

Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020

Enabling cooperation across regions to transform the programme area in a first-class region to live, study, work, visit and invest.

Transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation in the NPA allows organisations to share distinctive expertise, local experience and perspectives with partner organisations that are facing common challenges. Through **cooperation**, project partners develop new knowledge, skills and innovative solutions.

NPA projects have proven to have both tangible and intangible **impacts on communities**. These include: new business

growth opportunities, new links between entrepreneurs and public-private institutions, improved services in remote communities, changed attitudes and behaviours, increased organizational capacities for institutional development, and improved competitiveness, among others. This map provides a few examples of the results of transnational cooperation in Iceland.

About the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme

The Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020 (NPA) is part of the European Territorial Cooperation objective, better known as Interreg, supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Interreg programmes support cooperation projects between countries, to deliver regional development within priorities areas identified for each programme territory.

NPA Territorial Features

- Peripherality
- Low population density
- Unevenly distributed population
- Long distances between settlements
- Low economic diversity
- Reduced market access due to the lack of transport connectivity
- Abundant natural resources
- Rich natural and cultural heritage
- High impact of climate change

The combination of these unique features means that regions within the NPA area have more in common with each other than with the metropolitan areas in their own countries.

Therefore, the transnational cooperation enabled by the NPA programme is key to **overcome challenges and realise the opportunities** related to the distinctive characteristics of the area.

Contacts

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EXPERIENCE ON THE GROUND

NORTHERN CEREALS

- 1 MATIS – Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D Company, Reykjavík
- 2 Þoran Distillery, Hafnarfjörður
- 3 Eimverk Distillery, Garðabær

MAKING IT WORK

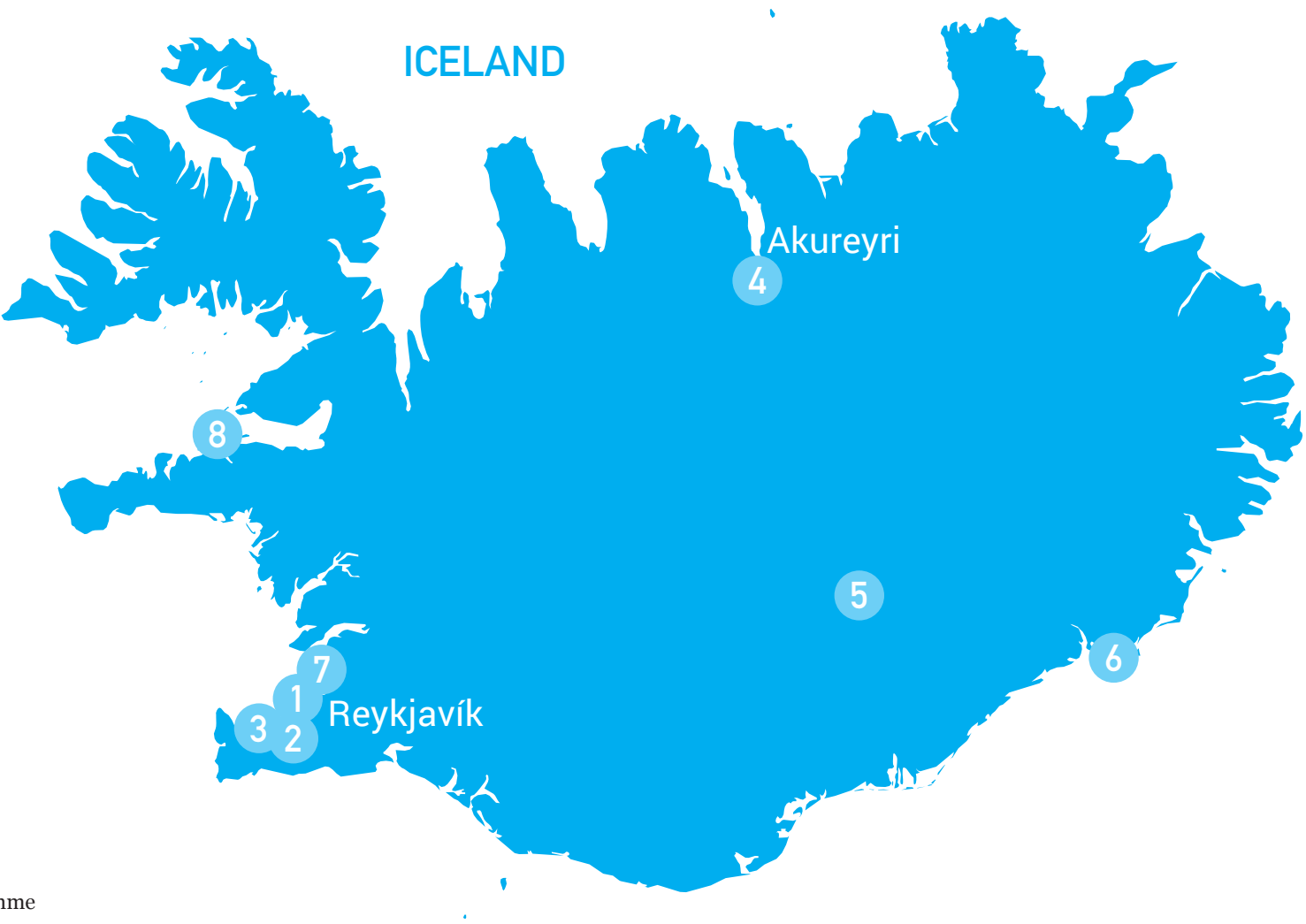
- 4 Akureyri Hospital, Akureyri

SAINT

- 5 Vatnajökull region
- 6 Höfn village

URCHIN

- 7 Marine Research Institute, Reykjavík
- 8 Thorisholmi fishing company, Stykkishólmur



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www.interreg.eu

More on Interreg project results:

www.interreg-npa.eu/projects/project-outcomes/

More on NPA project results:



The NPA area encompasses the northernmost part of Europe including parts of the North Atlantic territories. In the EU, the Member States of Finland, Sweden, Ireland and the United Kingdom (Scotland and Northern Ireland) are involved together with the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Norway. In total, the area covered by NPA corresponds to 75% of EU's surface area.

The NPA Programme Area



Discover the achievements of the NPA projects in Iceland



NORTHERN CEREALS

New Markets for a Changing Environment

Warmer growing conditions, improved research in cereal varieties and cultivation technologies have created new opportunities for greater cereal production. The NORTHERN CEREALS project expanded cereal cultivation to new locations in the NPA regions and increased the food and beverages production from locally grown cereals.



The Icelandic Experience

During the project, Icelandic farmers and the R&D institute MATIS ¹ shared their experience in barley breeding and provided Scottish and Norwegian partners with barley varieties adapted to the northern climate to start cultivation trials.

Staff from two Icelandic distilleries, Þoran Distillery ² and Eimverk Distillery ³ visited their colleagues in Scotland, to learn about the malting processes. As a result, both distilleries started their own production of whisky and gin made of Icelandic barley.

Through baking courses, Icelandic bakers gained new knowledge about the use of barley and created new products such as breads, buns or breakfast porridge mixes. As locally grown barley became more popular, Icelandic farmers received more orders for barley from food and beverage producers.

Testimonials

Eva María Sigurbjörnsdóttir, Eimverk Distillery:

In June 2016, I attended a placement arranged for me by the Agronomy Institute at Orkney's Highland Park Distillery. During this I carried out all of the activities involved in floor malting and was also able to see the other processes used for whisky production at the distillery. The placement was very valuable and helped me to develop plans for our own malting facilities. The contacts I made at Highland Park have also been very helpful in answering other distilling queries.



Project duration:

01-06-2015 to 31-05-2018

Total budget:

833 802 EUR of which NPA co-financing: 464 484 EUR

Lead Partner:

MATIS - Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D, Iceland

Partners:

Agricultural University of Iceland, Iceland
Forestry and Agrifoods Agency, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada
The Agricultural Agency, Faroe Islands
The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research – NIBIO, Norway
University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland



Video

http://cereal.interreg-npa.eu/

MAKING IT WORK

Recruiting and Retaining Skilled Workforce in Rural Areas

Communities in remote and rural areas struggle with the lack of skilled employees in the public health sector. Making it Work has explored how community engagement and involvement into recruitment strategies can help develop a stable workforce.



Making it Work developed a 9-steps strategy with concrete interventions covering advertising, administration, relocation officer roles, marketing of the rural location, changes to how services are delivered, career development support, support for families and partners, and education and training.

The Icelandic Experience

In Iceland, the project focused on the chronic shortage of specialist physicians in Akureyri Hospital ⁴. Having participated in the creation of the Making it Work Framework, Akureyri Hospital put into practice the project's recommendations. When recruiting new employees, the hospital included a Community Council member in the recruitment process to inform potential recruits and their families about different services and leisure opportunities in the community. New employees also provided feedback to the project and suggested, for instance, to improve Icelandic language classes or to increase child care services.

By the end of 2018, the number of medical specialists increased by 6 permanent and 4 temporary positions. The community engagement method proved to be successful and could be applied to other staff groups in the hospital, such as nurses or GPs. Akureyri Municipality expressed a lot of interest to continue working with the solutions to keep skilled workers in rural areas.

Testimonials

Sigurður E. Sigurðsson, Chief Medical Executive, Akureyri Hospital:

The sharing of information, experience and formulating the solution has increased our knowledge and been a pathway for new and innovative solutions. One of our main focuses was the involvement of the community inspired by the Canadian partner North Ontario school of Medicine but also other parts of the framework were used. We used the idea of annual cycle well developed by the Norwegian partner and recognized the importance of rural aspect of medical education from our Swedish partner.



Project duration:

01-02-2016 to 31-01-2019

Total budget:

1 983 874 EUR of which NPA co-financing: 1 237 970 EUR

Lead Partner:

Västerbotten County Council – Rural Medicine Centre, Sweden

Partners:

Akureyri Hospital, Iceland
National Health Service Highland (Highland Health Board), Scotland
Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Canada
The Arctic University of Norway, Norway



Video

https://rrmakingitwork.eu/

SAINT

Slow Adventures in Northern Territories

Slow adventure is a form of tourism that lets people discover nature at their own pace without any rapid adrenaline hits. By enjoying slow journeys, living and travelling through wild places, and experiencing nature in its timeframe, a slow adventure enables people to connect with the environment and understand the local cultural and natural rhythms. Through its lifetime, the SAINT project helped local SMEs to develop greater markets for slow tourism activities.



Photo: Þorvarður Árnason

The Icelandic Experience

In Iceland, the SAINT project focused its activities on the Vatnajökull region ⁵. Due to the increasing popularity of social media, the project provided trainings for local SMEs in how to use digital marketing to promote their services. The entrepreneurs appreciated these classes because they learnt how to better reach their audience.

During the project, Icelandic tour guides visited their colleagues across the NPA and tested their slow travel products. Inspired by them, new types of activities emerged in Vatnajökull region, such as practicing yoga at the sea side of a beautiful fishing village Höfn ⁶ or kayaking between glaciers. Local entrepreneurs also cooperated together and developed unique packages for tourists, combining activities like glacier hiking and dining with locals.

Testimonials

Hulda Laxdal Hauksdóttir, Höfn local guide:

I got very much inspired during the period of the project, especially during my trip to Sweden to the transnational meeting it was held to experience slow adventure in a different setting, with different people gave me a lot of ideas for my own, both through the experiences themselves and through conversations with the other people.



Project duration:

13-04-2015 to 12-04-2018

Total budget:

1 701 558 EUR of which NPA co-financing: 1 054 390 EUR

Lead Partner:

University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland

Partners:

Derry City Council, Northern Ireland
Icelandic Tourism Research Centre, Iceland
Leitrim County Council, Ireland
Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services Ostrobothnia, Finland
Mid-Sweden University, Sweden
Naturpolis Ltd., Finland
Nord-Trøndelag University College, Norway
Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Ireland
University of Iceland, Hornafjörður, Iceland
Wild Norway, Norway



Video

http://saint.interreg-npa.eu/

URCHIN

Utilisation of the Arctic Sea Urchin Resource

The NPA areas have enormous sea urchin resources with limited harvesting possibilities due to the environmental challenges, inadequate fisheries management, and the lack of knowledge and technology.



By gathering the existing expertise from Norway, Iceland, Ireland, Greenland and Canada the URCHIN project was able to expand the sea urchin fisheries in the NPA region, develop new and novel fishing techniques for urchins in remote and challenging environments, and implement optimal fisheries regulations.

The Icelandic Experience

The Marine Research Institute ⁷ and Thorisholmi fishing company ⁸ analysed the population of green sea urchin in southern Breiðfjörður. By using underwater cameras and a dredge system, they were able to estimate the size of the stock and its distribution. Based on their findings, it was possible to prepare a management plan for sustainable sea urchin fishery in Iceland for the first time. The document was presented to the Icelandic Ministry of Industries and Innovations as a policy advice for the following year's maximum allowable catch.

The research and underwater surveys discovered new fishing areas within Breiðfjörður, which were considered unusable due to their deepness. This allowed the Thorisholmi fishing company ⁸ to increase their annual catch, buy new fishing boat, and hire more employees. Additionally, the project helped fishing companies to discover new markets in the USA and Asia, and to develop new products, such as frozen urchin roe.

Testimonials



Ólafur Ásmundsson, Thorisholmi fish ng company: *The collaboration between Thorisholmi and the URCHIN project has been successful over the whole project period. The results from the project are very valuable for our fishery. Knowledge of quality of roe at two different depths indicates that fishery can be conducted in deeper areas. In this period the landings have increased and the fishing grounds expanded. The shelf-life information on urchin has been valuable and contributed to exporting of roe to different markets.*

Project duration:

01-05-2015 to 30-04-2018

Total budget:

874 080 EUR of which NPA co-financing: 448 046 EUR

Lead Partner:

Nofima, Norway

Partners:

Arctic Caviar AS, Norway
Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Ireland
MATIS – Icelandic Food and Biotech R&D, Iceland
Marine Research Institute, Iceland
Thorisholmi, Iceland
Royal Greenland, Greenland



Video

https://urchinproject.com/