



SUMMARY

COOPERATION PROGRAMME INTERREG NORTH-WEST EUROPE 2014 - 2020

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DISCLAIMER: The Cooperation Programme North West Europe is still subject for approval by the European Commission. Thus, all contents of this summary are subject to change until final adoption by the European Commission.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Overview of the Programme.....	3
The NWE Programme’s Intervention Logic.....	6
PRIORITY 1: Innovation.....	7
PRIORITY 2: Low carbon	10
PRIORITY 3: Resource and materials efficiency	16
Breakdown of funding for Priorities and Specific Objectives	17
Who is the NWE Programme for?.....	19

Introduction

This document provides a short summary of the INTERREG North-West Europe (NWE) Cooperation Programme¹. It is aimed at potential project partners who may wish to design, propose and/or participate in the delivery of a project; but is also intended as a summary of the aims and objectives of the Programme for policymakers and other stakeholders.

It forms part of a suite of Programme documents that includes the full copy of the Cooperation Programme and the Programme Manual for potential applicants, which are all available from the Programme's website at www.nweurope.eu. Please note however that the only legal reference document is the official Cooperation Programme, formally approved by the European Commission.

Whatever your question or need, support and assistance is available from the range of Programme bodies established to manage and deliver the Programme. In particular the **Contact Points** and the **Joint Secretariat** are the first point of contacts for detailed information on the Programme and to help project promoters to develop their project ideas. More information on each of the Programme bodies can be found in the Programme Manual or on the Programme's website at www.nweurope.eu.

Overview of the Programme

The INTERREG North-West Europe (NWE) Programme is a transnational European Territorial Cooperation Programme funded by the European Union. The areas involved in the NWE Programme are Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and parts of France, Germany and the Netherlands.

The Programme's eligible area extends over 845 000 km² and is home to a population of about 180 million people. While it can be considered as one of the most economically dynamic and prosperous areas of Europe, it also faces a number of environmental, social and economic challenges.

Many of Europe's leading and internationally significant economic centres – including a number of large metropolitan areas – are located in NWE. However, as a mark of its many contrasts, the NWE area also includes a number of rural areas with a more remote character. As evidenced in a number of socio-economic and environmental

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indicators², the area's diverse regions are characterised by significant disparities, which have been increasing with time. As a result, one of the main challenges for the NWE area is to support excellence while simultaneously addressing its disparities.

² For example, population density or economic performance as highlighted in the SWOT analysis of the programme. See http://www.nweurope.eu/nwefiles/file/Reviewed_SWOT_NWE_FINAL.pdf

Transnational Cooperation areas 2014 - 2020 North West Europe

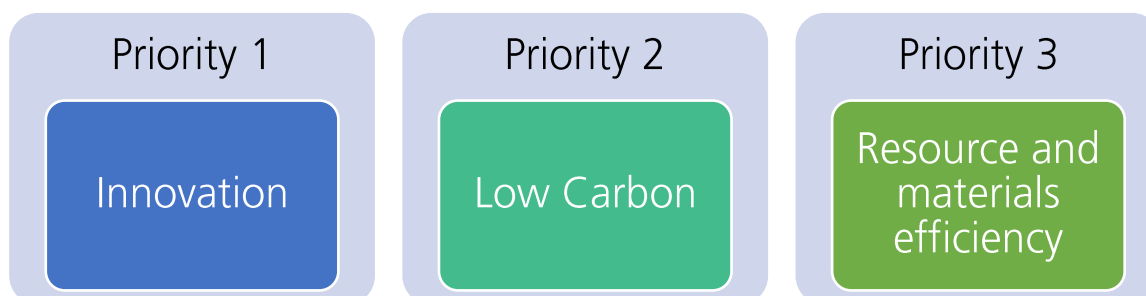


The NWE Programme's Intervention Logic

NWE's ambition

The NWE Programme's ambition and overall vision for the future territorial and socio-economic development of the NWE area is *"to be a key economic player in the world and create an attractive place to work and live, with high levels of innovation, sustainability and cohesion."*

In order to achieve this, the Member States involved in the NWE area carried out a SWOT analysis and identified a number of key challenges that need to be addressed in order to help realise the Programme's ambition. Based on these challenges, that are further summarised under each Priority, the Programme has defined a set of three Priorities:



For each of these Priorities, the strategy then defines one or more Specific Objectives. The Types of Actions (ToA's) are also set out for each SO to provide examples of project activities.

For clarity purposes, the following table shows 'at-a-glance' the relationship between the three priorities and the five corresponding Specific Objectives (SOs):

Priority	Specific Objective
Innovation	SO1 To enhance innovation performance of enterprises throughout NWE regions
Low Carbon	SO2: To facilitate the implementation of low-carbon, energy and climate protection strategies to reduce GHG emissions in NWE SO3: To facilitate the uptake of low carbon technologies, products, processes and services in sectors with high energy saving potential, to reduce GHG emissions in NWE SO4: To facilitate the implementation of transnational low-carbon solutions in transport systems to reduce GHG-emissions in NWE.

Resource and materials efficiency	SO5 To optimise (re)use of material and natural resources in NWE
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PRIORITY 1: Innovation

The NWE region faces a range of distinctive challenges that provide the rationale for this Priority. The NWE area has considerable innovation potential and hosts some of Europe's top innovation performers. However, this potential is highly geographically concentrated, creating a pronounced territorial divide. Tackling this 'territorial gap' and the differences in innovation performance among regions is specifically addressed in this Priority.

For example, innovation capacity, patent applications and R&D spending are geographically concentrated in a small number of regions. And although R&D spending is in line with the EU average, it is behind that of international competitors.

There is also a low translation from research to marketable products, processes and services: NWE produces good ideas, but they do not get to the market. A key reason for this is poor circulation of knowledge and limited collaboration among innovation stakeholders, but also, very often, a lack of 'critical mass'. In other words, an insufficient number of innovation stakeholders in a number of regions and therefore insufficient capacity at local level, to generate innovations;

The NWE area also faces persistent levels of social and economic exclusion, in particular for communities under pressure, and populations that are excluded or at risk of exclusion.

Priority 1 thus focuses on enhancing the innovation performance in NWE. The NWE Programme uses the following definition for 'enhance innovation performance': *"to better exploit research outcomes for the development of new technologies, products, processes and services generating an impact on the social, demographic, spatial, economic and environmental conditions of NWE territories"*.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1

To enhance innovation performance of enterprises throughout NWE regions

Funding available for this Specific Objective: €131m

Types of Action (ToA) supported

The Programme will support three types of actions:

ToA1: Building innovation capacity of regions and territories to improve innovation performance. This specific objective targets regions that are lagging behind in terms of their innovation performance by encouraging them to collaborate with more developed

regions. Projects are required to build transnational partnerships that bring innovation stakeholders together to improve innovation performance and know-how in NWE regions. Partnerships can be cross-sectoral and are likely to involve public and private sectors, research organisations and relevant interest groups from civil society (e.g. consumer groups, environmental groups etc.).

For example, the Programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Enhancing and developing transnational (self-sustaining) clusters or networks
- Supporting internationalisation through the sharing of know-how and cross-sectoral collaboration;
- Developing transnational schemes for infrastructure sharing for research and innovation

ToA2: Improving the competitiveness of enterprises, through cooperative projects that take forward the development of specific products, services or processes to a state of market-readiness. Project actions focus mostly on the concept/technology validation phase of the innovation idea, including its design, testing and development phases.

Where they exist, projects are required to be in tune with the objectives of the regional smart specialisation strategies, and need to support cooperation between regions and territories with similar strategic objectives. Through cooperation, projects can provide the necessary critical mass and improve regional competitiveness in international markets.

The Programme therefore supports projects that collaborate on:

- Demonstrating and testing technologies, products, services and processes under real-life conditions
- Demonstrating (larger scale) service delivery models/improved business processes (proof of concept);
- Developing transnational schemes for infrastructure sharing to improve business innovation and competitiveness;

ToA3: Delivering societal benefits through innovation. The Programme supports projects from all NWE regions and territories and in particular projects that target populations that are excluded or at risk of exclusion, as well as communities under pressure. Projects aim to support the development, testing and implementation of innovative solutions that tackle social needs and problems (i.e. 'social innovation').

The programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Designing and demonstrating new public service delivery mechanisms (for example, public-private partnerships), or products for populations that are excluded or at risk of exclusion;
- Developing and delivering joint services or financial tools that address the demographic or social challenges identified in the NWE area, in particular unemployment, deprivation, demographic changes, health inequalities, rural peripherality/isolation and social integration (communities under pressure and vulnerable groups);

- Supporting and developing social enterprises, such as setting up social incubators in transnational collaboration networks and ‘train the trainer’ programmes for social entrepreneurs.

What specific outputs is the NWE Programme seeking to achieve?

The actions described above generate a range of specific outputs. Projects need to quantify them in their projects. In summary, these include:

- New or enhanced transnational clusters or innovation networks
- Technologies, products, services and processes developed and tested in real life conditions
- Jobs created and maintained in all economic sectors
- Funding leveraged by the projects (€)
- End-users benefitting from social innovation
- Pilot actions implemented, focusing on social innovation
- Enterprises receiving support, including social enterprises
- Enterprises co-operating with research institutions, including social enterprises
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products

Which regions are targeted under this Specific Objective?

With a view to reducing the regional differences in innovation performance within the NWE area, the aim of this Specific Objective is to support cooperation that generates positive innovation spill-overs in weaker performing regions (i.e. those defined by the EC’s Regional Scoreboard for innovation performance as ‘follower’ or ‘moderate’ innovation regions.)³

ToA1 and 2 both target a wide range of regions and focus explicitly on supporting cooperation between stronger and weaker ‘innovation’ regions. In the field of social innovation (ToA3), the Programme particularly welcomes projects that aim to support territories with populations that are excluded or at risk of exclusion and communities under pressure, with the goal of helping them to participate in society and in the economy.

³ The programme uses the European Commission’s Regional Innovation Scoreboard for innovation performance to define ‘stronger and weaker performing’ regions, in particular three types of ‘innovation regions’: innovation leaders, innovation followers and moderate innovators.

PRIORITY 2: Low carbon

NWE is a successful area in economic terms, yet it has an Achilles' heel – NWE countries are among the EU's highest emitters of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs). The financial and economic crisis has underlined the need for the EU-economy not only to become more competitive but also more sustainable by achieving the transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy; goals which go hand in hand. The analysis of issues facing the NWE area found that there is a broad public and political awareness of this need and an even broader public acceptance for the shift to a low-carbon economy.

The Programme therefore addresses the challenge of finding ways to reduce GHGs to meet climate change goals. This is not an easy challenge, the NWE area is highly urbanised, and urban areas are major sources of GHG emissions.

For example, the region is home to a number of energy-intensive and/or high energy consuming sectors (e.g. building sector, transport) but which have a high potential for increasing energy efficiency. Furthermore, the share of renewable energy in NWE in the production and consumption mix is lower than the European average, and there is a high dependence on foreign energy. The renewable energy distribution and generation infrastructure needs improving; e.g. there are still existing technological, regulatory and financial hurdles to delivering alternative energy production to networks and grids. Moreover, persisting problems regarding access to affordable and sustainable energy sources exist (e.g. for low-income social groups).

In regards to transport, a high-energy consuming sector, NWE remains heavily reliant on road transport for the movement of goods and people. The motorisation rate is above the EU27 average in the majority of the NWE area. The existing road infrastructure in NWE is heavily congested, especially in the core area. NWE suffers from the coupled issues of high energy use and high levels of GHG emissions. Thus, as the transport sector grows, energy use, pollution and CO₂ emissions continue to rise.

Priority 2 therefore includes **3 Specific Objectives**.

- SO2: To facilitate the implementation of low-carbon, energy and climate protection strategies to reduce GHG emissions in NWE
- SO3: To facilitate the uptake of low carbon technologies, products, processes and services in sectors with high energy saving potential, to reduce GHG emissions in NWE
- SO4: To facilitate the implementation of transnational low-carbon solutions in transport systems to reduce GHG-emissions in NWE.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2

To facilitate the implementation of low-carbon, energy and climate protection strategies to reduce GHG emissions in NWE

Funding available for this Specific Objective: €48m

Types of Actions (ToA) supported

In order to tackle the challenges identified in the area of low-carbon, this Specific Objective will support two types of actions:

ToA4: Promoting carbon reduction in cities and regions through the implementation of emerging or existing low-carbon, energy or climate protection strategies. Strategies may encompass localised energy generation and supply, distribution and efficiency management, or other means of reducing carbon emissions at a territorial level, and their delivery. The success of this Specific Objective is not however measured in terms of strategies produced, but in terms of real solutions put into practice (technical, organisational, or financial) that lead to reduced GHG emissions in NWE's regions and territories.

The Programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Delivering integrated territorial strategies which may combine, for example, localised energy generation, energy distribution, energy efficiency, energy storage, energy affordability/accessibility or reducing carbon emissions from key sectors;
- Testing and developing new financial schemes in order to deliver low-carbon strategies backed by both public and private funding;
- Initiating new governance arrangements (involving civil society stakeholders and local communities) to deliver low-carbon strategies and improve institutional capacity, where they lead to new solutions;
- Promoting and developing transnational networks of energy neutral communities, where they lead to the shared development of new solutions;
- Developing innovative approaches to deliver localised energy distribution and micro-generation, for example, in public buildings or social housing;
- Delivering technologies and solutions to create low-carbon intelligent energy networks;
- Developing synergies between existing large-scale infrastructure projects, using transnational cooperation to make delivery more efficient and effective.

ToA5: Implementing combined mitigation and adaptation solutions to demonstrate feasibility and to refine regional development plans for the future. As noted above, the highly urbanised nature of NWE makes the area highly vulnerable to climate change events. NWE must therefore develop and introduce innovative solutions tailored to the circumstances of its regions and territories. The challenge is to combine mitigation and adaptation measures and to focus actions on limiting the causes of climate change, instead of dealing with its consequences, in other words projects are required to deliver both a reduction in risks and a reduction in GHG emissions.

Project activities may include collaboration on:

- Analysing, testing, demonstrating and implementing solutions that combine mitigation and adaptation measures. This involves technical, financial, organisational, regulatory and institutional aspects, such as:

- Built structures that deliver results in terms of adaptation (reduction in risk) and mitigation (reduction in GHG emissions), which are sustainably designed or built;
- Innovative approaches to environmental risk at a city or regional level, which bring adaptation and mitigation benefits, such as Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD);
- Measures to reduce or compensate for emissions in water systems, such as optimised water distribution and CO2 neutral maintenance of adaptation infrastructures;

What specific outputs is the NWE Programme seeking to achieve?

The actions described above generate a range of specific outputs. Projects need to quantify them in their projects. In summary, these include:

- Solutions facilitating the delivery of existing or emerging low-carbon, energy or climate-protection strategies
- Number of combined mitigation-relevant adaptation solutions implemented
- Jobs created and maintained in all economic sectors
- Funding leveraged by the projects (in €)
- Households with improved energy classification
- Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings
- Estimated annual decrease of GHG

Which regions are targeted under this Specific Objective?

This Specific Objective supports projects from across the entire NWE area, thereby providing opportunities for partners from all regions to participate. The scale-up and roll-out of existing strategies may engage 'follower' regions that are in the process of developing such strategies. There is also both an unmet need and potential to exploit energy sources in rural areas (localised distribution systems, local biomass, biogas etc.). Including such rural areas in the projects also strengthens territorial cohesion in NWE. Regions facing problems with energy affordability and/or accessibility may also be targeted. The potential of energy-generating buildings has an important role to play under this Specific Objective, especially in urban areas.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3

To facilitate the uptake of low carbon technologies, products, processes and services in sectors with high energy saving potential, to reduce GHG emissions in NWE

Funding available for this Specific Objective: €51m

Types of Actions (ToA) supported

This Specific Objective supports the following types of actions:

ToA6: Implementing low-carbon technologies and other solutions through the demonstration and roll-out of existing low-carbon products, technologies, or solutions. The Programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Implementing and adopting zero/low-carbon technologies in enterprises and industrial production processes; particularly those relating to energy generation and/or energy reductions/efficiency;
- Delivering and rolling out of emerging energy technologies;
- Implementing transnational living labs to test and demonstrate the use of zero/low-carbon solutions in real life conditions;
- Implementing of joint zero/low carbon technology demonstration schemes and facilities, including fab labs and R&D/testing facilities;
- Ensuring that new energy solutions are feasible (for example, finding ways to prevent bioenergy production from negatively affecting agricultural or water resources).

These project activities must demonstrate the positive environmental and economic impact associated with the use of existing zero/low-carbon solutions, leading to the further uptake of such solutions, particularly by private stakeholders.

What specific outputs is the NWE Programme seeking to achieve?

The actions described above generate a range of specific outputs. Projects need to quantify them in their projects. In summary, these include:

- Adopted or applied low carbon technologies
- Jobs created and maintained in all economic sectors
- Funding leveraged by the projects (in €)
- Enterprises co-operating with research institutions
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products
- Additional capacity of renewable energy production
- Households with improved energy classification
- Annual decrease of GHG

Which regions are targeted under this Specific Objective?

This Specific Objective supports projects from across the whole of the NWE area, thereby providing opportunities for partners from all regions. In light of the needs and challenges detailed above, some actions may concern specific territories and sectors with high energy-saving potential.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4

To facilitate the implementation of transnational low-carbon solutions in transport systems to reduce GHG-emissions in NWE

Funding available for this Specific Objective: €48m

What are the issues and challenges facing NWE?

The NWE area faces a range of specific challenges that provide the rationale for this Specific Objective:

This Specific Objective targets NWE transport systems such as networks of mobility connections, flows of passengers and goods, travel patterns, logistic chains, multi-modal systems. As such, rather than promoting the uptake and sharing of stand-alone solutions, projects are required to demonstrate the transnational added value of their actions and how they will decrease GHG emissions.

Types of Actions (ToA) supported

This Specific Objective supports the following types of action:

ToA7: Implementing transnational solutions for low-carbon transport systems to reduce GHG emissions. The Programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Developing pilot or demonstration projects to bring accessible technologies or emerging solutions for low-carbon transportation (e.g. new forms of propulsion systems) closer to public use in NWE transport systems or networks;
- Testing and demonstrating low-carbon transport solutions in real life conditions, such as low-carbon or zero-carbon rolling stock, vehicles using alternative fuels, increasing levels of e-mobility, in NWE transport systems or networks;
- Engaging with different kinds of transport operators and their supply chains across the NWE area to affect large-scale behavioural change with respect to the use of low-carbon transportation and the implementation of different low-carbon solutions.

ToA8: Implementing solutions for optimised traffic management to enhance capacity and to bring about a tangible shift to more environmentally friendly forms of transport in order to reduce GHG emissions. The Programme supports projects that collaborate on:

- Developing, implementing and evaluating efficient traffic management solutions, such as seamless transport, smart mobility, IT systems, last mile concepts or services, journey planning tools, where these lead to real reductions in GHG emissions;
- Developing and improving multi-modal transport (freight and passengers), focused on reducing GHG emissions;
- Optimising transnational logistic chains and systems within transport corridors or transport systems to reduce GHG emissions.

What specific outputs is the NWE Programme seeking to achieve?

The actions described above generate a range of specific outputs. Projects need to quantify them in their projects. In summary, these include:

- Implemented low-carbon solutions in transport
- New or improved transport management systems leading to GHG reduction

- Transport operators supported implementing low carbon solutions
- Jobs created and maintained in all economic sectors
- Funding leveraged by the projects (in €)
- Enterprises co-operating with research institutions

- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products
- Annual decrease of GHG

Which regions are targeted under this Specific Objective?

All regions are concerned by this Specific Objective, since low-carbon transport solutions are relevant for the entire NWE area. The Programme therefore supports projects and actions that target the major urban areas of NWE as well as its peripheral regions.

PRIORITY 3: Resource and materials efficiency

With growing pressure on the world's resources and on the environment, it is important for NWE to promote the transition to a resource-efficient and ultimately regenerative circular economy (rather than a 'throw away' economy). Achieving this would lead to greater resource productivity, a reduction of waste and a reduction of the environmental impacts from production and consumption in NWE. This applies to all areas of resource use and production processes, in particular those that tend to be intensive in their use of raw materials, water and land.

Currently, the market for production and consumption in NWE is overly oriented towards a traditional linear economy (make, use, dispose of) and has not shifted towards a regenerative circular economy. The large-scale consumption of non-renewable material resources in a highly industrialized society is clearly unsustainable. There is a significant challenge in terms of decoupling economic growth and resource consumption.

Increasing resource efficiency can create major economic opportunities, improve productivity, drive down costs and boost competitiveness, thereby securing jobs and growth. Eco-innovation, in this case the innovative and more efficient use of resources, is a response to this need.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 5

To optimise (re)use of material and natural resources in NWE

Funding available for this Specific Objective: €95m

Types of Actions (ToA) supported

ToA9: Implementing new technologies, services, products and processes to improve resource efficiency. The transfer and implementation of, for example, new technologies and solutions is required to optimise the use of material resources in line with territorial strategies.

Project actions may include collaboration on:

- Implementing solutions to mitigate the impact of resource-intensive industrial sectors;
- Designing and implementing new production measures by public, private and research organisations, delivering the concept of the 'circular economy';
- Designing and implementing new products, processes, technologies or solutions that minimise resource use and / or replace non-renewable materials, such as biomaterials, alternative fabrics and bio-plastics;
- Implementing life-cycle analyses of products and services as a tool to improve resource efficiency;

- Developing and implementing collaborative approaches to increase the usefulness of waste, such as the extraction of energy from waste;
- Developing 'industrial ecology' practices, encouraging collaborative approaches between organisations to use waste, energy and materials.

These actions are aimed at the implementation of strategies rather than the development of strategies and are designed to achieve a reduction in resource consumption.

What specific outputs is the NWE Programme seeking to achieve?

The actions described above generate a range of specific outputs. Projects need to quantify them in their projects. In summary, these include:

- Innovative uses of waste processes/products/services from waste materials
- Efficient natural and material resources solutions tested and implemented
- Funding leveraged by the projects (in €)
- Decreased raw material use (in tons) - the resource saving rates the projects generate
- Increased material recovery, re-use and recycling (in tons) - the recycling rates the projects generate
- Jobs created and maintained in all economic sectors
- Enterprises receiving support
- Enterprises co-operating with research institutions
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products
- Enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products

Which regions are targeted under this Specific Objective?

This Specific Objective concerns the entire NWE area. However, certain regions have specific needs and challenges relating to resource efficiency, waste management, and industrial production or to a dominant sector that is water and/or land intensive, for example.

Breakdown of funding for Priorities and Specific Objectives

Priority	Specific Objective	Proportion of ERDF budget	ERDF support €	National counterpart €	Total budget €
1 – Innovation	SO 1	33%	130,724,333	87,149,555	217,873,555

2 – Low carbon	SO 2	12%	47,524,529	31,683,020	79,207,549
	SO 3	13%	51,484,907	34,323,271	85,808,178
	SO 4	12%	47,524,529	31,683,020	79,207,549
3 – Resource & Material efficiency	SO 5	24%	95,072,242	63,381,495	158,453,737

Projects can receive co-financing of up to 60% ERDF of their total budget. The remaining budget needs to be match-funded by the participating organisations.

Who is the NWE Programme for?

Target groups and beneficiaries

The Programme is aimed at two groups. Projects financed by the Programme are delivered by a set of organisations acting as project partners (Beneficiaries). These deliver solutions and benefits for the end-users of project activities (Target Groups).

The **beneficiaries** include, among others:

- Governmental organisations (local, regional, national and international);
- Civil society stakeholders (for example third-sector organisations such as NGOs and non-profit organisations);
- Education and knowledge institutions, including private or semi-public research organisations;
- Intermediate bodies, such as chambers of commerce, development agencies, cluster organisations, technology transfer offices;
- Enterprises, including social enterprises;

The **target groups** to benefit from the project activities include, among others:

- Enterprises, including SMEs;
- Excluded population or population at risk for exclusion, or other forms of communities under pressure;
- Households and inhabitants in the NWE area;
- Governmental organisations;
- Civil society stakeholders.

Further examples of beneficiaries and target groups are listed under each Specific Objective in the full Cooperation Programme document.

For more detailed information, please consult:

- the Programme's **website** www.nweurope.eu for contact details, Programme news, calls for proposals as well as key documents such as the
- draft **Cooperation Programme**, still to be approved by the European Commission
- **Programme Manual** providing detailed information on how to develop a project, the application and assessment procedures, as well as on the rules and procedures for project implementation.