

Regional development and cross-border cooperation

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway have set aside €88 million to address challenges in regional development and to promote cross-border cooperation.



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WHY FOCUS ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION?

Despite much progress, wide economic and social inequalities still exist in Europe, both between and within countries.

Public institutions and local and regional authorities play a crucial role in any country. Increasing their capacity and developing modern and efficient administrations is important for the development of regions across Europe.

European regional challenges at a glance:

- > Of the EU's 271 regions, one in four has a GDP of less than 75% of the EU average
- > Regions with the lowest GDP per capita are located in the beneficiary countries of the EEA and Norway Grants
- > Ethnic minorities such as the Roma, and immigrants in many EU member states, are often disadvantaged and vulnerable to exclusion with generally lower rates of employment and income and higher school drop-out rates, homelessness and criminal propensity
- > Regions along the EU external border share common challenges, with comparatively low levels of economic development, and high levels of organised crime, unemployment and environmental challenges.

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE?

The EEA and Norway Grants have allocated €88 million to programmes promoting regional development, cooperation with Norwegian authorities and institutions and cross-border cooperation in the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The programmes contribute to:

- > Strengthened social and economic cohesion at regional and local levels

- > Increased cooperation and transfer of knowledge between public institutions, local and regional authorities in the beneficiary country and their counterparts in Norway
- > Closer contact and cross-border cooperation between regions on both sides of the EU external border

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE IT?

Types of activities supported by the programmes include:

- > Strengthening capacity, developing systems and strategic planning as well as improving public service provision of national, regional and local government institutions through exchange of practice and experience between Norwegian national and regional authorities and their counterparts in the beneficiary countries
- > Improving access to education for children and young people as well as better service provision in poorer regions in Romania and Slovakia with significant Roma populations
- > Promotion of social inclusion and anti-discrimination measures at national, regional and local levels
- > Improving cross-border cooperation between people, authorities and civil society organisations in Slovakia and Ukraine - primarily between the Slovak self-governing districts of Košice and Prešov and the Ukrainian region of Transcarpathia
- > Supporting municipalities and local governance in Bulgaria, as well as strengthening cross-border relations with the country's neighbours Serbia, Macedonia and Turkey

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Projects are supported under dedicated programmes in 11 EU countries. Some of these projects are predefined, while others are selected following open calls for proposals organised by the programme operator in the respective country.

Calls are published on the websites of the programme operators and on www.eeagrants.org.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

To enhance knowledge exchange and mutual learning, partnerships between organisations in the donor and beneficiary countries have been established. Several public bodies from the donor countries are involved as donor programme partners (DPPs). They play a strategic role in programme planning and implementation as well as facilitating project partnerships. Entities from the donor countries also participate in individual projects as project partners.

To encourage cooperation, funding is available through the bilateral funds. This can be used to develop joint project applications or to facilitate partner searches, as well as for activities not directly related to projects, such as networking, joint events or exchange of best practice.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW: REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

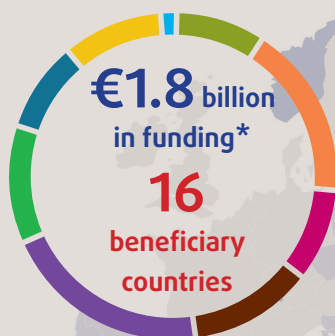
Country	Local and regional initiatives to reduce national inequalities and to promote social inclusion	Capacity-building and cooperation between public authorities in the beneficiary countries and Norway	Cross-border cooperation	Improved well-being of children and young people at risk in municipalities and regions	Partners	Grant amount (€ million)
Bulgaria		.	.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) Norwegian Barents Secretariat 	2.0 ■
Croatia	.					3.4 ■
Czech Republic	.	.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council of Europe (<i>capacity-building programme only</i>) 	3.0 ■■
Greece	.					4.3 ■
Hungary		.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) Norwegian Agency for Lifelong Learning 	10.8 ■
Latvia		.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) 	5.0 ■
Lithuania		.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) National Police Directorate (Norway) Norwegian Environment Agency 	8.0 ■
Malta		.				0.3 ■
Poland	.					9.8 ■
Romania	.			.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council of Europe 	27.0 ■
Slovakia	.		.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norwegian Barents Secretariat (Children and young people) Council of Europe (Social inclusion) 	14.4 ■■
Total						88.0

■ EEA Grants

■ Norway Grants

ABOUT THE EEA AND NORWAY GRANTS

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provide funding to:



AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Environmental management
- Climate change
- Civil society
- Cultural heritage and diversity
- Human and social development
- Green industry innovation
- Justice and home affairs
- Research and scholarships
- Decent work and social dialogue

* EEA Grants €993.5 million (Norway 95.7%, Iceland 3.2%, Liechtenstein 1.1%) – Norway Grants €804.6 million, financed by Norway alone