

Transnational challenges, joint solutions

2018

Annual Report Summary

**Interreg**  
North Sea Region  
European Regional Development Fund







# Cooperating for the future

The Interreg North Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 improves citizens' quality of life through better public services, a greener and more robust economy, climate-smart solutions and a healthier, more liveable environment that benefits people and wildlife.

We do this by supporting projects that catalyse innovation and sustainability in the North Sea Region. This summary captures highlights from 2018 and results achieved so far.





## Partnerships and pilots







Our projects are driven by transnational partnerships involving government agencies, public and private organisations, academia and NGOs from across the North Sea Region.

This set-up enables practitioners and experts to come together to find viable solutions to complex problems in our region. It also provides a perfect test-bed for piloting new ideas in a variety of real-life settings.

## Investing in a brighter future

In 2018, our Steering Committee approved 21 new projects. A total of 60 projects are now operating in the North Sea Region, funded by €128 million from the European Regional Development Fund and close to €7 million from Norway. Each project matches one of our priority areas:

-  **Thinking growth:** Fosters public-private innovation partnerships and builds innovation capacity.
-  **Eco-innovation:** Promotes a circular economy and the greening of products, services, and processes.
-  **Sustainable North Sea Region:** Builds climate resilience and sustainable ecosystem management.
-  **Green mobility and transport:** Promotes green solutions for freight and passenger transport.

<h3>North Sea Conference</h3> <p>The North Sea Conference 2018 was held in Fredrikstad, Norway. At the event, over 200 enthusiastic participants discussed the future of the North Sea Region.</p>		<h3>Video contest</h3> <p>The Conference hosted the award ceremony of the very first North Sea Region video contest. The projects <i>Building with Nature</i> and <i>CATCH</i> were awarded.</p>	
 <h3>10 Things To Know</h3> <p>We coordinated the publication <i>10 things to know about transnational cooperation</i>, jointly produced by the transnational Interreg programmes and Interreg Europe.</p>		<h3>#MadeWithInterreg</h3> <p>We coordinated an exhibition at the European Week of Regions and Cities. The exhibition was a joint effort by the transnational Interreg programmes.</p>	
<h3>Webinars launched</h3> <p>As part of our efforts to support the project community, we launched the first in a series of webinars for projects and applicants.</p>		<h3>Newsletter revival</h3> <p>Our newsletter The Upshot was relaunched as a key channel for announcing events and calls and for disseminating project progress and impacts.</p>	



## Project achievements

In 2018, projects that had been approved in the first calls increased in pace and started delivering outcomes and benefits.

Overleaf, you will find key figures summarising what the projects have achieved so far. In the following pages, we present examples of projects within each of the four priority themes.

Project partners per country



60



projects

781



beneficiaries

1121



organisations adopted  
new solutions

1063



enterprises cooperating in  
knowledge partnerships

67



business support  
measures launched

93



green business  
solutions piloted

44



sites managed using  
new solutions

19



climate adaptation  
solutions demonstrated

45



Green transport  
solutions adopted



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Priority 1: Thinking growth

Creates business alliances and networks, builds the innovation capacities of SMEs, and enhances public service delivery. At this point, over 1,000 enterprises are actively engaged in new knowledge partnerships, and projects have launched 67 new business support measures.

## Lean Landing

### Award-winning approach helps SMEs go global

On 21 November 2018, Lean Landing received the Grand Jury Prize of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards for their innovative approach to helping micro-SMEs enter new European markets.

Policymakers increasingly recognise the importance of SME internationalisation in European job creation. Lean Landing addresses this challenge through hands-on support including regional incubators, a Soft Landing platform, and visits to meet potential business partners abroad. By end-2018, the Lean Landing network was used by 233 SMEs and 113 SMEs had so far participated in meetings abroad.

*"The jury considers Lean Landing to be highly innovative with an original approach"* - Kristin Schreiber, Director for SME Policy and the COSME Programme of DG GROW, the European Commission



## REFRAME

### Strengthening local economies through local food frames

Locally grown, often organic, food products are increasingly prized by consumers, and demands are starting to exceed supply in some areas.

REFRAME advances local food supply chains that drive positive rural development. The project works with the entire supply chain and builds regional concepts, e.g. through common brands and cooperatives.

As an example, pilots develop Regional Food Supply Propositions for beef, pork and cheese (the Netherlands) and institutional kitchens (Flanders). In Groningen and West-Sweden, large public and corporate organisations have opted for regional food sourcing and REFRAME is co-developing a new guideline for local Flemish governments to follow the same tack. REFRAME shares its concepts via its Online Resource Centre.

## Inno-Quarter

### Startups test sustainable business ideas at festivals

Inno-Quarter supports startups to conduct a vital reality-check of their products and services at festivals across the North Sea Region. This helps them to further develop and refine their concepts. To be eligible, their business ideas must clearly contribute to at least one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2018, Inno-Quarter set up shop at three festivals in three countries, with a total audience of 90,000 visitors. Startups presented an impressive diversity of new products and services, from recycled yoga mats to innovative electric cars and an app for crowdsourcing audioguides.

All festivals involved in the project attract a wide range of visitors, providing a perfect micro-society for testing new business ideas.





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Priority 2: Eco-innovation

Promotes the circular economy and reduction of the region's greenhouse gas emissions in the public and private sectors. Thus far, ongoing projects have demonstrated 93 new green products, services and processes.

## 2imprezs

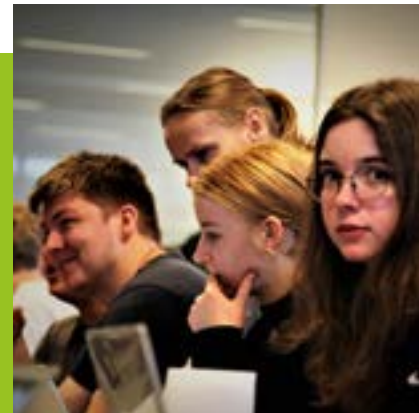
### Energising students to reduce carbon emissions

The 2imprezs project empowers school children at 141 schools in the North Sea Region to take a leading role in reaching 30% energy savings, reducing emissions by 7,320 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The project recognises the strategic role of school kids who are considered 'agents of change' and are involved in all core activities, from conducting energy audits for school

buildings to assessing their schools' current energy situation and designing a plan for improvements and energy savings.

Each school nominates 'Energisers' amongst the students and engages all school children in interactive events. More than 20,000 students participated in the project's Energy Challenges campaign in 2018 alone!

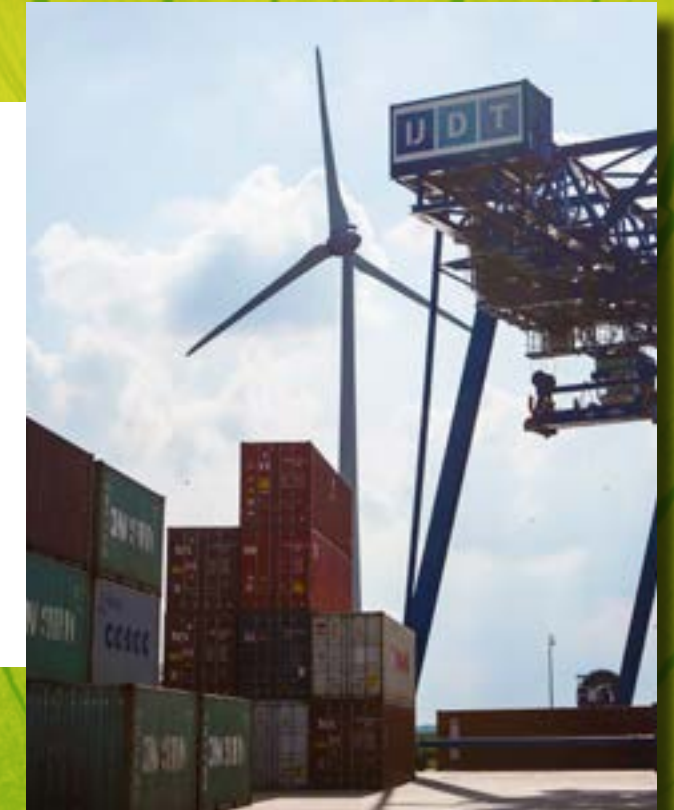


## DUAL Ports

### Decarbonising regional ports

The DUAL Ports runs 15 pilots demonstrating green port concepts. In 2018, new LED lighting in the Port of Emden was installed, with estimated carbon savings of 80%; the project discovered that LNG port facilities can be turned 'H2-ready'; the Port of Zwolle achieved savings of €240,000 through resource-sharing; and a Danish pilot recycling demolition waste, fly ash and slag for port construction inspired several similar schemes in the region. An initial cost-benefit analysis indicated that pilot investments are beneficial.

DUAL Ports has been showcased on Dutch TV and at international events. Based on an extension grant, new pilots were added.



## SalFar

### Saline farming: Producing food in a changing climate

As sea levels rise, salty seawater pushes inland, rendering large tracts of farmland unproductive. SalFar (Saline Farming) spearheads new coastal farming methods and business opportunities for farmers, food producers, and entrepreneurs. So far, the partners have have piloted 15 products and recipes containing salt-tolerant crops and demonstrated that saline farming methods can reduce freshwater consumption.

In 2018, SalFar helped put saline farming on the policy agenda in the Dutch Province of Fryslân and presented itself to the Minister for Federal and European Affairs and Regional Development of Lower Saxony and former UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon.



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Priority 3: Sustainable North Sea Region

Fosters climate adaptation, ecosystem management, blue growth, and marine spatial planning. Based on project interventions, 44 sites are now using new solutions supporting long-term sustainability whilst 21 climate adaptation solutions have so far been demonstrated.

## TOPSOIL

### Water management under a changing climate regime

Via ground-breaking technology, TOPSOIL explores how the soil and groundwater beneath our feet respond to rising temperatures. This enables the experts to predict whether local areas will be facing drought and water scarcity, saltwater intrusion, or flooding in the future.

TOPSOIL's technologies are now being applied in climate-smart planning and management in several North Sea Region coun-

tries, and it is also being deployed by the US Geological Survey and Stanford University. Preliminary results are being integrated into new farming practices and land management in Germany and the UK.

On 8 December 2018, TOPSOIL presented its preliminary results at the Interreg Climate Change Network session organised as part of the UN Climate COP24 in Katowice, Poland.



## Building with Nature

### Applying nature-based solutions in climate change defence

Building with Nature (BwN) explores the role of natural structures – such as dunes, sandy shores and rivers - in climate resilience and flood defence. In 2018, the project conducted nourishment solutions and eelgrass experiments and completed national analyses. In Groningen, construction of Twin Dikes began. The Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Ms Rosanna Cunningham, visited the Eddleston River pilot and was briefed about how this catchment area is used to assess nature-based techniques and their benefits.

BwN offers training for professionals and works with the US Army Corps of Engineers on developing guidance for BwN practitioners. The project was highlighted in the 2018 UN World Water Development report “Nature Based Solutions for Water”.

## BEGIN

### Building liveable and resilient cities together

BEGIN helps cities across the North Sea Region adapt to climate change via blue-green infrastructures (BGI) and Social Innovation (SI), involving local stakeholders in the design process. BGI such as green corridors, permeable paving, bio-swales, and rainwater harvesting can bolster cities against extreme weather events whilst enhancing liveability and ecosystem services.

The project has made significant inroads towards promoting BGI and SI. So far, the City of Dordrecht has made climate adaptation a central goal and contributes to the Dutch national climate policy and adaptation strategy; Antwerp and Bergen are developing new city master plans involving BGI; Hamburg works with several ministries to build BGI into climate adaptation policy; Gothenburg has adopted plans for handling a “100-year storm”; and a large investment scheme in Bradford (Shipley Canal Road Corridor, >50M GBP) now includes many BGI elements.





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Priority 4: Green transport and mobility

Fosters sustainable mobility and transport that lower the carbon footprint of the region, where passenger and goods transport is intense due to its dense population, busy ports, and thriving trade. By end-2018, 45 new, green transport solutions had been adopted.

## SHARE-North Advancing shared mobility

SHARE-North promotes shared mobility as a pillar of sustainability and a vital part of integrated transport planning. The project demonstrates convenient shared transport options that reduce congestion and air pollution whilst enhancing accessibility in cities and regions.

Shared mobility hubs are now established in Bremen, Bergen (Norway) and in Flanders, with similar initiatives under way in the Netherlands and the UK. SHARE-North has so far removed at least 6,000 cars from city streets, saving 25,850 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in 2.5 years and freeing up about 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> of urban street space.

The partners also created shared travel plans and support for nearly 300 businesses and employment centres in the UK, and provide digital tools facilitating shared mobility at business parks and enterprises in Flanders.



## G-PaTRA

### Low-carbon mobility in rural areas

G-PaTRA builds the capacity of public authorities to integrate low-emission vehicles in rural transport systems and make smarter use of existing resources, lowering the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of personal transport in rural areas.

In 2018, G-PaTRA launched a dial-a-bus scheme trial in the Scottish Highlands, established a “youth bus” ride offer in Lower Saxony, and launched shared mobility hubs across rural Flanders. Also in Flanders, they rolled out the Quality Neighbourhoods campaign where citizens get to spend a month testing alternatives to private cars.

In addition, the project ran a survey on carsharing, gathered data for travel optimisation, and conducted events to raise awareness of hydrogen power in transport.



## SEEV4-City

### Greening city energy and transport

In pilots demonstrating smart charging and Vehicle2Grid concepts from household to city-wide, SEEV4-City creates unprecedented flexibility in the energy flow between vehicles and grid. This advances fossil-free transport whilst smoothing out mismatched demand/production peaks that can disrupt grid operations.

Amsterdam launched smart charging and the Amsterdam Johan Cruijff ArenA installed a large energy storage system. In Oslo, the Vulkan car parking garage was upgraded with a smart battery storage and flexible charging to shave load at peak times. A similar experiment is ongoing in Kortrijk, Belgium.

Loughborough added electric vehicle and stationary storage to a household with existing solar energy and Leicester is developing a Vehicle2Building system at an office site.

SEEV4-City is generating significant interest amongst European industry and policymakers.







## Stay in touch

Join the community of North Sea Region enthusiasts! Follow us, call us, mail us or visit us at our office in Viborg, Denmark.

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## North Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 funded projects



### PRIORITY 1

BLING | CORA | CC | CUPIDO | FBD  
Growin 4.0 | In For Care | Inn2POWER  
Like! | Inno-Quarter | PERISCOPE  
PROWAD LINK | REFRAME | RIGHT  
SHINE | SCORE | Lean Landing  
Northern Connections



### PRIORITY 2

AC/DC | SMARTGREEN | Carbon  
Farming | BIOCAS | CircPro2 | COBEN  
DUAL Ports | DecomTools  
EMPOWER 2.0 | INDU-ZERO | OESA  
2imprezs | Salfar | SCALE-UP  
SOILCOM



### PRIORITY 3

NorthSEE | BEGIN | BWN | C5a  
CANAPE | FAIR | FRAMES | GEANS  
IMMERSE | Jomopans | NSW  
NuReDrain | PARTRIDGE  
Sullied Sediments | TOPSOIL  
WaterCOG | CATCH



### PRIORITY 4

#IWTS 2.0 | ART-Forum | BITS  
G-PaTRA | HyTrEc2 | MOVE | SHARE-  
North | SURFLOGH | SEEV4-City  
Stronger Combined