

**Interreg**



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# TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE NPA



# Why should you strive for inclusion?

The NPA area is vast and represents different culturally and linguistically distinctive groups. At the same time, Interreg NPA projects are producing services and solutions that should be freely and widely available for everyone.

This guide is designed to **inspire** you and **motivate** you to implement new working practices that will help your project to be more inclusive and its results being available to a wider audience than you would normally think.

To start with, ask yourself a question:

**How will your project ensure that people of all genders, ages, nationalities, cultures, religious, identities, ethnic affiliations, sexual orientations, and people with disabilities will have the same opportunity and possibility to join the project activities, get to know about the achievements, and benefit from the results?**

Wonder no longer about the answer, flip the page, and check out some of our ideas how to make your project and its implementation more inclusive!

The cover picture has been taken **at Interreg NPA Annual Conference “Youth in the NPA” in Bodø, Norway on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2022**. The picture shows Parahini Parabaran from Troms and Finmark Youth Council and Emilie Gundersen from Trøndelag Youth Council.

Both Parahini and Emilie joined the conference to share their ideas how remote places can become more attractive for future generations, and voice how youth wish to be included in co-creating a greener, more digital, and inclusive future.

Photo credit: Håvard B. Rødsand



## Speak the local language

Consider which language you are using when communicating the project achievements or opportunities that one may gain through project participation. Although English is used as a main programme language for communication, projects are encouraged to translate their project materials, news, and publications into the local and/or minority languages. It is important that no one is left behind, therefore consider whether you need only one or more language translation. For your information, translation is seen as an eligible project cost under the [External expertise budget line](#).

## Think outside of the box

Project partners are present in local communities and capable of communicating with citizens in their own language. Although the project might be relevant and interesting for a wide audience, one group of people is usually prioritized, for example business support organisations. When communicating the project achievements and ongoing work, remember to include all target groups in your communication activities. These include local/regional/national policymakers, stakeholders within your focused theme (such as fishery, business support, tourism, manufacturing, etc.), the public, and the Interreg NPA Secretariat. The NPA Communication Manager can share the project results further on a European level.

For most projects, the number of followers on different social media channels is not a reliable way of counting the project's reach. Rather than high numbers, focus on the project reaching the right people and organisations. An analysis of the target groups could be a good way of ensuring this. If in doubt about how to reach a certain target group, consider contacting our [Regional Contact Points](#).

Wondering why is communication so important? Check out the [Communication chapter](#) in the Programme Manual where we share good-to-know practices for communicating your project (and planning the resources for it).

## Involve youth and/or other underrepresented groups to planning your events

As part of the efforts to become more youth inclusive and share the opportunities that Interreg programmes offer to local communities, it is recommended that projects and Programme bodies involve local youth/indigenous groups or

organisations into planning their events, meetings, site visits or workshops. Youth or indigenous involvement can benefit the projects / Programme bodies as well as underrepresented groups. If you are interested in getting in contact with local youth/indigenous groups, contact the [Regional Contact points](#) or the [Joint secretariat](#).

## Use simple language

If you want to reach wider audience and make your project more understandable, we recommend using simple, plain English (or other local) language when communicating the project's achievements. If you find it tricky and difficult, have a look at [these materials](#) developed by Interact. You will see the difference!

## Materials accessible for everyone

Recording videos or animations? Writing newsletters, website content, or social media posts? Remember to make the materials widely accessible. Sometimes even a small thing, like adding subtitles, can bring you a larger audience! For example, in Sweden it is required by law to add subtitles to videos. We recommend checking your own national regulations.

## Make a “shadow steering committee”

When thinking about how to involve young people and other underrepresented groups in the project team, let's use one of Interreg NPA projects as inspiration. [Rye Connect](#) established a “shadow youth steering committee” that participated in the project decision making processes. Learning from this experience, youth (or other groups involved) must be highly motivated and see the clear benefits of spending their time and efforts on an unpaid activity. Also, if you decided to create a “shadow steering committee” remember to ask the committee members for their feedback, and on the other hand, you also give feedback to them to ensure continuous learning and improvement.

As an example, youth could be given an opportunity to plan and lead some of the project events such as workshops, exchanges, site visits, etc. Or, for a more “industry-related” project, young people could be part of organising the project's outreach to SMEs, make relevant connections and broaden their network. All the contacts and

experiences that youth gather while participating in a transnational project could be seen as benefits for their future work and/or studies.

## **Include youth and/or other underrepresented groups to project´s steering committee**

If you want to take a step further, consider involving youth (or another underrepresented group) to your steering committee as an observer or an actual member.

Involving youth representatives provides steering committees with innovative ideas, ensures long-term sustainability, enhances communication and outreach, builds leadership capacities, promotes social inclusion, and strengthens community cohesion.

## **Hire a Youth Volunteer**

When talking about gaining experience and contacts, young people can apply to be a youth volunteer in any Interreg funded project or Interreg Programme body. Interreg Volunteer Youth is a programme for young people who want to gain new knowledge, experience and support territorial cooperation across Europe. Each volunteering experience lasts 2-6 months and the volunteers receive financial contributions from the Interreg Volunteer Youth programme to cover part of their costs of living. Are you interested in hosting a youth volunteer? Check out the [guidelines](#) and fill in the [application](#)! If you are based in Sweden, check out also [Youth 2030](#) organisation and their [Youth Up North movement](#).

## **Meet your audience where they are**

Meet the people who can benefit from your project, wherever they are! Whether it is youth clubs, fishing clubs, business incubators, universities, or large fairs of any type. Although we live in a digital era, in-person meetings and chatting with people can bring your project a larger audience than if you are only using the digital tools to reach out to people.

Investigate how these target groups are communicating, if they prefer emails, phone calls, in-person meetings, and adjust to their needs and preferences.

## **Communicate your efforts towards inclusion**

Be proud of your achievements and share your progress with the partnership, but also with the public and your Desk Officer. We would like to hear about your success!  
**Sharing is inspiring!**

## **Acknowledge different learning preferences**

Some people learn the best when listening, some prefer reading, and others might want to learn by doing. Know your audience, be prepared, and be flexible to shift your methods if needed. A simple questionnaire sent prior to a workshop, or an event can help you understand the group you are meeting and adapt to their needs and preferences.

**If you have any other suggestions or best practices,  
please contact the JS Secretariat and we will add  
them to the list.**