

Since the start of the first North Sea Region programme, cooperation in the region has matured and intensified. This has meant that with each programme period it has been possible to raise ambitions for the impact and durability of the projects funded, and the new North Sea Region programme will continue this progression.

Thematically, the programme builds on positions of strength, developing on proven successes and complementing these with new themes based on the current analysis.

New projects will be:

+ **Based on the shared or complementary needs of all partners.** Projects should be built around a clearly defined and agreed set of needs with a clear definition of the requirements and skills that each partner brings into the partnership. Projects allow all participating regions to pool the resources used on their particular challenges – and completing these with new themes based on the current analysis of the programme area.

+ **Reliant on joint implementation.** The value of cooperation lies in bringing in knowledge and new perspectives from other partners. Results should be based on joint action.

+ **Focused on delivering progress on core programme goals.** Every programme objective has a clear output and a related programme target. These targets give a clear direction for all activities and the results expected, but leave freedom for projects to define their precise activities based on partner needs and the evolving situation in the programme area.

+ **Implementing EU policy.** Projects should give practical shape to European policy by developing synergies with existing national and regional initiatives and also integrating the outputs of relevant projects under other Interreg programmes and all other funding programmes.

+ **Innovative.** Some projects work directly with 'innovation' by supporting the development of new products and services for the market. All projects are expected to be 'innovative' by rethinking standard approaches and using the skills, knowledge and experience available in the partnership to develop completely new approaches.

+ **Based on demonstrating and proving what is possible.** Research is an important part of the programme, but it is important to stress that the programme focus is on demonstrating practical developments for the North Sea Region and working through the barriers to making these developments a reality. Projects must therefore focus on demonstrating and testing new ideas.

+ **Limited and specific in the changes they wish to generate.** Projects should carefully define the need they will address, even where this means that other important issues must be left out.

+ **Inspiring national and regional policy and practices.** Programme funding is limited, but its ambition is to positively influence the whole programme area. This requires that the positive effects of results are not limited to the project partnership, but are communicated to the most important stakeholders in order to secure a durable legacy after the end of the project.

THE INTERREG NORTH SEA REGION PROGRAMME

Overview of strategy and priorities



This document is based on the draft Cooperation Programme and intended for participants at the North Sea Conference 2014. Information might still be subject to change.

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Priority Axes for the Interreg North Sea Region Programme

THEMATIC OBJECTIVE	INVESTMENT PRIORITY	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE
Priority 1 Thinking Growth: Supporting growth in North Sea Region economies		
Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	Promoting business investment in research and innovation, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialization, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies	Develop new or improved knowledge partnerships between businesses, knowledge institutions, public administrations and end users with a view to long-term cooperation (post project) on developing products and services
		Enhance regional innovation support capacity to increase long-term innovation levels and support smart specialization strategies
		Stimulate the public sector to generate innovation demand and innovative solutions for improving public service delivery
Priority 2 Eco-innovation: Stimulating the green economy		
Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	Supporting industrial transition towards a resource efficient economy, promoting green growth, eco-innovation and environmental performance management in the public and private sectors	Promote the development and adoption of products, services and processes to accelerate greening of the North Sea Region economy
		Stimulate the adoption of new products, services and processes to reduce the environmental footprint of regions around the North Sea
Priority 3 Sustainable North Sea Region: Protecting against climate change and preserving the environment		
Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management	Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches	Demonstrate new and/or improved methods for improving the climate resilience of target sites
Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency	Protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through NATURA 2000, and green infrastructure	Develop new methods for the long-term sustainable management of North Sea ecosystems
Priority 4 Promoting green transport and mobility		
Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures	Developing and improving environmentally-friendly (including low-noise) and low-carbon transport systems, including inland waterways and maritime transport, ports, multimodal links and airport infrastructure, in order to promote sustainable regional and local mobility	Develop demonstrations of innovative and/or improved transport and logistics solutions with potential to move large volumes of freight away from long-distance road transportation
		Stimulate the take-up and application of green transport solutions for regional freight and personal transport