

**Interreg**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**North-West Europe**

Interreg North-West Europe 2021-2027

# **Terms of reference**

## **1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals**

*22 March 2022*

**Disclaimer:** Please note that projects can only be approved and awarded ERDF funding at step 2 upon the condition that the Interreg North-West Europe Programme 2021-2027 is formally approved by the European Commission (EC). The final draft of the Interreg North-West Europe Programme 2021-2027 has been officially submitted to the European Commission (EC) for approval on 23 February 2022. The EC will assess the document and is expected to formally approve it by Summer 2022.

## North-West Europe

# 1. Introduction

The Interreg North-West Europe Programme invites partnerships of public and private organisations to submit applications in the framework of the first call for proposals for the 2021-2027 period.

A comprehensive description of the Programme strategy and priorities is included in the [draft Interreg North-West Europe Programme 2021-2027](#). This final draft has been officially submitted to the European Commission (EC) for approval on 23 February 2022. The EC will assess the document and is expected to formally approve it by Summer 2022. ERDF funding allocation to projects is conditional to the approval of the Interreg North-West Europe Programme 2021-2027 by the EC.

A complete set of application documents can be downloaded from the Programme website [www.nweurope.eu](http://www.nweurope.eu) (draft Interreg NWE Programme, Programme Manual, application form step 1 for reference).

# 2. Aim of the Programme

The Interreg North-West Europe (NWE) Programme is one of the fourteen transnational cooperation programmes financed by the European Union. It is financed through the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF). ERDF is one of the funds designed to improve EU Cohesion.

The Programme encourages public, scientific, private and civil society organisations to cooperate with a view to promote a green, smart and just transition for all NWE territories. The aim is to support a balanced development and make all regions more resilient. The Programme co-finances these organisations to work together in transnational projects on specific themes.

All projects financed by the Programme will need to demonstrate high transnational cooperation intensity throughout their lifetime with a clear focus on results. This means that partners must work together to deliver, disseminate and roll-out the results of their project.

# 3. Thematic priorities

To deliver its aim, the Programme has identified five thematic priorities, each of which is sub-divided into Specific Objectives (SO). These priorities and Specific Objectives are:

## **Priority 1 - Smart climate and environmental resilience for NWE territories**

- Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience taking into account ecosystem-based approaches (SO 2.4)
- Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution (SO 2.7)



## North-West Europe

### Priority 2 – Smart and just energy transition for NWE territories

- Promoting energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (SO 2.1)
- Promoting renewable energy in accordance with Directive (EU) 2018/2001, including the sustainability criteria set out therein (SO 2.2).

### Priority 3 - Transition towards a place-based circular economy

- Promoting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy (SO 2.6).

### Priority 4 – Improving territorial resilience in NWE through innovative and smart transformation

- Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies (SO 1.1).

### Priority 5 – Transition towards a socially inclusive and resilient society

- Enhancing the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social infrastructure and promoting social economy (SO 4.1).
- Ensuring equal access to health care and fostering resilience of health systems, including primary care, and promoting the transition from institutional to family-and-community-based care (SO 4.5).
- Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation (SO 4.6).

**The current call for proposals is open to all five thematic priorities.** Transnational partnerships are invited to submit their project application under one priority, and within this chosen priority, under one Specific Objective.

## 4. Who can apply?

The Programme targets all or parts of seven participating countries, including six EU Member States (Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) and the non-Member State Switzerland.

A wide range of public and private (non-profit and profit making) organisations are welcomed to take part in NWE project partnerships including national, regional and local authorities (or EGTC's, or public equivalent organisations), universities, R&D centres, SMEs and business support organisations (BSOs), sectoral associations, NGOs, lobby organisations and citizens groups.

Projects should bring together at least three partners from three different countries (usually more) of which two need to be from within the NWE Programme area.

## 5. Lead partner principle

The 'lead partner principle' will apply to the project management system, meaning that one partner takes the lead in the project. The lead partner must be an organisation which is public, non-profit or governed by public law, and it must be located in the NWE Programme area. The lead partner is the link between the project partnership and the Joint Secretariat, Programme bodies, the European Commission and other interested parties. Furthermore, it will supervise the administrative and financial management of the project and bear legal responsibility and liability for them.

## 6. Funding available

Over the lifetime of the Programme, € 287 million of ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) will be allocated to projects. **No ceiling is set for this call.**

All projects need to have a partner contribution (provide match-funding). The maximum ERDF grant rate for partners is 60% of the total project budget. The partnership needs to contribute the remaining 40%.

## 7. Submission of applications

This call for proposals is organised according to a two-step procedure. See chapters 3 and 4 of the [Programme Manual](#) for a detailed description of the process.

Step 1 – Applicants have to submit an application providing an outline of the proposed project. The application goes beyond a mere expression of interest, i.e. applicants need to present a comprehensive picture of the project need, intended change and result. This picture is the solid basis of the further development of the project.

Step 2 – Applicants who succeeded at step 1 of the call are invited to submit a full-length proposal which includes all the details on the finalised partnership, the project work plan and budget.

Project proposals, both at step 1 and step 2 of the call must be submitted in English and only through the Interreg NWE [joint electronic monitoring system](#) (Jems). Project applications sent via any other means will not be considered eligible. The project summary must be provided in all four programme languages (Dutch, English, French, and German).

## 8. Project selection

All project proposals are assessed against eligibility and quality assessment criteria (see chapters 3 and 4 of the [Programme Manual](#)).

## North-West Europe

The decision on step 1 project applications will be taken by the Interreg NWE Monitoring Committee (MC), which is made up of representatives from both national and regional authorities within the NWE Member States.

### **The Monitoring Committee will meet on 14 and 15 September 2022.**

The applicants will be notified of the decision of the Monitoring Committee after this meeting.

If a project is rejected, the partnership can reapply in another regular call taking into careful consideration all the comments and recommendations made by the MC in its notification letter.

If a project is declared ineligible at step 1, it may resubmit under a subsequent call, provided that it meets the eligibility criteria.

According to the call 1 provisional planning, the Monitoring Committee foresees to meet in February 2023 to decide on the full length step 2 application proposals. Projects can therefore plan the start of their activities for February 2023.

## 9. Deadline for submission

Project proposals for step 1 of this call must be submitted through the Jems at the latest by:

**Wednesday 15 June 2022 12.00 pm noon CET (11.00 am GMT).**

In case of approval at step 1, full applications (step 2) must be submitted **on Thursday 15 December 2022 12.00 pm noon CET (11.00 am GMT).**

## 10. How to get assistance

Project applicants should start by having a close look at the [Interreg NWE Programme](#) and [Programme Manual](#).

Continuous assistance will be provided by the Interreg NWE network of contact points during both stages of project development. They are available to respond to any queries. All contact details can be found on the website [Contact Points | Interreg NWE \(nweurope.eu\)](#)

Project applicants can also register to the [NWE online community](#) to find partners, join partnerships or network with other organisations from the North-West Europe area. They are also invited to [sign up for updates](#) on the NWE website and follow the Programme's social media channels to be informed of any updates concerning the call.

**Interreg**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## **North-West Europe**

Technical questions regarding the Joint electronic monitoring system (Jems) should be sent to:  
[jems@nweurope.eu](mailto:jems@nweurope.eu)