



Priority 4. Innovation and resilience

Specific Objective 1.1 - **Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies**

NB: This factsheet presents a **summary** of Specific Objective (SO) 1.1 of the Interreg North-West Europe Programme (NWE IP). The comprehensive description of SO 1.1, which contains detailed explanations and further examples, **should be consulted for a full understanding of the SO in Chapter 2.1 of the NWE IP.**

Territorial challenges and opportunities

The North-West Europe (NWE) region is a leader in many sectors, however regional disparities in innovation capacity, the use of technologies and the deployment of digitalisation have been observed across the Programme area. The COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit and globalisation have emphasised the need to support public and private innovation players in increasing their innovation capacity. This will enable them to tackle territorial challenges, boost smart and integrated development, and future-proof the transformation of economies.

Objectives

Within this Specific Objective, the Programme aims to support projects that:

- Address public and private players' innovation capacity in the NWE region to improve regional territorial resilience and livelihoods of its communities.
- Reinforce value chains in NWE and accompany innovation players in different ways (e.g., financial, technical, training support, innovative decision-making and planning processes, empowerment, co-creation, governance innovation etc.).
- Demonstrate smart, multi-actor and cross-sectoral approaches, which where possible feed into regional / national/ transnational strategies, policies, and action plans.

Target groups

- **Local/regional/national authorities, governmental agencies, public equivalent organisations** (including agencies or para-public organisations) with responsibilities relating to innovation, digital and smart transformation; with the capacity to drive policy change towards innovation, as well as smart and digital transformation.
- **Universities, public research centres, private research units, schools and higher education, training centres** which are innovation drivers and can provide scientific insight and evidence to regional challenges and further innovation, digital and smart transformation in the NWE Programme area.
- **SMEs and business support organisations** who are economic drivers in the region. They can help develop new solutions for innovation, digitalisation, and advanced technologies.

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- **Sectoral associations, NGOs, lobby organisations, citizens groups** acting as multipliers to their networks. They can gather data to influence policies and promote educational initiatives to raise awareness of innovative and smart solutions.

Activities

Projects should implement a combination of activities, such as:

- **Elaboration and implementation of joint strategies and action plans**, for example, related to smart transformation, to increase the quantity, accessibility, and quality of the services in all places.
- **Pilot actions for testing tools and/or solutions**, for example, for demonstration and joint implementation of smart, innovative solutions (e.g., financial, non-technological and technological, etc.) to roll-out successful regional ecosystem approaches in NWE regions (e.g., S3s/RISs, clustering of economic sectors, etc.), to implement new or adapted solutions and approaches for innovative digital services, decision-making, and planning processes.
- **Capacity building and awareness raising activities**, for example, joint training schemes targeting NWE innovation players.

Results

The **combination of these activities** may lead to results such as:

- Innovation players have an improved capacity to exploit and deliver for example, regional strategies/policies to contribute to balanced economic development, increased cohesion, and territorial resilience; or to Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3s/RISs).
- Smart solutions are applied by innovation players to roll-out successful regional innovation ecosystem approaches in the NWE region.
- Additional and better strategies/solutions/policies are taken up by innovation players in different fields to increase their innovation capacity and/or to foster innovation (e.g., by regions to enable digital transformation; smart services in mobility, etc.).
- New and/or adapted innovative and (non-) technological solutions improve the attractiveness of NWE regions and ensure accessibility of services.

Outputs and results of projects must contribute to the NWE Programme indicator framework (see the NWE IP).