



INTERREG IVB

## **INTERREG IVB North-West Europe Programme: Priority Axes**

### ***Priority 1: Developing the NWE knowledge-based economy by capitalising on our capacity for innovation***

The overall aim of the priority is to strengthen the innovative capacity and the knowledge-based economy of NWE and to support the mobilisation of regional and local potentials through transnational cooperation. Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 1.1:** to promote greater entrepreneurship and facilitate the translation of innovations and knowledge into (marketable) products, processes and services that strengthen the competitiveness of NWE

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Actions aimed at improving the access to, and transfer of, scientific/technological knowledge for prospective entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses
- Actions aimed at linking up R&D facilities of NWE organisations and those of international centres of excellence in order to facilitate access to scientific knowledge and technology transfer between them
- Transnational actions aimed at promoting collaboration between institutions and agencies that provide information to SMEs so as to strengthen support at regional and EU level for technology transfer, including public-private partnerships, and transnational partnerships
- Joint actions to promote the innovative use of existing/new knowledge, product and services in businesses and their wider application across NWE (e.g. in the fields of renewable energies, carbon footprint reduction)
- Joint actions to assist businesses in integrating/implementing innovative products, processes and services in their activities.



**INTERREG IV B NWE**  
Les Arcuriales, G/D  
45 rue de Tournai  
F-59000 Lille, France

T. +33 3 20 78 55 00  
F. +33 3 20 55 65 95  
nwe@nweurope.eu  
www.nweurope.eu



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**Objective 1.2:** to develop new and strengthen existing growth clusters and SME networks by building on the endogenous potentials of NWE cities and regions

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Transnational actions to stimulate the establishment of cross-sectoral innovation platforms across the NWE territory, in both 'stronger' and 'weaker' regions
- Actions aimed at establishing links between education facilities, research institutions and SME's for the joint use of R&D facilities and infrastructure or to undertake joint investments (to increase research and technology capacities)
- Actions aimed at establishing links between education facilities, research institutions, centres of excellence and SME networks in NWE through joint transnational marketing efforts
- Actions aimed at raising the international profile of innovative NWE clusters and SME networks through joint transnational marketing efforts (with a view to attracting Foreign Direct Investment)
- Transnational actions aimed at strengthening business clusters by providing communication and social infrastructure

**Objective 1.3:** to use and improve territorial cooperation in order to strengthen the institutional and territorial framework for innovation and the transfer of knowledge within NWE

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Actions aimed at a better coordination, formulation and application of innovation and territorial policies by public authorities and related agencies across the transnational territory
- Actions aimed at an improved horizontal coordination of public and private actors involved in innovation and territorial development across NWE
- Actions aimed at finding transnational responses to territorial implications of the 'knowledge economy' (for example to reduce the contrast between 'stronger' and 'weaker' regions in NWE; to attract the right labour force to NWE; to create and retain the right skills within NWE...)



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## ***Priority 2: Sustainable management of natural resources and of natural and technological risks***

The overall aim of the priority is to promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, risk management and the enhancement of the natural environment through transnational cooperation. Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

**Objective 2.1:** To promote an innovative and sustainable approach to natural resource management, including water, landscapes, biodiversity and energy, and waste management

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Integrated transnational approaches to the management of trans-boundary river basins, coastal zones, seas, fresh water resources, forests and landscapes of transnational significance
- Joint strategic actions and concepts for offshore and onshore planning to protect and enhance the maritime environment and coastal zones, e.g. through common standards, harmonisation of data and information and common principles for use
- Joint measures complementing EU environmental policy and legislation by adding a transnational and territorial dimension, e.g. in the area of enhancing biodiversity
- Promotion of responsible production and consumption patterns and energy efficiency in all economic sectors and society at large, through for example joint awareness-raising measures and integrated concepts and action plans to increase energy efficiency
- Joint strategic actions for energy savings, promotion and transfer of knowledge in alternative and renewable energy management patterns
- Transnational actions to promote eco-innovation, improved management tools for green technologies, lifecycle thinking and cleaner production processes
- Joint cooperation on development, application and dissemination of environmental technologies and processes for sustainable waste management including minimisation, recycling, and disposal particularly for energy generation.



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**Objective 2.2:** To promote an innovative approach to risk management and prevention, in particular water management (effects of the high concentration of human activities in coastal areas and river valleys; impacts of sea level rise on coastal areas and flood risk; the marine environment) in the context of climate change

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Coordinated approaches to improved risk management governance across national borders, e.g. by integrating spatial planning and civil protection policies and better integration of sector and spatial policies.
- Integrated flood risk management in coastal zones and large river basins of NWE, including: harmonisation of different standards; improved institutional cooperation and better integration of national and regional administrative structures;
- Interdisciplinary partnerships and PPPs; jointly developed hazard strategies/risk management plans and damage limitation; and harmonised standards for qualifications in the area of risk management.
- Coordinated actions to increase maritime safety and the protection of the marine environment (e.g. from technological hazards such as oil spills, a harmonized approach to dealing with ships in distress and accidents), for instance through contingency planning for marine pollution at sea and in coastal regions.
- Coordinated transnational actions on Integrated Coastal Zone Management, in line with the EU Marine Strategy Directive whenever relevant.

**Objective 2.3:** To promote a transnational and spatial approach to improving the quality of soil, water and air, to minimising greenhouse gas emissions and to reducing noise pollution

*Examples of possible actions:*

- Transnational actions aimed at improving the quality of water and coastal areas, with a clear link to the territorial development of the NWE territory
- Transnational actions aimed at improving the marine environment and integrating maritime activities with territorial development objectives of the NWE region (e.g. by developing a common maritime spatial planning concept for the English Channel and the Irish Sea).
- Joint innovative approaches to dealing with high groundwater tables in old mining areas
- Joint innovative approaches to territorial development, which are of transnational relevance, to improve the quality of soil and to combat soil erosion
- Transnational and coordinated actions aimed at the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- Joint innovative approaches to territorial development, which are of transnational relevance, aimed at improving the quality of air and at reducing noise pollution



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### ***Priority 3: Improving connectivity in NWE by promoting intelligent and sustainable transport and ICT solutions***

The overall aim of the priority is to improve the functional integration of NWE through improved connectivity and accessibility by promoting sustainable transport connections for both passengers and freight on rail, waterways, sea and air, and to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT, for the transnational territory and beyond. Three objectives are defined. The list of possible actions is non-exclusive, but should give directions to project promoters on the type of initiatives that are expected.

***Objective 3.1:*** to manage transport growth through optimisation of the capacity of existing (uni-modal) transport infrastructure for both passenger and freight transport

*Examples of possible actions:*

- more energy-efficient modes of travel by, for instance, achieving a modal shift from road to rail transport actions to make more efficient use of existing transport infrastructure capacity

***Objective 3.2:*** to support effective and innovative multi-modal strategic actions and efficient inter-operable systems on land, water and air

*Examples of possible actions:*

- the development of inter-regional territorial development strategic actions to promote effective transport and trading flows, and to maximise the related economic development potential of transnational development corridors (e.g. from Ireland across the English Northern Way to continental Europe and the East; from Randstad and Rhine-Ruhr to Eastern Europe; between Frankfurt-Stuttgart-Rhein/Neckar, Strasbourg and Zürich-Basel; a North-South axis from Randstad Transnational Central Belgian Urban Network-Paris/Luxembourg; and between the ArcManche regions)
- integrated territorial development programmes to tackle the 'by-pass effect' of major rail transport connections, such as the Channel Tunnel Rail link or other HST lines, on secondary centres. This can include improvements to feeding systems of secondary rail networks into the HST connections to strengthen regional access to transnational networks, and enhanced inter-operability of national and regional systems



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- integrated territorial development programmes to maximise the economic potential of regional airports and port gateways in balance with environmental impacts. This includes improved surface transport access to regional airport and port gateways, improvements to feeding systems and enhanced inter-operability of national and regional systems.
- increasing the potential of inland waterway and maritime transport (short sea shipping and long-distance maritime transport), related inter-modal shift and better integrated logistical chains, and improved sustainable hinterland connections
- Improving interoperability and intermodality of passenger and freight transport on land, inland waterways, sea and air, including harmonisation of all forms of public transport across national borders and on transnational East-West and North- South corridors

**Objective 3.3:** to develop innovative approaches to the use of ICT in order to improve connectivity, including approaches aimed at reducing the need to travel and at replacing physical mobility through virtual activity for both passenger mobility and freight transport

*Examples of possible actions:*

- joint transnational actions aimed at promoting the use of ICT in order to overcome the 'digital divide' in North West Europe
- the use and promotion of advanced ICT or ITS to improve transnational transport connections (in particular rail and sea transport)
- promoting the use of advanced transport information systems and advanced traffic management systems (including the innovative use of real-time information systems or navigation systems using e.g. Galileo) to improve transnational transport flows
- harmonisation of standards in, and compatibility of, ICT and ITS transport technology across national borders, with a view to improving the functional territorial integration of NWE and a more balanced territorial development
- the use of advanced ICT to reduce the need to travel and to replace physical mobility through virtual exchanges



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## ***Priority 4: Promoting strong and prosperous communities at transnational level***

The overall aim of this priority is to strengthen the attractiveness and performance of cities, towns, rural areas and regions through joint actions that will encourage sustainable economic activity and social cohesion.

**Objective 4.1:** to promote transnational actions that will enhance the economic and social performance of cities, towns and rural areas; including the economic potential of local and regional assets

*Examples of possible actions:*

- actions that will promote transnational cooperation between local and regional authorities to create better conditions for economic growth
- actions aimed at realising and using the economic potential of regional assets (natural and business assets) through transnational cooperation across the NWE territory
- actions aimed at improving transnational cooperation for organisations representing urban interests in order to improve economic performance and social cohesion
- actions aimed at strengthening the role of secondary towns and cities in NWE in order to develop counterweights to the dominant metropolitan areas
- actions aimed at developing and implementing joint pilot actions to identify solutions that will help to reduce the transnational impacts of commuting between cities, towns and rural areas



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**Objective 4.2:** to identify and develop collective actions that will improve the environmental quality and attraction of towns and cities including the sustainable use of the cultural heritage, tourism, the creative economy and sustainable and innovative energy practices

*Examples of possible actions:*

- develop and implement joint actions to encourage sustainable practices that will enhance the quality and attractiveness of natural and cultural assets in order to strengthen the overall competitiveness of the NWE area
- pilot actions to improve the attractiveness and livability of cities and towns by for example encouraging the good use of public space and encouraging a safe and attractive environment
- develop and implement joint actions to stimulate the development of sustainable tourism activities across the NWE area

**Objective 4.3:** to promote transnational responses to the impacts of demographic change and migration on the NWE territory

*Examples of possible actions:*

- elaboration and implementation of transnational actions, models and tools, to respond to the impacts of demographic change and migration patterns
- transnational pilots and actions to improve the accessibility of, and access to, services, including ICT, for areas affected by ageing and depopulation
- transnational actions that will facilitate the integration of the skilled labour force into cities and towns
- transnational actions to increase the institutional capacity of public and voluntary authorities to engage in transnational and international cooperation and exchanges



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