Enterprise as evidenced above. The other benefit is to have a framework that allow the opportunity to assess Scotland's position and performance relative to that of the other regions and get feedback from a group of highly experienced economic development specialists from across Europe.

Project Launch

01 January 2012

Project Completed

02 August 2017

Further Information

Scottish Enterprise

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Website

<http://www.tr3s-project.eu/>

HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

Scottish Enterprise has taken learning from the TRES project to help refresh our innovation support offering and we continue to use the contacts and relationships build with people in other Innovation and Development agencies to further our approach and to build consortia for other EU funded projects.

LESSONS LEARNED

Learning and sharing with other EU partners pays much bigger dividends than the financial funding from these projects.



The best bit about the project is definitely the enriching experience of working with some amazing people from interesting places and developing an appreciation of different places and cultures - vital to build a forward-looking nation!

Gunjan Yadav, Project Manager, Scottish Enterprise

Create Converge

North Sea Region VB Programme

PARTNERS

Dundee City Council/FifeScreen+TayScreen/Digital Dundee, Scotland (UK)
Abertay University, Scotland (UK)
Filmby Aarhus (Denmark)
Filmförderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)
Media Evolution (Sweden)
Screen South, England (UK)
Subatomic (Netherlands)
University of Hertfordshire, England (UK)
VIA University College (Denmark)

OVERVIEW

Creative Digital Solutions to Show, Tell and Sell: this new €3 million project is helping companies in the North Sea region make the most of creative technology to show, tell and sell. The Hollywood movie “Interstellar” saw calls from eminent science journals for it to be shown in schools. Why? Because top scientists said it accurately showed wormholes in space.

The partners in the project celebrated this news because it's a story of creative technology working in partnership with science to entertain, educate and inform. Creative technologies are seeing increasing convergence. Using the perfect mix is invaluable for helping people to enjoy content, understand information and interact with it.

Beyond entertainment, they offer applications for training, service delivery and marketing. For example, people could watch a film about ocean diving, get more information on different habitats and then try a virtual dive, all from the safety of the sofa. Even for experienced divers, they could learn about equipment before installing it underwater. Companies selling equipment could promote it and demonstrate how it works all in glorious 3D or virtually using a headset.

The project is all about fostering collaboration between producers of animation, live action, visual effects, virtual reality and games and with markets for digital solutions beyond entertainment from architecture to fashion, energy to medicine.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Whether content is for entertainment, professional or industrial purposes, it requires the necessary facilities and technology for production and, crucially, production services and workforces with specialist skills. Global consumer demand for film, TV and video games has consistently risen over decades from the birth of cinema to the advent of broadcast television, the internet and smart, mobile

Project Launch

02 April 2016

Project Completed

31 March 2019

Further Information

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Website

<http://www.createconverge.eu/>

devices. Screen media goes far beyond entertainment. It is also used across many industries and sectors - from medicine to energy, architecture to fashion - for education, training and service delivery. And demand is growing for these services also.

Countries whose regions form the NSR include locations that are key global centres for production and post-production (including editing and addition of computerised visual effects and animation) of content including feature films and TV, both home-grown and inward investing. For example, at the top end, over the last 5 years, the UK has successfully attracted its fair share of projects with budgets over US\$100m and has increased exports of UK content and formats. This has particularly been driven by the extension of tax credits to high end TV, postproduction, animation and games. This has equally presented a challenge and created a skills shortage previously predicted in the Next Gen report on the future of the UK visual effects and games sectors.

Partners in CC recognise that similar challenges and problems are encountered for information sharing and service delivery by screen entertainment and other sectors such as medicine, architecture, engineering and construction. They recognise the need to develop economies of scale that are not being achieved within eligible individual member countries/regions of the NSR. No single eligible region has the corporate tools, expertise and capacity that are required to deliver the holistic service needed and compete at European and global levels.

The sector also faces competition from regions such as the Pacific Rim where there are industry subsidies and sector investment well beyond that available in the NSR. Collaboration and pooling of resources offers a means to address this challenge.

The NSR is home to developing centres of expertise and skills. People working in such sectors also tend to be highly mobile; therefore, transnational solutions are an appropriate response with transnational, virtual, cooperative working activities helping to deliver common solutions.



Here to make waves and showcase the North Sea region's digital creativity. We' re on a mission to help companies move into the spotlight and get the help they need to continue making awesome, kick-ass digital products.

Julie Craik, Project Manager, Dundee City Council

Sustainable Accessibility between Hinterlands and Gateways around the North Sea (SustAccess)

North Sea IIIB Programme

PARTNERS

VZW Mobiel Kortrijk (BE)
Padborg Udviklingscenter (DK)
Emsland District (Landkreis Emsland), (DE)
Vest-Agder Fylkeskommune (NO)
Municipality of Sluis (NL)
Aberdeenshire Council (UK)
Perth and Kinross Council (UK)
Essex County Council (UK)
Southend Borough Council (UK)

OVERVIEW

The central aims of the project were to improve the accessibility between rural areas/hinterlands and gateways around the North Sea and secondly to develop the integration of hinterland areas in national and international transport networks. Emphasising an increased use of more sustainable modes of transport, the project covered both goods and passenger transport.

The overall aim of the project was to raise awareness of the Hinterland - Gateway concept at the political level. Partner activities and pilot projects included a wide variety of activities such as supporting the development of different gateway cities and their connection to their hinterland as well as improving public transport and making it more accessible.

For Perth and Kinross, the Sustaccess Project has played a vital role in the development of the Harbour by funding important studies into the long-term direction of Perth Harbour as an inspirational pilot example. Situated 30 kilometres inland in the estuary of the river Tay and within a 90-minute drive of Perth, the harbour serves the Scottish inland and 90% of the population. Accessibility improvements would strengthen Perth's position as a freight gateway. Research had been carried out regarding the creation and links with the new rail head and supporting quay extension by providing additional berthing, Harbour dredging and new system of navigational aids and improved tide level monitoring.

Project Launch

27 February 2004

Project Completed

30 September 2007

Further Information

Perth & Kinross Council

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BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The SustAccess project achieved an increased knowledge and awareness about the public transport interchanges, promotion of biking and methods of user and stakeholder involvement, particularly with a focus on peripheral areas.

At the various "Road Shows" in September 2007, the results of the freight and passenger strands in SustAccess were presented to major stakeholders in the different regions; this included port authorities, terminal operators, transport operators, scientific institutions and neighbouring authorities. Hence the project supported a cross-sectoral sharing of gained knowledge about strategies and concepts in the Gateway Hinterland perspective

HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

The SustAccess project has from the start aimed at involving politicians in the project work where for example the chairman of the steering group was a leading regional politician. At major conferences from most of the project partners, politicians played a reasonable role in the delegations. This enabled the project to address the access items directly to responsible politicians.

The Lead Partner arranged various feedback meetings with leading regional politicians in order to anchor progress. The political agreement on the value of good Hinterland connections can also be seen in the additional investments made in several project areas (i.e. Emsland). In addition, the concept of dryport where a transport hub in the hinterland operates as a virtual extension of the gateway has been implemented in the Interreg IV B project.

Strategic Transnational Cluster Cooperation - unlocking the potential for regional innovation (Northern Connections)

North Sea VB Programme

PARTNERS

Aarhus (Denmark)
Alkmaar (Netherlands)
Business Region Göteborg (Sweden)
Central Denmark Region (Denmark)
CLEAN (Denmark)
Energy Valley (Netherlands)
Falkirk Council, Scotland (UK)
Hafen City University (Germany)
Hamburg (Germany)
iCleantech Vlaanderen (Belgium)
Innovatum (Sweden)
North Denmark Region (Denmark)
Ontwikkelingsbedrijf Noord-Holland Noord (Netherlands)
OREEC (Norway)
Oslo (Norway)
Region South Denmark (Denmark)
Renewable Energy Hamburg (Germany)
Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)
Scottish Enterprise, Scotland (UK)
Sustainable Business Hub (Sweden)

Project Launch

01 November 2016

Project Completed

30 April 2020

Further Information

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Website

<http://northsearegion.eu/northern-connections/>

OVERVIEW

The joint challenge is to test the use of domestic innovation support measures transnationally and address the barriers to collaboration that exist between clusters and regions.

In Scottish terms, that means identifying where there are gaps in collaboration activity and shortcomings in innovation support in order to identify programmes working successfully in partner regions that can be transposed to Scotland.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The objective is to support more enterprises to participate in transnational innovation collaboration via strengthening transnational cluster and city/region cooperation.

On a Scottish level, having both Falkirk Council and Scottish Enterprise as full project partners has improved local cooperation and has also helped to better define how both parties can support each other to focus on opportunities to develop the Grangemouth Industrial complex as a 'living lab', a test-

bed for applying the innovation and business support programmes developed through the Northern Connections project.

Grangemouth's role as a primary economic hub for Scotland offers opportunities to test a varied range of initiatives but also increases the prospect of amplifying the potential beneficial outcomes by identifying which measures can be rolled out across the rest of the county.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project is in its early phases but what is evidently clear is that the potential opportunity for transnational collaboration is significantly greater than the current levels of partnership and cooperation would suggest and that if participation in these programmes is to cease then Scotland's economy and society will be losing a valuable resource.

Additionally, programmes such as this highlight the value of working with partners which have a well-developed specialisation or particular expertise, and, across a programme with 21 partners there is a breadth of knowledge and experience available.



“What initially attracted Falkirk to this project was the chance to explore the opportunities for clustering and transnational collaboration and we are already starting to see benefit of that. However, as a local authority, what has convinced us of the value of the INTERREG programme is the depth of knowledge and experience that the programme makes available through our interaction with the other partnership members.”

Matthew Farrell, Economic Development Officer, Falkirk Council

Integrated aquatic resources management across Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland (IBIS)

Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland
INTERREG IVA programme

PARTNERS

IBIS is a partnership between the Loughs Agency (Lead Partner), the University of Glasgow and Queen's University Belfast in an £8m cross-border project to help protect aquatic resources across Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.

OVERVIEW

Funded from August 2011, IBIS has delivered 70 years' worth of applied research in doctoral and masters projects, leaving a legacy of expertise in sustainable aquatic resources management in the three jurisdictions. The project further delivered, by June 2015, 16 Continuing Professional Development courses and 12 Knowledge Transfer workshops by - leaving a legacy of expertise in sustainable aquatic resources management in the three jurisdictions.

The project delivered research, education, and training at SCENE (the Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment, based at the University of Glasgow) and at the Marine Laboratory in Portaferry (Queen's University Belfast), in collaboration with the staff and facilities of the Loughs Agency. The project has provided training, empirical data and sharing of best practice in the field of aquatic resources management across the programme area and beyond.

IBIS has made a significant contribution to 70 years of empirical research which will impact at a national and international level.

The high-level CPD training courses, knowledge exchange events (plus the training of practitioners to higher degree levels) have enhanced empirical data provided to agencies involved in resources management at both a National and International level.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

A key benefit of the project has been the merging of complementary skills across Europe, the creation of a more unified approach to policy and management across Europe, in addition to the unique experience in learning from partners at an EU and international level.

Project Launch

01 August 2011

Project Completed

30 September 2016

Further Information

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HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

Much of the technical expertise which came from this project has provided a springboard upon which we were successfully able to develop at an International level and engage in other funding opportunities apart from INTERREG.

LESSONS LEARNED

Key lessons learned from the project are that the management of large EU-funded projects is difficult, and requires professional management expertise. Furthermore, extensive dialogue between scientists and managers/policy makers leads to much more useful science at an international level.



“IBIS represents a great partnership between government agencies, stakeholders and universities. The participation of cutting edge research universities such as Queen’s University Belfast and our partners at Glasgow University means that we can provide quality assurance and make sure that the research that informs policy comes in a global context and that we provide the best cutting-edge tools to answer the questions that are needed for local policy” .

Dr Julia Sigwart, Queen’s University Belfast

Recruitment and Retention of Health Care Providers and Public Service Sector Workers in Remote Rural Areas (Recruit & Retain)

Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013

PARTNERS

NHS Western Isles Scotland (UK)
University of Aberdeen, Scotland (UK)
Northern Ontario School of Medicine (Canada)
Agency for Health and Prevention (Greenland)
FSA Akureyri Hospital (Iceland)
Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT)(Ireland and Northern Ireland)
Finmark Hospital Trust (Norway)
County Council of Västerbotten (Sweden)

OVERVIEW

Recruit and Retain was a Northern Periphery Programme Strategic Project with core activities in health care but an expanded remit for the wider public service sector. Eight partners from eight countries established a comprehensive evidence base to inform development of solutions (29 products and services) designed to encourage recruitment and enhance retention of professional public service sector workers in remote rural areas. The Recruit and Retain Business Model describes seven steps to facilitate implementation of the solutions by organisations responsible for providing sustainable public-sector workforces in remote rural areas.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

A core benefit from the project has been the replicability of and access to the services developed through the project. Many of the individual products and services were developed by a specific partner, however during the development phase all partners had the opportunity to follow developments and input as appropriate. Once developed, other partners were at liberty to make use of the developing or developed product or service in their own organisation. This is shown below.

Project Launch

01 June 2011

Project Completed

30 June 2014

Further Information

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HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

The project has had impact on recruitment and retention strategy in the NHS in Scotland; influencing, for example, the development of the Scottish Rural Medical Collaborative and NHS Highland's "Being Here" project.

Furthermore, the project has also directly led to a follow-up project funded by the 2014-2020 Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme. This follow-up project is called "Recruit and Retain: Making it Work" and will run until 2019. It involves a wider collaborative of Scottish partners - NHS Highland, NHS Education for Scotland, North of Scotland Planning Group, NHS Orkney and NHS Shetland, with NHS Western Isles as observers. The aim of "Making it Work" is to forward work developed in "Recruit and Retain"; tailoring the business model to local and regional public-sector needs, with each region's implementation's being evaluated as a case study community within the participating areas. As part of this, a flexible policy framework is being developed - customizable by other jurisdictions interested in replicating the "Making it Work" successes.

LESSONS LEARNED

A core output from the project was a business model describing seven required steps to make maximum use of the solutions.

- Above all, a primary lesson has been the development of a proactive recruitment and relocation strategy, which involves working with staff to understand when further staff are required, how they can be attracted to work with you, why they are required and what is necessary to retain them.
- People who work in rural environments are more likely to have a rural background. They may be less interested in shopping and willing to live away from families and friends. They may be flexible and adaptable; aware of the challenges of remote rural working and living. A core lesson is not to employ people because they can't get a job anywhere else.
- You can never have too much information about rural living. Honest and reliable information about life and work in remote rural areas is key. The use of media such as brochures, booklets, videos let people know what is on offer; thereby getting the information to them.
- Community engagement is crucial. Communities have an obligation to ensure that the people they require to provide essential public services are comfortable and welcome. The community should be actively involved in job definition, the recruitment process and the ongoing well-being of newcomers and their families.
- Supporting staff and their families demonstrates your desire to care for staff. Staff need to be appreciated and understand when they are doing a good job. They need to know you will encourage the good ones to stay, if not they may leave. Buddying and mentoring helps the settling in process.
- The best staff hanker for knowledge and new ways of doing things, and avoiding intellectual and educational starvation may be difficult in remote rural areas. Much that is available may meet urban rather than rural appetites, and courses should be relevant to your local needs. Engage with your local universities, and ensure students and trainees can make use of your expertise and knowledge. Online learning is great for remote rural areas but requires time and resources make sure both are available and encourage your staff to use them.
- Without money, none of this will happen – remote rural public services are more expensive to provide than urban ones – the always have been and they always will be – the laws of economy of scale apply here – ignore them at your peril. Investing in your recruiting system will pay dividends but the returns will be greater if you invest in retention as well. All of the Recruit and

Retain Solutions are open source and free to use – but they may cost to implement and you will have to find the money to do it – there are no magic bullets – allocate resources and invest in your staff.



"The approach of creating and then using an evidence base to design, develop and pilot 29 specific products and services in eight different countries, has allowed development of a practical model relevant to all involved in recruiting and retaining public sector staff in remote rural areas.

Working in remote rural areas is not for everyone and there are people who are more suited to working in the urban environment, but for some the opportunities and challenges of delivering high quality services to people living in isolated areas is their dream; these people must be identified, valued and supported - the Recruit and Retain Business Model shows the way"

David Heaney, Rossal Research and Consultancy

Creating a leadership for maritime industries - New industries in Europe (CLIPPER)

Interreg Europe Programme

PARTNERS

Pays de la Loire Region (France)
Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR)
Asturias Energy Foundation (FAEN) (Spain)
Fife Council, Scotland (UK)
Ligurian Cluster for Marine Technologies (Italy)
Machine Technology Center Turku Ltd (Finland)
R&D centre Kiel University of Applied Sciences GmbH (Germany)
Public Institution RERA S.D. for Coordination and Development of
Split Dalmatia County (Croatia)

OVERVIEW

The CLIPPER project stems from the conviction that support to maritime industries is crucial in order to tackle 'Blue Growth' challenges, as well as energy transition imperatives. The global economic recession has not spared the maritime sector, which also suffers from the ever-growing competition from emerging countries. Regions have a crucial part to play to maintain SMEs' competitiveness in their traditional activities (shipyards in particular) while becoming leaders on blossoming markets such as Marine Renewable Energies (MRE).

Working closely together, the project's partner regions explore and implement new ways of supporting SMEs to improve their quality upgrading, manufacturing performance and leadership in new markets such as MREs.

The partners will develop action plans for each of their territories and design political recommendations to impulse them locally, in line with the analysis of relevant national and European contexts.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

EU collaboration has enabled learning from similar geographic regions, highlighting how other regions support SME competitiveness as companies in maritime industries move from traditional to newer opportunities, especially in offshore renewable energies.

Project Launch

01 January 2017

Project Completed

30 June 2021

Further Information

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“Even at the early stages, seeing different ways the diversification has been supported in other areas has been beneficial in simulating how we can improve what we do in Fife.”

Iain Shirlaw, Economic Adviser, Fife Council

Building a local digital innovation culture (LIKE!)

North Sea Programme

PARTNERS

Gronigen (Lead Beneficiary – NL)
University of Groningen (NL)
Province of Drenthe (NL)
Rotterdam (NL)
Aalborg (Den)
Angus Council (UK), Suffolk County Council (UK)
University of Vechta (GER)
Stadt Vechta (GER), Roeselare (BE)

OVERVIEW

LIKE! involves ten partners from five North Sea Region-countries; working together on innovative solutions for public service delivery with the use of data. The project will co-create smarter services through nine transnational pilots, and will work collaboratively with local government, citizens, universities and SMEs. The aim of this co-operation is to develop new skills, to share knowledge and engage with citizens, business and academic institutions to deliver services which meet the needs of the communities they serve. The digital service delivery will make innovative use of data currently available, whilst also developing new technology to best-suit providers and users of services.

Current activities within LIKE! include:

- Co-creating public service delivery in the Netherlands, where a number of public services have come together with the LIKE! project. The focus is on how data can help improve customer contacts, and on how the use of social media and other channels can improve communication between citizens and public organisations.
- The development of a transnational virtual Open Data Innovation Lab. To do this, a task force from Angus, Rotterdam, Groningen, Aalborg, Drenthe and the University of Groningen has started a virtual open data lab concentrating on four themes, namely; energy; nature and tourism; the elderly and accessibility of care in rural areas; and regional sustainable development.
- "Preparations for Smart Seniors", whereby Rotterdam and Grethe will host events to explore how digitalisation can help make life easier for elderly citizens. The results of this will be shared with all LIKE! partners.

Project Launch

01 October 2016

Project Completed

01 October 2019

Further Information

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BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Throughout Europe, public bodies are tasked with doing more for less. This collaborative programme allows for the sharing of knowledge and best practice with a range of public organisations, academia, businesses and citizens. Coming together around these common challenges allows for innovative practices to be trialled across a range of services. Europe is an ageing society, and it is vital to look at new, developing technology which can be utilised to improve and innovate service delivery. Similarly, how we communicate and use data across all sectors of our society are common to all nations which look to improve and innovate. At an early stage, partners are already learning from each other, and we are all at different stages of progress and success.

LESSONS LEARNED

This project is still at an early stage, but LIKE! and other European transnational projects allow the taking away any fear of failure! Innovation inevitably means that a number of trials will be needed before finding the correct and best fit solutions. In the current economic climate, organisations of all types are nervous and limited in funding innovation. Under this programme we have the 'luxury' to fail.

Implementing Transnational Telemedicine Solutions (ITTS)

Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013

PARTNERS

University of Aberdeen (Scotland)
Norwegian Centre for Integrated Care and Telemedicine (Norway)
Oulu Arc Subregion (Finland)
National University of Ireland Galway (Ireland)
County Council of Västerbotten (Sweden)
Centre for Connected Health & Social Care (Northern Ireland)

OVERVIEW

The aim of ITTS was to implement transnational telemedicine solutions across the Northern Periphery region. ITTS has supported the development of 25 new services in 48 sites in the participating countries. In total 3890 patients have used these services as a direct result of the project, expanding access to timely and local health care. The estimate for potential use of these services is over 27,500 patients with the involvement of 550 staff in all demonstrator projects. We estimated that 6.03 tonnes of carbon emissions were saved as a direct result of travel time saved by the introduction of these services.

"I think this was an ambitious and very relevant project in using telemedicine to improve healthcare delivery in rural and remote situations. It was impressive to see how you were able to co-ordinate activity and advice among so many centres and in so many countries and even overcome language difficulties. I regard your achievement as a major advance in remote health care delivery and technology and I look forward to studying your final report in August".

Professor Nelson Norman.

President, Institute of Remote Healthcare, TRANSNATIONAL, conference delegate

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Projects were implemented across all the countries involved in the project. All projects involved at least two countries (one export, one import) but many involved multi-partners. All six countries were actively involved in all projects, so that learning took place, hopefully leading to future implementation. Time and resource within the project was the main barrier to wider implementation. Results were disseminated to non-participating countries within the NPP area (e.g. Greenland and Iceland) and beyond, to other regions of Europe.

Project Launch

01 September 2011

Project Completed

31 March 2014

Further Information

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"ITTS clearly exhibited the benefit of a collaborative approach by partners across Europe, learning with, and from each other in developing solutions for common challenges".

John Matheson. Director: Health Finance, eHealth and Pharmaceuticals, Scottish Government, Scotland, conference delegate

HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

"The ITTS project opened up new horizons for us and gave us the courage to extend the use of video-conferencing to acute psychiatry. Through the creation of live links we are now able to offer consultant advice to GPs, A&E doctors and staff in the more remote areas of our catchment. This has led to increased confidence in assessment and convenience for patients who no longer have to travel long distances for an expert opinion. We believe that the use of this technology will develop into everyday practice and that psychiatry will be at the forefront of delivery of person centred approaches in acute as well as long term care."

Dr Grace Fergusson, Locum Consultant, NHS Highland, SCOTLAND (clinical partner on project3).

LESSONS LEARNED

- Deciding to focus on implementation of services from the outset – this was directed by the emphasis on products and services by the NPP during the application process, and meant the project instituted real change in service delivery in the region.
- Deciding which projects to include as demonstrators – this was underpinned by transnational knowledge exchange between partners; it took time and effort to gather information, to negotiate between partners to shape each demonstrator project and make it relevant to service delivery in the local, and transnational context.
- Deciding to incorporate key perspectives – ensuring citizens had input into the project meant that the projects selected were scrutinised in a “common-sense” fashion.
- Deciding whether implementation should proceed by using a business case approach to drive change meant that plans for implementation were coherent and transparent, and subject to scrutiny. It also meant that financial, organisational, and clinical barriers to change were considered before implementation.
- Presenting findings in an innovative style at the final conference, with each demonstrator being presented as a showcase, with information, video, other visuals, and quotes from patients and staff and included representatives of each demonstrator project were available to explain details to interested delegates.

"This innovative project, although challenging to execute has had a colossal impact on healthcare delivery across the 6 countries in which it has been operating. It has shown that new ideas in healthcare do not necessarily arise only in large urban university cities and that ideas originating in rural communities may also be applicable in urban centres".

Professor Alexander Munro, Centre for Health Science, Inverness, SCOTLAND, conference delegate



"We think we have made a difference to people living in the Northern Periphery and believe we have unleashed the potential for future developments, as technology advances, and as clinicians, patients and service planners get used to telemedicine being part of everyday practice."

"Knowledge exchange between partner countries not only enabled the success of ITTS, it also meant that it has been a real pleasure and privilege working with people across the Northern Periphery"

Dr. David Heaney, ITTS project director

Slow Adventure in Northern Territories (SAINT)

Northern Periphery and Arctic Interreg Programme

PARTNERS

University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland (Lead Partner) (UK)
Derry City and Strabane District Council, Northern Ireland
Wild Norway (Norway)
Mid Sweden University (Sweden)
Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Ireland
Leitrim County Council (Ireland)
Naturpolis Ltd, (Finland)
Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services, Finland
University of Iceland (Iceland)
Icelandic Tourism Research Centre (Iceland)
The Nord-Trøndelag University College (HiNT) (Norway)

OVERVIEW

The SAINT project seeks to extend the marketing reach of businesses in the slow adventure tourism sector, in order to encourage more tourists to come to these peripheral areas to enjoy and experience the outdoors and engage with remote, wild and nature-rich places.

Although the project is still running the main achievement has been in the Scottish case study, where a clustering model was used to bring together a range of tourism businesses to create new tourism products.

These clusters are the result of months of working with local businesses to test the effectiveness of collaboration that enables these micro-businesses to diversify their existing products and combine their expertise and offerings to broaden and enhance their promotional potential.

The interest at the 2017 VisitScotland EXPO show, where the 'slow adventure' cluster's stand won a couple of awards, was considerable, especially from international tour operators. As a result of this clear appetite for slow adventure, the partners are looking to create a spin-off company to sell these products.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The project has demonstrated added value by enabling the project lead partner in Scotland to work closely with micro-businesses on ventures that have led to the sale of commercial products, which in

Project Launch

13 April 2015

Project Completed

12 April 2018

Further Information

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turn will help to sustain and grow the tourism sector, and consequent employment, in a rural and marginalised area.

LESSONS LEARNED

Effective collaboration with multiple businesses can be a lengthy process, given the busy nature of tourism SMEs for much of the year and issues inherent in dealing with many partners, but rewards favour those who persevere.

Hydrogen Transport Economy (HyTrEc)

North Sea Programme

PARTNERS

Aberdeen City Council (Lead Partner) (Scotland)
SP Technical Research Institute (Sweden)
Hydrogen Sweden (Sweden)
Green Network (Denmark)
Europaisches Institut fur Innovation (Germany)
Gateshead College (UK)
Waterstofnet (Belgium)

OVERVIEW

HyTrEc achieved a lot through the project life, especially the establishment of a Joint Strategy Framework for the North Sea Region and recommendations by the HyTrEc project partnership to support the deployment of hydrogen fuelled transport.

During the project lifespan, HyTrEc developed a range of tools, materials and platforms to share the project findings, engage with a variety of stakeholders at different levels through various technical events such as the Fuel Cells, Batteries and Hydrogen Group Exhibit at Hanover Messe (Europe's largest exhibition for fuel cells) and All Energy, the UK's premier event for renewable energy as well as more public events. The project website was a key communication tool, where all project materials are published: www.hytr.ec.eu.

HyTrEc successfully engaged and exchanged with a variety of projects and organisation all with the same aim of supporting the deployment of hydrogen fuelled transport. This was done through the industry stakeholder group, an extensive project stakeholder list (over 300 stakeholders), a LinkedIn group (with over 100 members from 18 countries) and networking at various events throughout Europe.

The project made great steps towards communicating with politicians and influencing political opinion to the value and importance of the hydrogen sector. At a local level, each project had great political support which was visible all the way through the project for example the Danish partner Green Network started the project with little hydrogen vehicle activity and ended the project with a refuelling station and several fuel cell vehicles being used by the municipality.

At a regional level, again political support was evident especially during partner visits/conferences such as the launch of the 2 hydrogen hybrid vans at the North Sea Commission Annual Conference in Aberdeen 2014; or the launch of the Aberdeen Strategy Framework for Hydrogen at All Energy 2013 by Ed Davey, the UK Energy & Climate Change Minister at the time.

At an EU level HyTrEc was able to engage and inform politicians with influence on the European agenda most notably through the launch of the joint hydrogen strategy framework for the North Sea Region, at the final conference in Aberdeen

Project Launch

02 June 2013

Project Completed

30 June 2015

Further Information

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BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

HyTrEc deployed a high level of transnational working to allow NSR exchange of information and practices to guide the final outputs of the project. 6 monthly conferences where all partners attended, to participate in the working meetings and update other partners on progress within their local projects - these transnational exchanges allowed partners to compare progress, share information and experiences. An online discussion forum via LinkedIn, further enabled a wide cross section of people to take part in discussions. There were over 100 participants from 18 countries from as far afield as Japan, South Africa and India.

One of the main outputs of the project was the development of a Joint Hydrogen Strategy Framework for the North Sea Region. In order to develop the strategy framework, the HyTrEc partnership and Industry stakeholders focused on identifying the key barriers or challenges to be overcome. Exercises were influenced by the experience that the project partners have in the hydrogen sector or from the introduction of other alternative fuels, renewable energy and low carbon sectors. Other activities were also taken into account, such as demonstration activities carried out by some partners, as well as the development of the HyTrEc education programmes and a journey by hydrogen car around the North Sea Region.

The development and deployment of the demonstration infrastructure and vehicles has contributed a high level of learning to the partnership and beyond. The progress and issues of the vehicles and refuelling station have been discussed at each partner meeting and when possible the partners have been on study tours to experience and learn from the demonstrations at first hand. The experiences and lessons learned have been documented in a lessons learned log and have informed the NSR strategy framework for hydrogen which will be used to aid further deployments.

LESSONS LEARNED

Over the project life-cycle, HyTrEc collated a 22-page document on some of the key lessons learned. Some Difficulties pertained to locating trained local technicians who weren't able to repair vehicles and so identified a need to provide in-house training so that staff are trained to undertake the required work and get any damaged vehicles back on the road quickly.

Initially drivers were opting for diesel mode only as they lacked confidence to use the hydrogen. Two rounds of driver training were required to overcome this anxiety and empower drivers to use the H2 mode. All data had been recorded to a USB, which was required to be downloaded and sent away. An easier option in future would be for wireless dongle type approach with live time analysis.

Circular Ocean

Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme

PARTNERS

Environmental Research Institute, North Highland College UHI (Scotland) -
Lead Partner

Centre for Sustainable Design, University for the Creative Arts (England)
Macroom E (Rep. of Ireland)

Arctic Technology Centre (Greenland)

Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway)

Also a range of associate partners: Nofir AS (Norway), Marine Scotland
(Scotland), Environmental Protection Agency (Rep. of Ireland), Local
Enterprise Office South Cork (Rep. of Ireland).

OVERVIEW

The €1.5 million Circular Ocean project seeks to inspire enterprises and
entrepreneurs to realise the hidden opportunities of discarded fishing nets
and ropes in the Northern Periphery & Arctic (NPA) region.

Led by the Environmental Research Institute (ERI) of the North Highland College UHI, Circular Ocean
has been funded to tackle the increasing problem of marine pollution by encouraging the 'upcycling'
and 'repurposing' of plastic litter, i.e. to turn waste plastic from the sea into a useful resource and
support the move to a more circular economy.

As increasing levels of marine litter are particularly pertinent to the NPA region, the Circular Ocean
project acts as a catalyst to motivate and empower remote communities to develop sustainable and
green business solutions that will enhance income generation and retention within local regions.

Through transnational collaboration and eco-innovation Circular Ocean is developing and testing new
sustainable solutions to incentivise the collection and reprocessing of discarded fishing nets in the move
towards a more circular economy.

The project has been running for just under 2 years and is not completed but it has already delivered
tangible economic benefits across NPA - e.g. the project has linked a local plastic manufacturer with a
designer and the local artisan sector have been connected to other businesses and development
agencies in the area, resulting in cross-sector collaborations and addressing the challenges and
opportunities of the more remote areas in the North.

The project will pilot testing new uses for old fishing nets in two areas: 1. Using fishing nets to reinforce
concrete, and within building materials i.e. bricks tiles, and roof insulation. 2. Using fishing nets as a
material to remove pollutants from water. The focus of both pilots will be on creating environmentally

Project Launch

01 October 2015

Project Completed

30 September 2018

Further Information

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sustainable products. Another potential use of marine plastic that is being investigated through the project is as a feedstock for 3D printing.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The Circular Ocean project features a cohesive and strong collaboration of committed partners from diverse regions representing remote and rural communities. Adopting a triple helix partnership involving public, private and academic partners ensures that the results of the project have a real impact in the partner countries through encouraging greater dissemination of good practice, and widening the scope for successful enterprises and supply chains mechanisms to proliferate across the region.

Circular Ocean is a very current project with real potential to harness the wealth of the ocean, view fishing nets as a raw material, and through novel project activities unlock hidden economic opportunities in this specific sector. Through transnational collaboration and eco-innovation, Circular Ocean's position in the wider context of national and EU initiatives is of real need and of strategic importance enhancing the eco-innovation capacity of northern regions, as well as providing real time solutions for businesses and communities of the Northern Periphery and Arctic areas which have vast coastlines and important fishing industries.

In October 2016, the Circular Ocean project was recognised as worthy of the European Commission RegioStars Public Choice award – a prestigious award highlighting some of the best examples of European collaboration, resulting in tangible benefits for the regions involved and also shared across the wider European community.

HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

The project is on-going and it has enabled capacity building at ERI and connected it with stakeholder's other than those the University usually engages with - such as harbour masters, fishermen, fishing net manufactures, business support groups, and entrepreneurs. This is vital to ensure that the research can be better applied and address the real need on the ground across the Northern Periphery area. The work through the project has gained a lot of momentum and the consortium is already discussing the follow-on activities and further collaboration.

LESSONS LEARNED

The project has developed a better understanding of the issues of marine litter across different parts of the Northern Periphery. The sector turned out to be quite fragmented and not well regulated. Through transnational collaboration, the project is developing solutions to address this fragmentation and creating the market, testing and sharing approaches across the regions and connecting people in remote communities with the opportunities in their local areas.



“Virtually all plastic ever produced is still with us today, with more entering the seas each year to the detriment of fish, birds, turtles and marine mammals. If we utilise this so-called waste material for a new purpose we reduce the amount of new plastic created, reduce marine pollution, and encourage new green enterprises. Our aim in Circular Ocean is to facilitate this in the northern Europe and Arctic region.”

Neil James, University of Highlands & Islands

Enhancing policies through interregional cooperation: New industrial value chains for growth (S34Growth)

Interreg Europe Programme

PARTNERS

The Council of Tampere Region (Finland)
The Baltic Institute of Finland (Finland)
Basque Government (Spain)
Catalan Agency for Business Competitiveness (ACCIO) - Government of Catalonia (Spain)
Flemish Government, Department Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI) (Belgium)
AFIL - Intelligent Factory Lombardy Cluster (Italy)
National Innovation Agency (Portugal)
Scottish Enterprise (Scotland)
Region Sane (Sweden)
Brain port Development (The Netherlands)
Province of Zooid-Holland (The Netherlands)

OVERVIEW

Within the Vanguard Initiative 'New Growth through Smart Specialisation', the S34Growth partners have been pioneering a new approach to European industry-led interregional cooperation since late 2013.

As regions desire to leverage their own strengths in combination with innovation capacity in other regions interregionally, the existing policy structures and financing frames need to be improved to suit these interregional ambitions.

The main objective of the S34Growth project has been to develop and improve existing regional policy instruments to facilitate this interregional collaboration which in turn will support the renewal of Europe's industry and competitiveness. The focus is on improving the policy framework in order to be able to test and mainstream a methodology for industry-led interregional cooperation following the smart specialisation strategy (S3) principle that can be easily replicated at any domain anywhere in Europe.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

The project has provided SE with the opportunity to gain a more in-depth perspective of the approaches partner regions have taken to progressing their respective S3 agendas and the adoption of Industry 4.0. This has subsequently highlighted to SE areas where our approach is complementary and has the potential for larger inter-regional collaborative work as well a areas where partners have taken a different approach and Scotland can learn from this.

Project Launch

01 April 2016

Project Completed

31 March 2020

Further Information

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Website

www.interregeurope.eu/S34Growth/

Hosting a study visit in Glasgow in March 2017 also provided an opportunity for Scotland to showcase areas of expertise, particularly in the renewable energy sector and financial instruments.

Whilst still ongoing, the project has undoubtedly brought the 10 partner regions closer together, building up a level of trust between the partners and helping to encourage further introductions and interactions between various agencies. This will hopefully lead to enhanced joint working in the future once the project has completed.

HOW THE PROJECT AFFECTED CHANGE

The project has already led to further discussions with various partners on the potential for joint inter-regional projects, options for the utilisation of Article 70 and also further sharing of knowledge around topics such as joint calls, societal challenges and public/private procurement.

LESSONS LEARNED

The majority of the partners have shown a strong ability to engage with industry during the implementation of their S3 strategies, predominantly through the utilisation of their cluster organisations. This is something that Scotland has historically been weaker on than other partner regions and is a key area of learning during the various regional learning journeys.



“The S34Growth project has allowed Scottish Enterprise to build closer, deeper relationships with a range of partner regions in Europe, providing not only the opportunity to showcase Scotland’ s areas of expertise to new audiences but also the chance to witness first-hand the various approaches different regions are adopting to pursue their smart specialisation agendas. This has helped to identify potential new approaches to smart specialisation as well as highlighting areas of alignment in policy and approach, both of which will hopefully help to further shape and enhance Scotland’ s approach to innovation going forward.”

James Coggs, Research & Evaluation, Scottish Enterprise

City Logo

Urbact Programme

PARTNERS

City of Utrecht (The Netherlands) Lead partner
Municipality of Zaragoza (Spain)
City of Warsaw (Poland)
City of Vilnius (Lithuania)
City of Oslo (Norway)
City of Aarhus (Denmark)
City of Coimbra (Portugal)
City of Genoa (Italy)
City of Alba Iulia (Romania)
City of Dundee (UK)

OVERVIEW

CityLogo focused on developing innovative and integrated place brand management for cities, bringing together a number of cities with varying levels of experience in place/destination branding.

The project consisted of:

- A series of study visits to cities with experience in place-branding – Barcelona, Zurich
- 4 Thematic Workshops in Oslo, Utrecht, Dundee and Zaragoza
- The development of an Urbact Local Support Group in each area
- Development of a local action plan for each area, peer reviewed by partners

Partners had varying levels of experience of engaging in brand-led approaches and worked together to deliver 21st century appropriate models for delivery. URBACT projects are supported by a lead expert who undertakes a baseline study, supports the development of the programme,

As a result of participating in the project, Dundee realised that their city branding was quite far advanced, but with falling budgets, devising new digital models of branding and marketing were key. The project allowed us to learn from best practice, identify new ways of working, to engage local stakeholders to develop a local action plan and to implement the plan beyond the lifetime of the project.

Dundee hosted one of the thematic workshops which allowed us to showcase our city and our aims and ambitions whilst also generating income for the city through hotel nights etc.

BENEFIT DERIVED FROM EU COLLABORATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Project Launch

01 February 2013

Project Completed

30 April 2015

Further Information

Dundee City Council

Diane Milne

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Website

urbact.eu/citylogo

EU collaboration: Dundee has been delivering a brand-led approach to city marketing for many years but participating in the project allowed us to learn from best practice elsewhere; identify new potential models of delivery; engaging local stakeholders to develop an action plan.

Expert support: support from an expert in the field of city branding and marketing to analyse existing activity and support the development of our local action plan.

URBACT National Capacity Building Programme: During URBACT II a series of workshops were held in each participating member country where every partner in a project from that country attended 3 training events which focused on key method of addressing urban issues.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Dundee's existing brand marketing was of a high quality
 - Support to identify key audience segments and how to interact with them digitally
 - Key information to support the brief for the redevelopment of Dundee's website Dundee.com
 - Establishment of a key stakeholder group focused on delivery – previously the brand stakeholder group consisted of high level officers from partner agencies who were less involved in the hands-on delivery of activity
 - The benefits of crowd-sourcing the city's "story" – making the most of local audiences to sell the city's assets – narrative/story being key to a city's brand
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