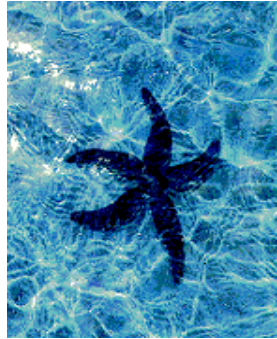


# TRANSNATIONALITY



## Background:

### What does transnationality mean?

There is no general agreement on one definition of transnationality, but transnationality has a number of aspects:

- Transnationality deals with international co-operation on other levels than just the nation state. This can for instance be co-operation between municipalities, counties, NGOs or research institutes located in different countries.
- Transnationality as opposed to cross-border co-operation. The organisations working together don't need to be located in a common border area. They can be located anywhere in the country as long as they have common interest with the partner organisation(s) in the other country/countries.
- Transnationality as relating to a transnational region, such as the North Sea Region. It is not relevant in which country the organisations are located, as long as the activities are relevant for the transnational region, e.g. as described in the transnational strategy of the CIP or in the NorVision document.
- Minimum definition, from the guidelines: 'the project is selected jointly and implemented, either in 2 or more participating countries, or in a single participating country, where it can be shown that the operation has a significant impact on other participating countries.'

The latter definition is stated in the Programme Complement of the North Sea Programme. This means that some projects, which only fulfil this minimum requirement could be selected in the Interreg IIIB North Sea Programme. However, the North Sea programme aims to have mainly projects with a strong transnational component, as the B branch of Interreg III is created for transnational co-operation on spatial development issues.

A good transnational project has a **common starting point and a common conclusion**. If pilots are carried out in the project, there should be a **real interest** from the partner organisations in the outcomes of the pilots.

As a general rule, the partner organisations must be from the eligible area and the activities must be carried out in the eligible area.

## Guidance:

### When is a project truly transnational?

- A project is transnational when the main objectives of the project can be placed in a transnational context.
- When transnationality runs throughout the project: planning, activities, outcomes, dissemination of outcomes, follow-up. Continued co-operation after the project is a sign of 'natural transnationality': the partners really find the co-operation useful.



# TRANSNATIONALITY



- When the project is relevant for the transnational strategy of the North Sea Programme as described in the CIP.
- When it has a positive impact in several parts or the whole of the transnational area.
- When the outcome of the project is (expected to be) clearly different from what could have been achieved without transnational co-operation. NorVision puts it like this: *“The Vision respects subsidiarity, meaning that it should only be concerned with those issues which cannot be satisfactorily considered by the countries and regions independently, and where there are significant benefits to be gained from transnational co-operation.”*

## What is not transnational co-operation?

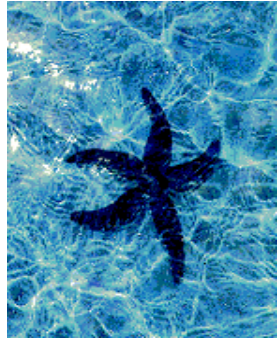
- Cross-border co-operation.
- International co-operation between the national governmental levels only.
- A project in which the partners work on their individual subprojects without (the need for) common linkage.

## Why is transnationality important?

- It can lead to finding new solutions to existing problems much quicker than in a national context. (Thinking out of the box)
- Many regions face similar problems but apply very different answers, this gives scope for exchange of knowledge/experience and common pilot activities.
- It strengthens the cohesion of a transnational area, like the North Sea Region.
- Working together leads to better understanding and thereby lays the foundation for future co-operation.
- Regions in Europe are becoming increasingly interdependent, economically but also in the fields of culture, nature development, tourism etc.
- Infrastructure (transport, communications, nature) is increasingly a transnational issue and can often be tackled more effectively in a transnational context.
- Some problems are transnational by nature (environment, economy, spatial structure) and require transnational co-operation for ‘real’ solutions.
- It brings ‘Europe’ closer to organisations not used to co-operate beyond the national borders.
- It helps to bring the organisation in tune with the latest (international) developments.



# TRANSNATIONALITY



- It provides a practical learning opportunity for the staff of the organisations involved.
- It helps to develop the organisations' capacity to be innovative and responsive to the changing world.
- It is a very practical way to evaluate the way the organisation presently deals with the issue concerned.

## **What are pitfalls in transnational working?**

- Cultural and linguistic differences: are we really talking about the same thing?
- It takes more time to agree in a transnational context.
- Different holidays, working hours and working methods cause delays.
- International meetings cost more time and money.
- Having too many partners: informing everyone sufficiently, settling the financial issues with all partners can be complicated and time-consuming.
- Having too few partners: some interesting and useful organisations are left out of the project.
- The solutions learned in other countries might be impossible to implement in your own country due to legal, institutional or other obstacles.
- It is important to know and trust your transnational partnership.
- Different levels of commitment/interest among the transnational partnership.
- It is important to set out clear objectives/deliverables from the beginning. This makes it possible to measure the success of the project.

