

Interreg



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Northern Periphery and Arctic

Harvesting Report

Post-2027 Consultation

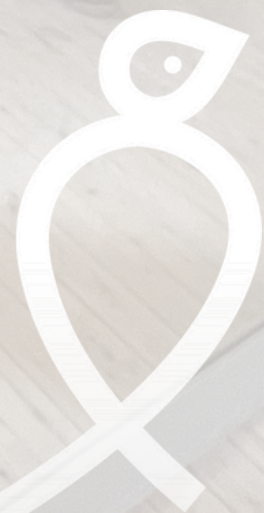


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Summary:

This report summarises the results from the consultation carried out by the Interreg NPA transnational programme to provide input to the European Commission DG REGIO for the discussions about the post-2027 Interreg framework.

Date of submission: 19th December 2024

1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the consultation carried out by the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme during the summer and autumn of 2024, as part of the Interreg-wide post-2027 consultation exercise organised by the European Commission DG REGIO.

The Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme is a transnational programme covering 7 programme partner countries; the Member States of Finland, Ireland, Sweden in cooperation with the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and Norway.

As a transnational programme, the main target group of the consultation group was stakeholders, rather than citizens. This chapter outlines which stakeholders were consulted, how they were approached, and what their response was.

2. Consultation of Stakeholders

2.1 Main Stakeholders consulted

It was recognised that stakeholders can be divided between those that are more familiar with the Interreg programme, and those that are less familiar.

Familiar stakeholders

Those who already have previous knowledge of Interreg, or more specifically Interreg NPA. This includes projects and former projects, including former project actors from Scotland and Northern Ireland; decision-makers at local, regional, national and EU level; RAG members; policymakers, who set the framework for policies in the NPA area, including policy initiatives like NSPA, NORA, Barents Cooperation.

Unfamiliar stakeholders

Those who may not be aware that they are stakeholders of the Interreg NPA programme, and/or may not have heard of Interreg or Interreg NPA. This includes potential applicants; those working in decision-making and policymaking bodies that are not directly involved with Interreg; and citizens in the NPA area and adjacent regions that can be affected by NPA projects, including young people, and indigenous peoples.

Composition of the respondents

All consultation input was anonymous, but respondents provided their organisation type, country, and their familiarity with the programme. Based on this, the total combined participation in the consultation was **196 participants**.

Most participants were from the EU Member States in the Interreg NPA area, **Finland, Ireland, and Sweden**, followed by Non-Member State countries Iceland, and Norway.

The organisation types most represented were **higher education and research institutions, interest groups** (NGOs), and **regional public authorities**. Other types were local public authorities, national public authorities, and schools.

In the survey, approximately **86%** of respondents classified themselves as **familiar** with the programme, whilst **14% as unfamiliar** with the programme. In the consultation workshop, about half the participants had several years of experience with the programme, whilst half less than one year.

2.2 Methods of Consultation

In the Interreg NPA consultation, several different methods were used to address the main target group, stakeholders.

Online survey

Using SurveyMonkey, the online questionnaire targeted a wide range of programme stakeholders. Besides promoting the survey through the usual digital channels, and at physical events, the survey link went out to a mailing list of more than 4300 people and organisations, including youth organisations from the NPA area, previous event participants, organisations such as Barents-Euro-Arctic-Council, Saami Council and Parliament, regional offices in Brussels, Arctic Mayors Forum, and previously funded projects.

The Monitoring Committee was consulted on the questions and consultation setup. They requested that the survey would cater to both the stakeholders familiar with the programme, as well as stakeholders less familiar. Participants were invited to self-select to which group – familiar or less familiar – they belonged, which guided them to a different set of questions. The familiar group answered the Commission questions aimed at stakeholders, whereas the less familiar group answered the Commission questions aimed at citizens.

Survey responses were collected from 9th July to 26th September 2024. In total, 122 individual survey responses were received.

Online consultation workshop “Shape the Future Interreg”

On 18th September 2024, an online consultation workshop was organised, targeting stakeholders that have been involved with the Interreg NPA programme as projects or applicants. A similar format had been used to help shape the Interreg NPA programme during the programming process, and this was viewed as a meaningful way to have facilitated discussions with the programme’s stakeholders, due to the relatively small size of the Interreg NPA’s audience.

In total, 15 participants joined the workshop, discussing in total 6 consultation questions, in smaller groups. The discussion facilitators used preliminary survey data as background information to guide the discussions.

Before the facilitated discussions, a video message about the future Cohesion Policy was given by **Prof. John Bachtler**, Director European Policies Research Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, and Member of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of the Cohesion Policy. Next, **Dr. Irene McMaster** from the same institution gave an overview of how Interreg had matured over the years, and more specifically how the Interreg NPA had evolved since its inception in the Nordic-Scottish Cooperation in the late 90s. She commented that throughout the different funding periods, the programme had maintained a strong community focus, which had allowed it to respond well to changing policies. See video ([link to YouTube](#)).

Exercise during Lead Partner seminar

On 26th September 2024, Lead Partners, financial officers and communication officers for the Fourth Call projects met in Copenhagen for a Lead Partner seminar. During this event, a short consultation exercise was carried out. In total, 16 participants joined the event.

Three consultation questions were placed on the walls in the coffee break area, divided by topic, A. Cooperation Opportunities, B. Functioning of the Cooperation, and C. Wishes for the Future. See Annex. The questions were inspired by the consultation toolkit provided by the European Commission, but adapted to the target audience of new Lead Partners.

During the break, participants were invited to write answers to the questions on sticky notes and place them under the relevant question. This method was adapted from the “world café” method.

Regional Contact Point stakeholder consultations Finland and Iceland

Each of the participating programme partner countries in the Interreg NPA Programme has a Regional Contact Point (RCP). This person is a local source of advice and information about the Programme.

The programme administration provided Regional Contact Points with guidance materials to carry out a post-2027 consultation exercise in connection with any existing events for Interreg NPA project partners in their country. During the autumn of 2024, two Regional Contact Points carried out such an exercise, in Finland and Iceland.

On 5th November 2024, the Finnish Regional Contact Point organised a gathering of Finnish NPA project partners in Ylivieska, Finland. Approximately 27 participants took part. A representative from the Joint Secretariat was also present. Using the World Café method, the participants answered a number of consultation questions, divided by topic, A. Cooperation Opportunities, B. Functioning of the Cooperation, and C. Wishes for the Future. In addition, the Finnish RCP provided the outcomes of a small focus group with staff members of the RCP organisation, the Regional Council of Lapland, Finland, held in August, which focused on the benefits of the Interreg NPA programme for the region of Lapland, as well as obstacles for cooperation.

On 31st October 2024, the Icelandic Regional Contact Point, from the Icelandic Regional Development Institute – Byggðastofnun, organised a meeting for Icelandic project partners and Lead partners. At this event, 16 Interreg NPA projects with Icelandic participation were represented. Using the World Café method, the participants answered most consultation questions for stakeholders.

2.3 Summary of the Input on the Key Questions

The original key Commission questions were adapted to reflect the fact that the Interreg NPA is a transnational programme with a vast programme area, stretching also outside of the European Union. The Monitoring Committee was consulted on the questions and consultation setup. Some questions were viewed as more suitable for cross-border programmes, and were left out. Besides this, the questions were reformulated for clarity and to reflect the Interreg NPA programme context specifically. One additional question was added for stakeholders: What does Interreg NPA funding allow your organisation to do that you could not do otherwise?

The questions were grouped into 3 topics, A. Cooperation Opportunities, B. Functioning of the Cooperation, and C. Wishes for the Future. An overview of the key questions and their translation into survey questions can be found in **Annex 1 – Key Consultation Questions and their translation for different consultation methods**.

This chapter provides a summary of the input on the key questions for all different consultation methods. **Please note** that the answers from the unfamiliar group were summarised together with similar questions addressed to the familiar group.

Key question 1: Is living next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?

This question was not included in the consultation, as it was not deemed relevant for the transnational context of the Interreg NPA programme territory.

Key question 2: Where is the biggest potential for territorial cooperation in your area?

Survey Respondents listed a number of cooperation topics. **Sustainable development and climate change** is mentioned by most respondents as an emerging topic, closely followed by **tourism related to the specific characteristics of the programme area**, biodiversity and sustainable land use, **youth engagement** as well as resilience and disaster preparedness, and health and wellbeing. Unfamiliar respondents generally mentioned wider themes, such as economic growth and job creation, social sustainability, mobility, energy and innovation

Workshop participants would like to see projects addressing specific demographic groups such as **elderly citizens and young people**, more resilient and inclusive communities including preparedness for crises, **food security and cyber security**, as well as **biodiversity** and **land use**, as well as sustainable tourism.

RCP event respondents from Finland emphasised **resilience** and comprehensive **security**, but also **polarisation**, and grants for **cultural initiatives**. Iceland mentioned **blue-green** solutions and **demographic challenges** as well as **immigration** in small communities that lack human capital. Other topics mentioned were **clean air**, **space research**, and **AI**, as well as projects that strengthen communities and **social networks**, **climate change**, and **responsible tourism**.

Extra question: what is not possible without Interreg NPA funding?

When asked what the Interreg NPA allowed organisations to do that cannot be done otherwise, survey respondents described the highest added value to the possibility for collaboration across borders, and **connecting with international partners**.

Those unfamiliar with the Programme focused more on broad cooperation possibilities relevant to local economic and social sustainability, while respondents familiar with the programme highlighted specific project types, international cooperation, and resource support facilitated by Interreg NPA funding, such as **flexible project opportunities**.

Workshop participants mentioned that Interreg funding enabled the launch of transnational R&D projects, including **technology transfer between regions**. Besides this, Interreg funding was instrumental in **fostering capacity sharing among stakeholder across different regions**, as well as stronger transnational ties. Interreg NPA funding was also said to have **helped peripheral and Arctic regions stay competitive with more central EU regions**, allowing them not to fall behind. Finally, Interreg NPA funding allowed cooperation on **niche, but valuable topics** overlooked by other funding streams, including building the creative economy in peripheral regions, and testing plant breeding in northern climatic conditions.

Lead Partners view the programmes as **unique, with its focus on rural areas**, and its role in facilitating a network between these territories. The programme was also viewed as being **receptive to innovation other than technical innovation**, and it allows reaching citizens with new technology.

Icelandic RCP event participants responded that the programme allows them to **exchange with communities facing similar circumstances**. Interreg NPA funding also **gives universities more scope** to present knowledge to communities, and offers **building connections and trust**.

Key question 3. What currently works well in this cooperation and should be either preserved or reinforced?

When asked what survey respondents liked about the Interreg NPA, the **possibilities for cooperation** offered by the programme are viewed as the most valued aspect. Another aspect emphasised by a large number of respondents is the **focus on rural communities and the programme's ability to target real needs**. The focus on results as well as the possibility to develop projects in various domains is appreciated, as is the support from Interreg NPA staff, in particular the **support to get projects started**.

Workshop participants provided suggestions for the programme to better target real needs in the programme area, such as developing a **better understanding of the conditions** in the area, such as very long distances, **involving stakeholders even though** among small organisations, there is a **lack of time and resources**, recurring **workshops** to identify needs, keeping a **manageable scale of projects**, as well as **flexibility about the topics** that can be addressed.

Lead partners valued the **easy and straightforward application process** that allows them to conduct **small projects** that would not fit with the parameters of other funding mechanisms. They also mentioned preparatory projects, one-to-one consultations with Joint Secretariat staff at an early stage, and the electronic monitoring system Jems.

RCP event respondents liked the Interreg NPA's focus on **practical solutions**, and the **mix** of research, innovation and practical implementation. In addition, the Interreg programme is seen as a **good school for smaller organisations** to gain self-confidence to be part of bigger international projects.

Key question 4. What currently does not work well in this cooperation and should be improved?

When asked what could be improved, survey respondents mentioned the need for different fora for **networking opportunities**. **More funding** was also frequently mentioned, both in the meaning of more funding for the programme in general, higher grant rates for beneficiaries but also new opportunities for funding within the programme. **Increased flexibility**, simplifications, and reduced bureaucracy are other areas of improvement suggested by respondents. Respondents would like the programme to better support **capacity building** of fragile organisations in remote areas, and be able to involve partners from outside the programme area.

Workshop participants suggested that more **geographical flexibility** was needed, because different funding levels for different countries made it difficult to develop balanced partnerships. Besides that, it was suggested for **experienced partners to support newcomers** and provide **capacity building grants for project preparation**.

Lead Partners mentioned that **eligibility rules for equipment costs** were too complicated, and there should be **more online Q&A sessions**.

RCP event participants wished for **simplification and flexibility**, such as being able to adapt projects during their lifetime, or **reallocate budget** between partners. It should be easier to work with other Arctic communities, such as **Canada**. Also, more availability of **lump sum funding**, start-up funding, and funding for associated partners. In addition, a wish for more information about **previously funded projects**, more support with **project planning**, and a way to preserve and **make visible project results** and knowledge.

Key question 5. What are the major obstacles for a good cooperation in your area?

When asked about the main obstacles for organisations to engage in Interreg cooperation, developing networks in the programme area is viewed as **time consuming and resource intensive**, and the **lack of resources** for this is a major obstacle in many organisations. The programme grant rate is viewed as low and it is becoming increasingly difficult for partners to find match contribution in times where regional economies are constrained. Unfamiliar respondents also highlighted the lack of funding for the creation of projects.

Icelandic RCP event participants identified **difference in regulations between countries** and a **lack of data harmonisation** in different countries as an obstacle. Representatives from the Regional Council of Lapland also highlighted that many Finnish organisations see the **cross-border programme Interreg Aurora as more attractive**, because there are fewer countries competing for funding, it is seen as more familiar, and its actors are closer. Besides this, it has a higher budget.

Key question 6. Are there things you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why?

In general, stakeholders responded that they are satisfied with the cooperation opportunities in the current programme.

When asked if there are things their organisation would like to do through Interreg NPA but cannot, a number of issues were addressed by the survey respondents, ranging from the possibilities to **build capacity in often fragile organisations** to the **involvement of partners from outside the programme area**, specifically the UK.

Icelandic RCP event participants also mentioned the possibility to take part in **research programmes**.

Key question 7. What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future Interreg?

In their wishes for the future, survey respondents mention topics of relevance, aspects related to the functioning of the programme as well as flexibility regarding the geography.

Topics were quite wide-ranging, from marine science, to supporting new companies, to digital transformation and sustainable social housing.

Wishes for the functioning of the programme echoed the points for improvement mentioned in other questions, such as **smaller grants with simplified reporting processes**, more brokerage event for networking and partner search, advance payments and higher budgets, and reduced financial control. Aspects that are already viewed as working well are **preparatory projects**. In terms of geography, Denmark was mentioned as a region to be added.

Workshop participants asked for **more project idea development tools**, such a directory of project ideas, **including those from other Interreg programmes**, a pre-assessment of project ideas, and testimonials for previously successful project in a local language. They also asked for **more flexibility, to be able to address new emerging topics**, and the flexibility to **include more partners or increase the budget** after approval, if a project is deemed very relevant. In terms of capitalization, it was suggested that **learning across projects that are not addressing the same theme** should be considered, as well as the possibility to launch a **policy development project** after a regular project to help with the uptake of project results.

RCP event participants wished for the possibility to work with **Scotland**. They also wished for **"Projects of excellence"**, a few bigger projects with larger budgets. On the other hand, also **micro projects** with fewer countries. Finally, they asked for **easier rules for equipment** (limit depreciation).

Key question 8. Is there a need for some infrastructure projects?

When asked if the Interreg NPA should support infrastructure investments, more than half of the survey respondents stated that **small-scale infrastructure investments** could be relevant for the NPA programme, including research infrastructure. However, some concerns regarding the relevance of infrastructure investments in this type of programme were also highlighted, as knowledge is rather seen as the key than a lack of infrastructure investments. Furthermore, large investments are less feasible with the small programme budget, and would need to be maintained by large national institutions, not regional ones.

Workshop participants suggested that **small-scale investments** in devices and solutions **for demonstrations** (pilots), **internet infrastructure** investments, and **projects informing infrastructure development** instead of actual infrastructural investments would be of interest.

RCP event participants also supported the possibility of infrastructure investments.

Key question 9. What should be done to facilitate the work with your counterparts in another country (governance)?

When asked how programmes can help to better prepare organisations for cooperation, some of the respondents conclude that **they are prepared**, while others see **financing** and **networking** as main keys for being better prepared. Strengthening the **organisational capacities and in-house expertise** is further emphasised.

Workshop participants suggested that **more guidance** was needed to understand Interreg lingo, and better information should be available for all Interreg NPA countries. Besides that, they suggested more **support for project idea and partnership development**, such as a database with available project partners, as well as project-to-applicant mentoring. Preparatory projects were seen as a good existing tool. In addition, participants suggested more **online training and thematic events** for organisations in specific fields. Finally, **regional Interreg NPA champions** were suggested as a way to lower the barriers to entry for new organisations. Other regional support, such as a better system for **national/regional match funding** was wished for.

RCP event participants wished for **more support with partner search** and **information about other projects**, as well as **training and capacity building**.

10. What would be the cooperation project of your dreams?

Finally, when asked about the project of their dreams, a wide range of themes were suggested by respondents as well as suggestions for project development and different set ups for projects. Many topics echoed the potential cooperation topics mentioned under section A, such as **preparedness, sustainability, bioeconomy, youth**, but also remoteness, capacity building, and creative industries. Respondent highlighted the importance of targeting **real needs**, and **involving end-users** in projects. Some respondents wished for more research than development, and more **geographical flexibility**. Other wishes previously mentioned, such as **higher project budgets**, and a higher grant rate were again listed.

Lead partners wished for projects addressing **EU and regional priorities, social housing, a youth programme** addressing grand challenges, and the New European Bauhaus principles. Project methods such as **mission-based actions**, and **co-design practices** such as living labs and citizen science were valued. In addition, participants emphasised using existing knowledge from previous projects and learning from projects in a different Interreg programme tackling the same topic, to facilitate **cross-project learning**. When it comes to geography, Lead Partners wished for partners from **Scotland and Northern Ireland** to be eligible again. They also wished for less burdensome reporting, higher project budgets, and **capital investments** for demonstrations.

2.4 Interesting Quotes

For privacy reasons, all consultation input was anonymous.

Please find below some interesting quotations from the survey, grouped by topic.

A. Cooperation Opportunities

“The benefit of collaborating transnationally is of course the possibility of **building critical mass** of expertise in addressing the remote and rural challenges that people within the area experience on a daily basis.”

Regional public authority, Sweden

“NPA funding allows my organisation to take **bigger steps.**”

Regional public authority, Iceland

“NPA funding allows us to undertake **innovative and replicable pilot projects** that we would otherwise be unable to consider.”

General public, Ireland

B. Functioning of the Cooperation

“We need a programme that can support the **capacity building** for organisations from within the programme area. There is no other alternative if we want development to become viable over time.”

Regional public authority, Sweden (edited for conciseness)

“Experienced partners/partnership should always be conditioned to **add appropriate new partners** in their applications when applying for funds, so more organisations are introduced to the transnational collaboration opportunities that exists.”

Regional public authority, Sweden

“What I like about the Interreg NPA is the cooperation possibilities and shaping of **projects that matter.**”

Regional public authority, Iceland

“What I like about the Interreg NPA is that it is a small, practically orientated programme **targeting real needs** of the region.”

Regional public authority, Finland

“What I like about the Interreg NPA is that there is a focus on **involvement of stakeholders** in projects. That the programme is not a so to say top-down programme, even though it is an Interreg programme and it has focus on **tangible results.**”

Regional public authority, Sweden

“NPA is a **good school** for smaller entities **to gain self-confidence** to take part in bigger international projects.”

Project partner, Iceland

C. Wishes for the future

“Support to develop **"soft" research infrastructure** so knowledge can be developed based on citizen and professionals in remote and rural regions.”

Regional public authority, Sweden

“Making sure projects are NOT academic but about **real-life people.**”

International organisation, EEIG, Norway

3. Recommendations for post-2027

This chapter outlines recommendations based on the consultation input.

3.1 Topics to be covered by Interreg

Current themes of the programme remain important for the consultation participants, with a strong focus on **sustainable development of communities and climate change**. It is recommended to keep this focus.

Respondents wished for more focus on **sustainable tourism related to the natural and cultural heritage of the programme area, biodiversity** and sustainable land use, **youth engagement** as well as **resilience, security** (food, energy, cyber) and **preparedness** in response to climate change and geopolitical tensions, and **health and (mental) wellbeing**. It is recommended to explore the inclusion of these topics in the next period.

What is striking is that many of these topics have already been defined by the Interreg NPA Monitoring Committee as sub themes under the Interreg Specific Objective 1 (ISO1) Priority of the Interreg NPA, in recent calls. This means that ISO1 has in practice functioned as a way to include and test emerging cooperation topics for the programme. **It is recommended to keep ISO1 as a flexible priority to build institutional capacity for emerging topics.**

3.2 Geography of programmes

Many respondents **valued the clearly defined place-based approach** of the Interreg NPA programme, with its unique focus on remote and sparsely populated communities compared to other funding instruments.

There is a wish for **more geographical flexibility** with bordering third countries, including Scotland and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), and Canada. The inclusion of Member State Denmark in the Interreg NPA area was also suggested.

Respondents also wished for **more availability of funding and better systems for national or regional match funding across all Interreg NPA countries**, making it easier to build balanced partnerships.

It is recommended that the programme partner countries take these wishes into consideration.

3.3 Implementation of programmes and projects

When it comes to the functioning of the programme, the respondents were very constructive and concrete, considering that all questions were open questions. They confirmed in many ways what is already working well for the programme, such as its unique focus on **real needs of remote and sparsely populated communities**, the **support offered by the programme administration**, and the **flexible project types**. **Preparatory projects** were mentioned repetitively by all consulted groups as a well-functioning project development tool. In addition, respondents appreciated the easy application process and **Jems**. It is recommended to keep these implementation aspects.

It is recommended to **keep flexibility to allow for different project formats**, such as smaller budget sizes and shorter project durations, especially to attract participation by

smaller organisations, and underrepresented groups, such as youth organisations. On the other hand, a few bigger “projects of excellence” were also suggested.

Targeting real needs on the ground was repeatedly mentioned, keeping the focus on results and end users. Several suggestions were mentioned, such as regular **workshops with stakeholders** to identify needs, or **co-design practices** such as living labs and citizen science were valued.

More support for partner search and project idea development is wished for. The suggestions included events, but also the use of regional Interreg NPA **champions** to lower barriers to new organisations, and **mentoring** between projects and applicants, or between more experienced and less experienced partners. It is recommended to explore the inclusion of these suggestions.

There was also a wish that the programme could finance **small-scale investments** in devices and solutions **for demonstrations** (pilots). On the other hand, **projects informing infrastructure development** instead of actual infrastructural investments would be of interest. It is recommended to explore the inclusion of these suggestions.

Finally, stakeholders wished for **more possibilities for cross-project and cross-programme learning**, and **better access to information** about other projects and programmes. They also suggested having **policy development projects** after regular projects to facilitate the uptake of project results. It is recommended to explore the inclusion of these suggestions at the level of the Interreg Arctic Cooperation, the transnational Interreg programmes network, and Interreg-wide (through Interact).

4. Annexes

Annex 1 – Key Consultation Questions and their translation for different consultation methods

Key questions for stakeholders, targeted at familiar stakeholders

Key consultation questions	Interreg NPA consultation questions
A. Cooperation Opportunities	
1. Is living next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?	Not included, as it was not deemed relevant in a transnational context.
2. Where is the biggest potential for territorial cooperation in your area?	Survey + RCP: A2. What are the emerging topics where you see potential for cooperation between organisations in the NPA area?
	Workshop: Are there potential cooperation topics not (sufficiently) addressed in the current programme that you would like to see in the future?
Extra question	Survey + RCP: A3. What does Interreg NPA funding allow your organisation to do that you could not do otherwise?
	Workshop: What are the most impactful pilot projects or new ideas your organisation has been able to test with NPA support, that would not have been possible otherwise?
	Lead Partner exercise: Why did you choose to bring your project idea to the Interreg NPA? What does the programme allow you to do that you cannot do otherwise?
B. Functioning of the Cooperation	
3. What currently works well in this cooperation and should be either preserved or reinforced?	Survey + RCP: B2. What do you like about the Interreg NPA, that you would like to see more of in the future?
	Workshop: How can the programme (to an even larger extent) target real needs in the region?
	Lead Partner exercise: Based on your recent successful experience applying for funding, what works well, and what should be improved in the application process?
4. What currently does not work well in this cooperation and should be improved?	Survey + RCP: B3. What could be improved in the future Interreg NPA programme?
	Workshop: How could the programme better support capacity building?
5. What are the major obstacles for a good cooperation in your area?	Survey + RCP: B4. What does your organisation see as the main obstacles for engaging in transnational cooperation?
6. Are there things you would like to do under Interreg but cannot? Why?	Survey + RCP: B5. Are there things your organisation would like to do through Interreg NPA but cannot? Why?
C. Wishes for the Future	
7. What is the most important novelty that you would like to see in the future Interreg?	Survey + workshop + RCP: C3. If you could add a new feature to the future NPA programme, what would it be?
8. Is there a need for some infrastructure projects?	Survey + RCP: C5. So far, the Interreg NPA has not supported infrastructure investments. Do you see a need for infrastructure investments with a transnational value?

Key consultation questions	Interreg NPA consultation questions
9. What should be done to facilitate the work with your counterparts in another country (governance)?	Survey + RCP: C4. How could your organisation be better prepared for cooperation with other countries? Workshop: How can the programme help to better prepare partner organisations for cooperation (matchmaking events, online training, partner databases)?
10. What would be the cooperation project of your dreams?	Survey: C6. What would be the Interreg NPA project of your dreams?

Key questions for citizens, targeted at unfamiliar stakeholders answering the online survey

Key consultation questions	Interreg NPA consultation questions
A. Cooperation Opportunities	
1. Is living next to a border an opportunity or a disadvantage?	Not included, as it was not deemed relevant in a transnational context.
2. In the place where you live, what are the main topics where cooperation is needed?	A1. Interreg NPA allows organisations in your country to work with partners from Finland, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden. What are the main topics for cooperation with these countries that could benefit the region where you live?
B. Functioning of the Cooperation	
3. Can you name an Interreg project that you find useful in the place where you live?	Not included, as it was deemed not representative due to the vast size of the Interreg NPA programme area.
4. In your daily life, what are the biggest difficulties for (cross-border and transnational) cooperation?	B1. For most organisations, participating in a cooperation project with organisations across several countries and sectors is more an exception rather than the rule. What are the main obstacles for your organisation to engage in cooperation with other countries in the NPA area?
C. Wishes for the Future	
Extra question	C1. Participating in a cooperation project with organisations in other countries and sectors can be new to some organisations. What could be done to better prepare your organisation for this?
5. What would be the cooperation project of your dreams?	C2. If you see the Interreg NPA as a cooperation tool for creating positive change and improving life in the NPA area, what would your project be about?

Annex 2 – Background materials

For each consultation method, more detailed reports and other materials exist. Please find the links below.

- **Online survey**, SurveyMonkey, open from 9th July to 26th September 2024
 - [Survey report](#) (PDF)
- **Online consultation workshop** “Shape the future Interreg”, 18th September 2024, via Zoom
 - [Consultation workshop report](#) (PDF)
 - [Workshop recording](#) (YouTube)
 - [News article](#) (URL) on Interreg NPA website
- **Lead Partner seminar exercise**, 26th September 2024, Copenhagen, Denmark
 - [Lead Partner exercise report](#) (PDF)
- **Regional Contact Point stakeholder consultations Finland and Iceland**, October-November 2024
 - [Report Regional Contact Point consultations Finland-Iceland](#) (PDF)