



Wadden Sea Funding Guide

Analysis of funding opportunities for future project activities of the Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage

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Abbreviations:

CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
EMFAF	European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund, European Rural Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund
JTF	Just Transition Fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
NSR	North Sea Region
NWE	North-West Europe
OUV	Outstanding Universal Value
R&I	Research and Innovation
SAPs	Standard Action Projects
SIPs	Strategic Integrated Projects
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNAPs	Strategic Nature Projects
TA	Technical Assistance
TA-CAP	Technical Assistance projects for Capacity Building
TA-PP	Technical Assistance for Preparation Projects
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WH	World Heritage
WS	Wadden Sea
WSWH	Wadden Sea World Heritage

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Part A - Introduction



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1 Introduction

The trilateral Operational Team Partnership Hub for the Wadden Sea World Heritage (OPteamPH) identified the need for a guide to future third-party funding opportunities. The diversity of organisations and stakeholders participating in trilateral cooperation at the Wadden Sea makes the systematic analysis of both national and international funding opportunities necessary. Third-party funding provides the means for the [Trilateral Partnership in support of the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage](#) to fulfil its potential as a platform and network for the partnership working in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WSWH). The Wadden Sea trilateral partnership represents an example of international best practice in strategic multi-stakeholder cooperation in nature conservation, building on more than forty years of cooperation, knowledge exchange and concerted effort on the part of public authorities, NGOs, scientists and sectoral stakeholders.

A wealth of experience in the acquisition of third-party funding and implementation of European, nationally and sub-nationally funded projects has been gathered by governmental and scientific actors and NGOs at the Wadden Sea. This expertise and legacy constitute a very strong point of departure for availing of funding opportunities at both international and national levels to support the work of the trilateral partnership in its continued pursuit of excellence. The development of the Partnership Hub represents an opportunity to engage a broader range of stakeholders in projects supporting the objectives of the WSWH. At the beginning of 2022, the new programmes for 2021-2027 EU funding period are taking shape and the first calls have been announced.

This guide has been commissioned by the Lower Saxon National Park Authority, as project partner of PROWAD LINK ("Protect and Prosper: Benefits through linking sustainable growth with nature protection", funded by the INTERREG VB Programme for the North Sea Region (NSR)) and developed by REM Consult and Dr. Cormac Walsh. It aims to provide professional assistance with the task of navigating through the wide range of programmes and associated sea of documentation of potential relevance to the Trilateral WSWH Partnership. The assessment of funding opportunities presented below is specifically targeted to the objectives of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) of the Trilateral WSWH Partnership. The assessment thus focusses on funding for activities which support the protection of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) including the integrity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem and foster sustainability of human uses in the Wadden Sea region, associated with these objectives. The focus here is on actions that go beyond that what is required by public authorities, to support the Wadden Sea trilateral partnership in its role as a model of collaborative practice in protected area management. This work runs in parallel to the development of Wadden Sea research agenda with separate strands for the acquisition of funds. Consequently, the emphasis here is more on practice-based projects and transdisciplinary, applied research projects rather than fundamental research opportunities. Whereas the primary focus is thus on the WSWH site, funding opportunities which support the role of the partners and stakeholders from the coastal hinterland and islands in contributing to the goals of the WSWH and PH are welcomed.

2 Setting the scene

The purpose of this funding guide is to provide orientation in terms of funding opportunities for future collaborative projects to the trilateral WSWH partnership and thus a wider array of Wadden Sea stakeholders engaged in this collaboration. The focus here is on collaborations and types of actions that go beyond legal obligations of public authorities.

To assess and identify suitable funding opportunities, four steps are necessary:

- to define the focus areas for the future trilateral WSWH Partnership (in this document we use the terminology Topics and Sub-topics)
- to collect the thematic priorities and objectives of the different funding sources, and
- to identify types of actions supported by each funding programme,
- and finally, to set these three aspects in relation to each other in order to identify matches.

This chapter includes an overview of the topics for the trilateral WSWH Partnership, a typology of actions generally supported by funding programmes, and an overview of the EU, national and regional funding programmes that have been analysed for the funding guide. The key characteristics of the most relevant funding programmes, including the types of actions that they allow and the thematic links to the

focus areas of the trilateral Wadden Sea partnership are later presented in more depth in Chapter 5 and 6. Building upon this inventory of funding programmes and identification of topics and sub-topics, we present in Chapters 8 and 9, a matching analysis. This matching has two components: matrix tables and illustrative scenarios focussed on selected sub-topics.

Potential topics for future trilateral Wadden Sea WH Partnership projects and activities

The topics have been derived from an in-depth analysis of the Memorandum of Understanding of the trilateral WSWH Partnership and a survey of topics, sub-topics and related challenges. The survey was distributed among the OPteamPH, PROWAD LINK partners and their networks. Care was taken to ensure alignment between the list of topics and sub-topics and the overall objectives of the partnership.

The topics listed below (Table 1) thus represent the outcome of this first stage of the analysis and provide the basis for the match of suitable funding programmes and related project actions as well as of feasible funding scenarios for the Trilateral WSWH Partnership. Please note that the topics and sub-topics do not reflect a prioritisation. Rather, all topics are considered relevant if they have a functional relation to the OUV of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

Table 1: Potential topics for future trilateral WSWH Partnership projects and activities

Nature Conservation
Sustainable Regional Development
International Cooperation
Education and Interpretation
Governance and World Heritage Brand Management

Potential topic 1: Nature Conservation

Protected area management under climate change

Needs and challenges: To manage protected areas with regard to climate change effects, more research-based knowledge is needed with the aim to develop and implement adaptive management practices.

Climate Change Adaptation

Needs and challenges: To counterbalance negative effects of climate change on the whole Wadden Sea Region, interdependencies between climate change, ecosystems and economic, social and cultural life shall be detected and adaptation strategies shall be developed.

Ecosystem services (e.g. CO₂ sequestration)

Needs and challenges: To develop concrete cooperation, approaches to identify ecosystem services including natural capital accounting and trade off-calculation models are needed to balance economic growth and nature conservation and its contributions to social-economic welfare.

Natura 2000 habitats (incl. biodiversity protection)

Needs and challenges: To (further) facilitate the cooperation and management of Natura 2000 habitats, intensified knowledge exchange on environmental assessment monitoring results and management strategies in respond to current challenges, such as biodiversity decline, is needed.

Land-sea interactions (Habitat / landscape connectivity)

Needs and challenges: Improving ecological connectivity across the salt-freshwater interface. Improving links between protected areas on the coast, islands and in the Wadden Sea.

Noise pollution / light pollution

Needs and challenges: Monitoring noise / light pollution in the frame of 'nature conservation' calls out for an assessment of negative impacts on different species/habitats. This may include the identification of "natural sound" and "natural light" areas in favour of nature conservation and for touristic purposes.

Potential topic 2: Regional sustainable development in support of WSWH objectives

Local/community sustainability (island communities)

Needs and challenges: recognising that local communities on the islands and sparsely populated areas of mainland coast face particular challenges.

Sustainable use of renewables

Needs and challenges: Following the common policy that „the construction of wind turbines, in the Wadden Sea Area outside the Nature Conservation Area, is only allowed if important ecological and landscape values are not negatively affected” (WSP 2010, p. 39) as well as to “concentrate cable crossings through the Wadden Sea within a minimum of cable corridors and a minimum of cables, using the best available techniques” (WSP 2010, p. 39), there is a need also beyond legal obligations to review, monitor and mitigate potential negative impacts of renewable energy production and related infrastructure on the Wadden Sea ecosystem.

Green harbours and shipping safety

Needs and challenges: To maintain and improve sustainable shipping and port industry standards in the Wadden Sea Region (and beyond), more research, knowledge exchange and cooperation is needed between relevant stakeholders from academia, public authority and economy.

Sustainable fisheries (shrimps, shells/mussels)

Needs and challenges: To improve and implement measures and policies and strive for a level playing field approach at the trilateral level, more research, knowledge exchange and cooperation is needed between relevant stakeholders from academia, public authority and economy.

Sustainable tourism

Needs and challenges: Besides assessing positive impacts of sustainable tourism concepts and good entrepreneurial practices on both the environment and the economy of the WS Region, more knowledge and expertise is needed to further increase and implement sustainable tourism practices that fully considers the ecological requirements of the WSWH. This includes detection of tourism needs and interests regarding environmental protection and sustainability aspects; development of new/ improved sustainable tourism products and services in cooperation with local communities and SMEs;

exploration of potential of 'health and wellbeing' as well as of 'nature/cultural heritage' for nature-oriented tourism.

Potential topic 3: International cooperation beyond the Wadden Sea Region

Conservation of fish species (Swimway)

Needs and challenges: To facilitate the Swimway cooperation, more research-based knowledge exchange is needed to facilitate synergies for cross-border conservation measures and to develop/implement shared strategies and policies.

Cooperation with other natural sites

Needs and challenges: To facilitate cooperation with other natural sites ecologically similar to the WS ecosystems or with a direct link to the WS, more collaboration and exchange is needed regarding management, monitoring, reporting and communication.

UNESCO World Heritage marine programme

Needs and challenges: To contribute to the UNESCO WH marine programme and to improve the implementation of the WH convention related to the WSWH, more collaboration and exchange is needed regarding management, monitoring, reporting and communication both on local/regional and global level.

Potential topic 4: Education and interpretation

Environmental education

Needs and challenges: Finding new and innovative ways, methods and concepts to improve environmental education of both the public (local communities, tourists, information centres) and educational entities (schools, universities). This may include improved cross-border visitor management to relieve pressure for specific natural habitats, the initiation of summer school for young scientists or the use of innovative media and platforms in nature education.

Internal capacity building

Needs and challenges: To facilitate the transfer as well as improvement of knowledge related both to WSWH governance as well as specific expertise (e.g. maritime spatial planning), training and capacity building options for partner organisations to the PH should be improved and implemented.

Potential topic 5: Governance and WH Brand Management

Engagement and enhance dialogue with diverse stakeholders and target groups (civil society, economic sectors)

Needs and challenges: To facilitate the sustainable management and development within the WSWH Region, the civil society and in particular economic actors have to be involved in projects and initiatives providing knowledge, best practice or test beds for sustainable solutions to maintain and enhance the OUV including the integrity.

Further develop the trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage partnership

Needs and challenges: To improve the management of different topics of the trilateral partnership, more trilateral collaboration beyond the governmental sector and exchange is needed. This includes: improved integration of the WH brand narrative into work environments of the different Partnership Hub stakeholders; communication and assessment of key challenges related to good governance indicators and local site management needs; more stable and direct links to key PH actors (authorities, NGOs, academia) in DE, DK, NL; capacity building of PH actors related to WSWH management.

Types of action – Typology

The different EU, national and regional funding programmes generally support a multitude of activities.¹ These activities can be categorised into recurring types of actions, and each funding programme explicitly or implicitly defines which types of actions are supported and which ones are not. It is to be highlighted that most projects may fit to or include more than one type of action.

¹ We have not included 'governance' as a specific action type on its own. WSWH governance incorporates a diverse range of activities, some of which may be supported by EU or national funding programmes, others where this is not likely to be possible. The following action types taken together reflect key aspects of WSWH partnership activities: Network building, Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices, Capacity building, Policy improvement, Brand building/brand improvement, Citizen engagement/citizen science, Brand building/brand improvement.

Table 2: Types of action - Typology

Fundamental research	Research actions that aim to expand knowledge in a given research area and to improve understanding and prediction of natural or other phenomena
Applied research	Research actions that focus on practical problem-solving and lead to the development of innovative practices
Innovation / pre-commercial development	Actions that aim at making an innovation market-ready and enabling its commercial exploitation
Demonstrator	Actions that try to prove that a solution or innovative practice is feasible, effective and/or cost-efficient and can be rolled out
Network building	Actions aiming at making new transnational and/or transsectoral connections, building trust and stimulating cooperation
Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	Actions that focus on mutual learning processes (incl. study visits) on what approaches and solutions work or do not work in given circumstances
Capacity building	Actions that aim to improve the institutionalised knowledge in organisations and institutions and to increase problem-solving capabilities
Policy implementation	Actions that aim to bring EU, national, regional or local policy directives and regulations into practice
Policy improvement	Actions that aim to review and improve policies and strategies, involving relevant decision-makers
Brand building / brand improvement	Actions that aim at developing a brand and/or improving brand recognition among relevant target groups
Mobility	Actions to prepare, organise and implement cross-border placements for researchers, students, apprentices, interns or staff
Education	Actions that facilitate cooperation of educational institutions (e.g. schools, universities, vocational education) or providers of informal education or aim at the development and piloting of educational offers, methods or formats
People to People	Low-threshold actions that have the aim to bring European citizens in direct cross-border contact with each other, e.g. in the field of culture, civic education or sports.
Citizen engagement / citizen science	Actions that have the aim to directly engage citizens in public processes, political decision making, planning or research.
Awareness-raising	Actions that have the main aim of sensitising either the general public or specific target groups (e.g. political decision makers) about a particular challenge
Nature management	Actions to plan and implement individual protection measures for specific wildlife habitats
Infrastructure	Actions to make concrete improvements in infrastructure (transport, power, services of general interest) – often connected to investments

List of Funding Programmes included in the analysis

For this guide, EU and national funding programmes and funding bodies relevant to the Wadden Sea in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have been identified and analysed. The following programmes and sources were selected as the most significant for trilateral Wadden Sea partnership, based on their relevance to the PH objectives, matching funding requirements, geographical scope, participation of different kind of actors and thematical priorities.

European Funding Programmes

Other programmes than listed in table 2 have been considered, but not integrated into the funding guide. This applies to:

The European Social Fund+ (ESF+) and those parts of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that delivered under shared management (regional/national operational programmes in the different EU Member States). These programmes do not generally support transnational or cross-border projects (though a transnational cooperation programme on social innovation is planned under the ESF+, to be launched in 2022 or 2023).

Sector specific programmes like Creative Europe, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

(AMIF) or Citizens, Equal Rights and Values (CERV) Programmes were not considered relevant for the thematic objectives of WSWH partnership. With the exception of the BlueInvest Grants under the EMFAF, programmes that provide funding for single enterprises have not been considered.

National Funding Programmes and other funds

Those listed in chapter 6 include a diverse range of both public and private sources of funding. Some organisations operate at a national level while others are regionally focussed. Preliminary lists of relevant funding sources for each national context were compiled by means of desk research and subsequently complemented through contact with PROWAD-LINK partners, the OPteamPH, national experts and, where necessary, the funding bodies themselves. Dutch and Danish language sources were translated with the aid of professional translation software (DEEPL). The analysis of national and subnational funding programmes cannot claim to be comprehensive or exhaustive, but it does provide an orientation and overview of potential funding opportunities and, in particular, the range of funding sources that might be relevant and suitable for specific topics and action types, either for stand-alone projects or in combination with other national or international funding.

Table 3: List of most relevant European Funding Programmes

Interreg A	Interreg Germany-Denmark Interreg Germany-Netherlands	LIFE - Funding Instrument for the Environment and Climate Action
Interreg B	Interreg North Sea Region Interreg Northwest Europe	ERASMUS+
Interreg C	Interreg Europe	EMFAF - European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
Horizon Europe, incl. relevant Missions		EAFRD - European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

3 A step-by-step guide to develop a project

The path from the first idea for a future cooperation project to an approved application for funding is a long one, and preparing an application is a complex and time-consuming process. Resources invested into an unsuccessful application are often wasted. It is therefore very important to be well informed and prepared before embarking on a project development journey, and to keep track of all the steps necessary along the way. In the following, you will find some advice that you may find helpful in this process. In general, they are applicable to most larger funding programmes, though there are slight differences in how the application procedures are organised and where information is made available. The sequence of these steps is also not fixed, you may find that it makes more sense for your project to proceed in a different order.

1. Draft an idea

In most cases, your starting point will be an idea for a project, often derived from challenges you or your colleagues have encountered in your work, or from discussions on priorities and objectives of your organisation or established partnerships. At the very beginning, it is a good idea to put the idea down on paper or on a (digital) whiteboard, preferably in bullet points or with simple sketches and graphs that can quickly be adjusted and rearranged. At this stage, it is perfectly fine to brainstorm and include a broad array of aspects and topics – you can still narrow the idea down later on.

2. Talk the idea through with colleagues or potential partners

If you haven't already involved other people in the first stage, now is the time to do so. This might be colleagues in your own organisation, or potential partners from other organisations that you already identified. It always helps to get input from people who have another perspective, experience in developing projects or the ability to ask the right questions. You might discover that you have forgotten something important or receive first hints on how to narrow down the project idea.

3. Find the right funding opportunity

In all likelihood, you will be in need of external funding to implement your project. Now is the right time to think about potential funding opportunities and identify those that fit best to your plans, ambitions and (financial) resources. This is what this funding guide is meant for – to provide you with a first orientation on what funding sources exist, what their geographic and thematic focus is and what types of actions they support. In addition, specific programme requirements are listed, such as application procedures or funding rates which implement a timely planning or consideration of co-financing resources. Once you have narrowed down the number of funding sources, you should look for the most relevant resources that you will usually find on the funding programme's website (in case of Interreg and some national programmes), the funding authority's website (in case of most national/regional funding sources) or the EU funding & tender opportunities portal (for Horizon Europe, LIFE and other programmes that are managed by the EU Commission):

a. Operational programme, programme document, work programme

It is always a good idea to read carefully through the thematic priorities and objectives of the programme, to check if your idea really fits to the thematic expectations of the programme.

b. Call announcement, topic description

There are funding programmes (such as Interreg) that launch calls for proposals that are open for any project application that fits under the programme's priorities and specific objectives. In these cases, the call announcement will mainly inform about the timeline and application process, and sometimes about focus themes or prioritised topics. Other programmes, most notably Horizon Europe, provide very concrete descriptions of expected activities and impacts that are immensely important for deciding whether or not your idea fits into the programme and that you should therefore read very carefully.

c. Programme Manual, call document, guide for applicants, model grant agreement

This is usually where the eligibility requirements and administrative provisions, as well as the application procedure and selection criteria of the respective funding programme are laid down. The deeper you get into planning the involvement of partners and their budgets, the more important it gets to read this document carefully.

d. FAQ sections

There are always questions that are not answered in the official programme documents. You may find answers quickly in the FAQ sections of the EU funding & tender opportunities portal or the programmes' websites.

While you are doing your research on the funding source, watch out for announcements on webinars or information events about the programme. It is always helpful to have the programme explained by a real person in order to get a feeling for the programme and read between the lines of the programme documents. These events may also offer networking opportunities to get in touch with potential partners and the opportunity to ask questions or discuss ideas with programme representatives.

4. Check what has been done before

Now that you have thought through your project idea, you should check what has already been done previously in the field you address. Previous projects in the same or in another funding programme may have already tackled the same issue, and rather than working on the same solution for a second time, you can build upon previous projects' results. We have listed some example projects for the relevant programmes and topics presented in this guide, but we recommend you to dig deeper. The keep.eu database is a great starting point to find territorial cooperation projects, but many funding programmes also have their own databases with search and filtering functions.

5. Develop an intervention logic

Once you have selected a funding programme in which you want to submit your application, it is time to revisit your initial project idea. You may have to adapt the thematic focus in accordance with the programme's priorities and objectives. And you should start developing an intervention logic that is in line with the programme. Some programmes make provisions on how an intervention logic should

be set up and how it should be reflected in the work packages, other programmes give you full flexibility. In most project types, the intervention logic will include the following elements:

Challenge: What is the challenge that your project is going to respond to? Which concrete improvements are needed, for which problems is your project going to provide a solution? You may define a general challenge in the beginning (e.g. too much noise emissions from shipping), but you should break it down to concrete challenges related to specific target groups (e.g. lack of data on impact of noise emissions among regulatory bodies) in the next step.

Target group: Who are the actors affected by the challenge you address and in need of a solution to overcome it? Distinguish between target groups (e.g. municipalities that want to provide sustainable tourism offers) and end-users (the tourists who use these offers) and consider for each target group whether they should be directly involved in the project as partners or merely addressed by it as external stakeholders.

Expected changes/objectives: What are the desired changes and needs and how do they translate into specific project objectives? You may need to consider changes, expected outcomes and objectives defined by the funding programmes and calls you are applying to.

Activities and outputs: What tangible outputs or solutions is your project going to develop, test and/or bring to the market via implemented project activities and deliverables? Is it really an output that the target group needs and is able and willing to use? If you can, consult members of your target group on this question. It is better to develop one output or solution with great impact and usage than several ones that are never applied in practice.

Results: How will the situation have changed once your project has been implemented? To what degree will you have contributed to solving the challenge? Maybe not yet, but at a later stage you will also have to ask yourself the question of how you will measure the achievement of the intended results (key performance or impact indicator).

Drawing up a coherent intervention logic (figure 1) is perhaps the most important step towards a successful project application. Visualising it (e.g. using a proven template such as the Theory of Change) may help you both in planning the project and in explaining it to others.

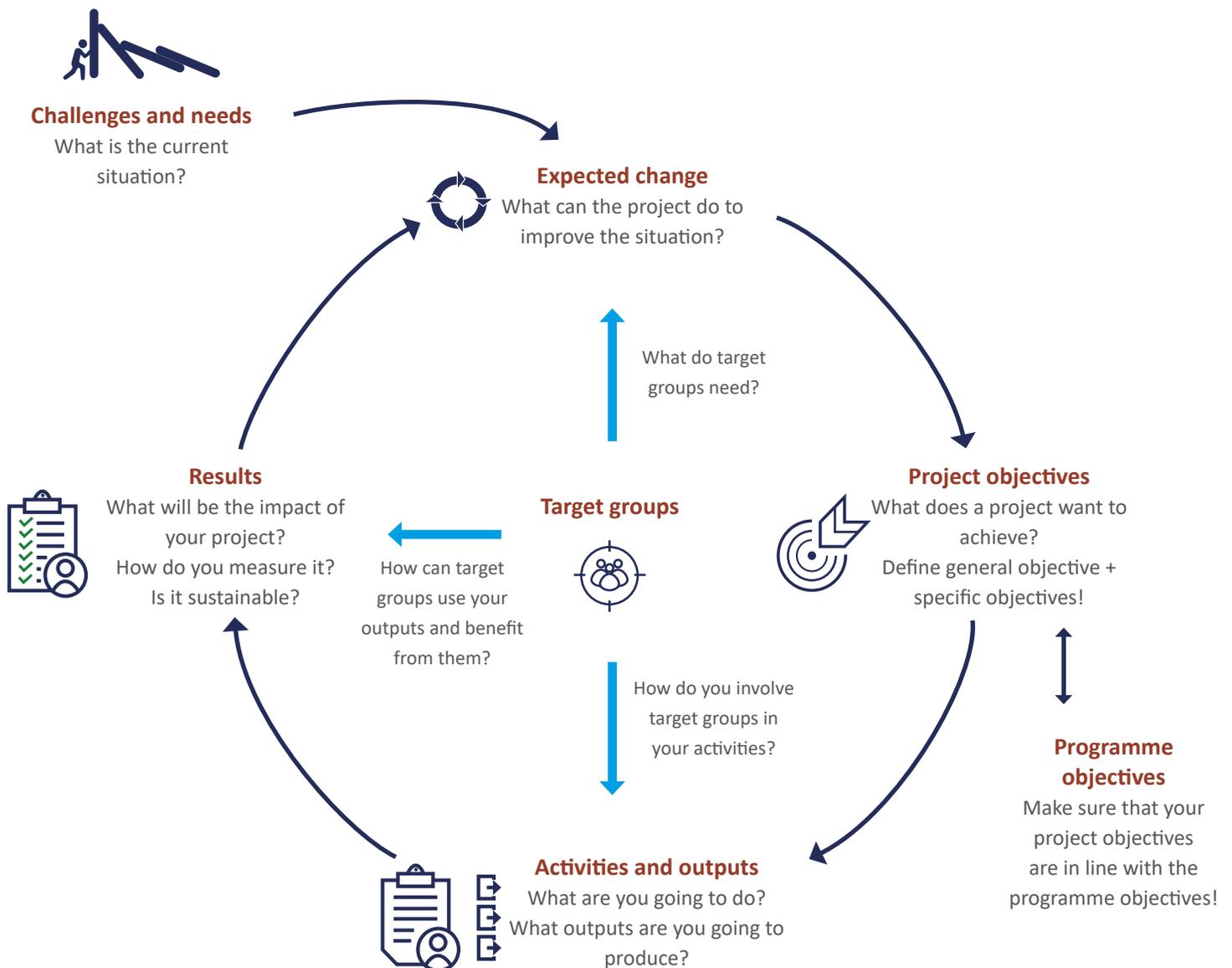


Figure 1: Simplified view of an intervention logic

6. Seek a consultation

Once you have developed the intervention logic, you might want to get a better feeling on whether or not you are on the right track and whether your project meets the expectations and requirements of the funding programme. Some, but not all funding programmes offer the opportunity to present your project idea and receive feedback on it. In the Interreg programmes such advice is often offered by the respective Joint Secretariat and/or by national contact points, either in individual consultations or as part of an information seminar or programme conference. The European Commission generally does not provide individual advice to applicants, but

there are usually contact points in all the Member States (we have listed them wherever possible in this funding guide).

7. Look for preparatory funding

In most EU funding programmes, preparing a high-quality application is a complex and time-consuming process that requires a lot of resources. Fortunately, there are opportunities to receive financial assistance. Some programmes offer a reimbursement of preparation costs as lump sums for successful applicants. There are also opportunities to apply for seed funding at the national or regional level or from intergovernmental agencies or programmes. Check

with the responsible ministries and agencies in your Member State and region to see if they offer any financial support for preparation of an application.

8. Define your own role in the project

When you have reached this point (or even earlier), you should make an honest assessment of your own capacities, resources and priorities that determine the role you can take in the application process and the project itself. For example, if you are working for a small non-profit nature conservation organisation you may encounter difficulties in providing the own financial contribution that is necessary in many funding programmes, and you may also find that you are not in the position to lead a complex funding application process. In such a case, look for an organisation with more resources to take over the coordination role or for external assistance in application writing and/or cooperation management, and focus on your core competences, e.g. by contributing to the project as a piloting or supporting partner, associated organisation, or even a subcontractor for a specific task.

9. Setting up the right partnership

Having the right partnership is a key success factor for any cooperation project, regardless of its size or thematic focus. In transnational cooperation, setting up a good partner consortium – which is a process across all steps – is often a delicate balancing act: On the one hand, you are usually expected to have partners from a number of different Member States and often from different sectors. On the other hand, budgets are limited, and each additional partner increases the project management and administrative burden on the coordinator. You should make use of the option to include associated partners without a partner budget that most programmes offer. Which partners you need (e.g. research institutes, public authorities, companies, sector associations, etc.) depends on the funding programme's requirements, the type of action and the intervention logic (which institutions are key for developing or implementing a solution?). Use bilateral meetings or project development workshops as an opportunity to “test” the fit, know-how and commitment of your potential partners, to explain and discuss the intervention logic and to develop a common vision of the project and its objectives.

10. Set up a work plan with roles and responsibilities

Once you have the core partners on board, you can start developing the intervention logic further

into a project work plan. For this, you add another element to your intervention logic: activities. These are all the steps that are necessary for producing the foreseen outputs and for making sure that the project reaches its results. There are many kinds of activities, including research, development, piloting, evaluation, communication, project management and administration. Once you have determined what activities are needed within your project, you can discuss with your partners who should take part in which activity and take over which responsibilities. In most larger projects, activities are grouped within work packages. Developing a good work plan is about finding the right balance in many different ways:

- It's good to distribute responsibilities for activities and work packages among the partners, but make sure that all partners are capable of fulfilling their responsibilities, and that you set up a project management system that enables the coordinator to keep control of the overall process.
- Set ambitious targets for your project results and concrete outputs, but make a realistic assessment of the available time, resources, and know-how so that your partnership is really able to reach these targets.
- Check your developing work plan for coherence regularly. Make sure that activities contribute to achieving the intended results and that you adequately involve your target groups.

11. Assemble a project budget

The project budget and the distribution of funds among partners should be in line with the work plan and reflect the partners' responsibilities. There are two basic approaches for setting up a budget: Top-down planning, i.e. the coordinator sets the budget limits for all partners based on their expected overall contributions, and bottom-up planning, where partners plan their own budget based on activities. The latter tends to produce more realistic budgets that do not have to be adjusted during the project, but it requires more negotiations with partners. In any case, make sure that you have fully understood what costs are and are not eligible in the given funding programme and that you pass this knowledge on to your partners.

12. Fill out the application form

Now you are almost done. All that remains is to transfer the work plan, budget and partner data into the application form and to explain the project's

background and rationale. Every application form is different, but here are some hints that are generally applicable:

- Open the application form as early as possible. Type and click around a bit so that you know what is expected from you. Be aware that in dynamic PDFs or online forms, not all information and all required boxes may be visible at once.
- Carefully read the guidance document and instructions in the application form so that you know which information is required where. Also, check early on what information and documents you will need from your partners and how the process of (signing and) submitting the application form works.
- Let several people read through the application draft and ask at least one of them to put special emphasis on the overall coherence of the application.

When setting your timeline for preparing the application, reserve a little buffer for unexpected technical issues.

13. Remain active while waiting for the funding decision

While it seems that there is nothing that you can do in this phase, you can actually make good use of the waiting time. Stay in contact with your partners, keep them engaged and informed about the process. Be prepared for both cases: If your application is approved, you will suddenly have many tasks at the same time: clarifying open issues with the funding authority, preparing legal documents, organising public procurement, organising a kick-off meeting etc. If, on the other hand, your application is rejected, this does not mean that the journey ends here. Competition for funds is high, and a rejection does not mean that your project is not worth being funded. You may very well stand another chance in a future call for proposals or another funding programme if you adjust your project idea!

Part B - Programmes



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4 Overview of EU overall funding and policy framework for 2021-2027

When applying for funds from European funding programmes, certain EU-wide or regional strategies and policy documents can be important to consider. The following is a non-exhaustive list of the most important ones that could prove relevant to the development of projects in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage. In certain cases, sector-specific strategies will have to be considered during conceptualisation of projects for particular sources of funding. At the end of this chapter, a brief list of potentially relevant sector-specific strategies will be provided. Nonetheless, it remains important to identify the specifics of each funding programme and the respective call, if applicable, to verify which strategies and frameworks will have to be taken into account for a successful project proposal.

The 6 European Commission's Priorities 2019-2024

The Commission has defined [6 priorities](#) for 2019 – 2024 setting out the political guidelines for the next European Commission until 2024:

1. A European Green Deal
2. An economy that works for people
3. A Europe fit for the digital age
4. Protecting our European way of life
5. A stronger Europe in the world
6. A new push for European democracy

The [European Green Deal](#) is one of the most relevant priorities that has an influence on strategic decisions when designing projects in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage.

It centres around the topics of climate change and environmental degradation and paves the way for Europe to be the first climate-neutral continent. To achieve this, the European Green Deal contributes to the following goals:

- No net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
- Economic growth decoupled from resource use
- No person and no place left behind.

For delivering the European Green Deal, 7 focal areas have been outlined (table below), out of which number 1, 4, 6, and 7 could be said to be, not the only ones of relevance but, the most relevant for the WSWH.

Table 4: Focal areas of the European Green Deal

- 1. Transforming our economy and societies**
by reducing emissions, creating jobs and promoting growth, addressing energy poverty and reducing external energy dependency, as well as improve citizens' health and wellbeing.
- 2. Making transport sustainable for all**
- 3. Leading the third industrial revolution**
- 4. Cleaning our energy system**
by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through an increase in shares of renewable energy, promoting the uptake of renewable fuels and the reduction of general energy consumption.
- 5. Renovating buildings for greener lifestyles**
- 6. Working with nature to protect our planet and health**
to fight against climate change. Restoration of nature and enabling biodiversity of Europe's forests, soils, wetlands, and peatlands are of relevance, including a circular and sustainable management of these various resources.
- 7. Boosting global climate action**
by facilitating a shift towards a greener future, and supporting climate objectives.

Cohesion Policy 2021 - 2027

The European Union's [Cohesion Policy 2021 – 2027](#) conveys, and hence supports, the EU' political priorities with a particular focus on the green and digital transition. Its aim is the enhancement of social, economic, and territorial cohesion as well as regional development within the European Union. Therefore, the Cohesion Policy 2021 – 2027 has 5 objectives:

- a **smarter Europe** achieved through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation, and SME support.
- a **greener Europe**, promoting a greener, carbon-free Europe, implementing the Paris Agreement and investing in clean energy to fight climate change.
- a **better connected Europe**, with strategic transport (sustainable urban mobility) and digital networks.
- a **more social Europe** supporting social inclusion and delivering equal access to healthcare.
- a **Europe closer to its citizen**, based on locally-led strategies and sustainable urban development.

Regional funding within the [Cohesion Policy budget](#) is still largely dependent upon GDP per capita. To address the various objectives, its budget is, therefore, divided into 3 different categories of programmes and funding investment goals:

1. Investment for jobs and growth:
 - the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
 - the European Social Fund+ (ESF+)
 - the Cohesion Fund
 - the Just Transition Fund (JTF)
2. European Territorial Cooperation:
 - Interreg
3. European Commission managed EU instruments and technical assistance

European Regional Development Fund

The [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) aims „to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions“. Consequently, this instrument is meant to build and support strong relationship between the EU member states and regions and to close social and economic gaps existing between and within them. To reach this goal, the ERDF follows the objectives of the Cohesion Policy and its aims for the programming period 2021 - 2027 are hence identical.

For the development of successful cooperation across regions and countries, [Interreg](#), being part of ERDF, is receiving separate funds from the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 budget.

The Territorial Agenda 2030

The [Territorial Agenda 2030](#), adopted in December 2020, is a strategic document that sets out a framework and serves as guidance for strategic spatial planning as well as calls that aim at building up territorial cohesion and/or development within sector policies at all governance levels. It, therefore, is closely linked to the EU Cohesion Policy and further EU policies and objectives such as e.g. the Sustainable Development Goals in Europe or the Paris Agreement (2015).

In its needs analysis, pressing challenges like climate change as well as the endangerment of nature, landscape and cultural heritage are highlighted. It also underlines the increasing threat of exploitation of maritime space and resources, and the negative impact of mass tourism on natural habitats and ecological corridors. The Territorial Agenda 2030 wishes to encourage cooperation between regions to withstand these future challenges by providing orientation via setting two overarching objectives together with six priorities:

1. A Just Europe

- Balanced Europe: Better balanced territorial development utilising Europe's diversity
- Functional Regions: Convergent local and regional development, less inequality between places
- Integration Beyond Borders: Easier living and working across national borders

2. A Green Europe

- Healthy Environment: Better ecological livelihoods, climate-neutral and resilient towns, cities and regions
- Circular Economy: Strong and sustainable local economies in a globalised world
- Sustainable Connections: Sustainable digital and physical connectivity of places

The Territorial Agenda 2030 was developed in cooperation with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of Regions, the European economic and Social Committee, the European Investment Bank Group, and further relevant European and national organisations. These en-

courage implementation at European, transnational, macro-regional, and cross border levels as well as national, regional, and local levels. It is, therefore, likely that EU and national, and regional sources of funding will refer to the Territorial Agenda 2030, and a possible connection between the strategic document and funding opportunities (e.g. Interreg, ERDF, ESPON, etc.) for the WSWH should be explored prior to submitting a project proposal.

North Sea Region 2030 Strategy

Developed by the North Sea Commission (NSC), one of the commissions of the [Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions](#), the [North Sea Region 2030 Strategy](#) represents the NSC's steering document and the priority list for cooperation in the North Sea Region (NSR). Regional authorities in the NSR have worked together on the development of this strategy, determining the most crucial challenges and creating it in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and of the implementation of the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement. Four priority areas for cooperation have been defined (table below).

Among other purposes, the strategy was designed to serve as a basis for discussions with the Interreg North

Sea Region Programme in order to enable synergies between policy and projects, and to include the priorities into the Programme. Since it shall also lay the groundwork for future potential consultations on European and national North Sea related initiatives, transnational projects, public awareness raising, and knowledge/best practice exchange between members, its relevance for future projects within the Wadden Sea area is undeniable.

Further strategies and policy documents

Further strategies and policy documents that may be of relevance are listed below. Note that this list is non-exhaustive and that sector-specific strategies that will have to be taken into account for the respective funding programme and call will always be mentioned in either the programme or the call document:

- [Biodiversity Strategy 2030](#)
- [EU \(Climate Change\) Adaptation Strategy](#)
- [European Climate Pact](#)
- [Common Fisheries Policy](#)
- [Integrated Maritime Policy](#)
- [EU Agenda for International Ocean Governance](#)
- [EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#)
- [EU Common Agricultural Policy](#)

Table 5: North Sea Region 2030 Strategy

Priority area	Vision	Key topics
A productive & sustainable North Sea	Sustainable marine and maritime development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy marine environment • maritime spatial planning • sustainable aquaculture and fisheries • sustainable blue economy
A climate neutral North Sea Region	A resilient and adopted NSR which has achieved climate neutrality at the very latest by 2050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • renewable energy/alternative fuels • energy efficiency • carbon capture • utilization and storage and natural carbon sinks • climate adaptation
A connected North Sea Region	Fossil-free, safe and user-friendly accessibility for all and in every territory of the NSR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transnational accessibility • clean shipping • climate-neutral and inclusive transport • intelligent transport solutions
A smart North Sea Region	A front-runner in sustainable economics and democracy – a macro-region maximising its competitive advantages through innovation and blue and green economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • smart specialisation strategies • skills/competences and mobility of researchers students and the work force • circular use of resources

5 EU Programme Profiles

Interreg as part of ERDF

To foster the territorial cohesion in Europe and promote the policy objectives of the ERDF across regions and EU member states, the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), better known as Interreg, is one of the two goals of Cohesion Policy besides [investment for Growth and Job](#). The overarching objective of Interreg is to promote a sustainable economic, social and territorial development of the Union as a whole through project funding and the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. Therefore, in 2021-2027, Interreg will continue to support those projects aiming to „[jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more](#)“. In addition to the 5 objectives set out by the ERDF, two new objectives will steer territorial cooperation: ‚Better cooperation governance‘ and a ‚safer, more secure Europe‘.

The related funding scheme to reach these objectives is conceptualised around three regional strands of cooperation:

Interreg A – cross-border cooperation along all EU land and maritime borders.

Interreg B – transnational cooperation, including macro-regional strategies and sea basins.

Interreg C – interregional cooperation, which builds networks and lets leading regions share their successes and experience with other territories. In the following, relevant funding programmes for the ‘Trilateral Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage’ of the above-mentioned strands will be further presented and evaluated.



Interreg VI A

5.1 Interreg Germany-Denmark

Geographical scope: German regions/cities (Nordfriesland, Ostholstein, Plön, Rendsburg-Eckernförde, Schleswig-Flensburg, Flensburg, Kiel, Lübeck, Neumünster), Danish regions (Syddanmark, Sjælland), other DE/DK-regions may be eligible under certain circumstances

Programme budget: €93,8 million (P1: 33%, P2: 25%, P3: 22%, P4: 20%)

Project budget: unavailable at editorial deadline

Application procedure: unavailable at editorial deadline

Funding rate: 65%

Success rate: /

Project duration: 36 months

Target group: Public and semi-public institutions, research and educational institutions, interest groups, private institutions and companies

Types of action: Applied research | Innovation/pre-commercial development | Demonstrator | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Policy implementation | Brand building/brand improvement | Education | People to People | Awareness raising | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Nature management

Key links:

[Interreg Germany-Denmark Website](#)

[Webinar series on the new programme 2021-2027](#)

[Project Database 2014-2020](#)

[Secretariat](#)

Programme Description

The Interreg Germany-Denmark Programme for 2021-2027 has decided to set 4 programme priorities to address the region's most pressing challenges: (1) An Innovative Region, (2) A Green Region, (3) An Attractive Region, and (4) A Functional Region. Horizontal themes are: language, sustainability, digitalisation, equality, and anti-discrimination.

Priority 1 - An Innovative Region: This priority focuses on the strengthening of the regions' economic growth and competitiveness. Research and Innovation are indispensable for regional development, growth, and employment. Hence, with the involvement of companies (especially SME's) application-oriented research shall enhance the regions' innovation capacities and lead to the introduction of advanced technologies. Development cooperation between public and private actors shall be strengthened in order to better connect existing clusters and networks.

Priority 2 – A Green Region: This priority focuses on dealing with the consequences deriving from climate change and therefore, provides financing for projects focusing on renewable energies, circular economy as well as any further measures to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change. The goal is an environmentally friendly, resource efficient future for a more resilient German-Danish region. Fundable actions include among others the development of intelligent energy systems, networks, and storage systems outside of the trans-European energy network. Furthermore, the adaptation to climate change, civil protection as well as the region's ability to withstand disasters shall be promoted. Existing cooperations and structures shall be further developed and amplified to address these defined challenges.

Priority 3 – An Attractive Region: This programme priority aims at creating better conditions for

people’s lives. It therefore focuses on the sectors of vocational education and training, culture and creative industries, and tourism. Actions supporting quality training as well as lifelong learning shall be enhanced to provide the preconditions for a good functioning and innovative region. The cultural and the tourism sector are two important economic factors in the region and, hence, shall be promoted to make the region more attractive to locals and tourists. Sustainable tourism that will protect and at the same time, use the region’s cultural and natural heritage as an asset, is a key element of this priority.

Priority 4 – A Functional Region: Under this priority, the programme wishes to improve the strategic and institutional capacities as well as the framework conditions for cross-border cooperation. This improvement may be aimed at laws and regulations as

well as culture and traditions but also any further lack of interest or awareness in cross-border exchange, as well as lack of cross-border information and knowledge exchange. Two main foci have been set for the achievement of this priority’s goals: (1) increasing the effectiveness of the public administration sector through the promotion of the administrative and legal cooperation and the cooperation between citizen and (public) institutions, with a special focus on eliminating legal and further potential obstacles across the cross-border regions. (2) Reinforcing mutual trust, specifically by encouraging people-to-people activities bringing citizen closer together and, thus, reducing the barriers in the minds of the inhabitants of this region, creating a common identity and intercultural understanding.



Figure 2: Programme priorities of Interreg Germany - Denmark

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

Nature conservation and Sustainable use of renewables

Under the priority “A Green Region”, Interreg DE-DK allows for projects focusing on topics related to energy, climate change and disaster prevention. It, therefore, bears opportunities for projects within the WSWH that focus on the development, testing and demonstrating of mitigation and adaptation strategies to build up the region’s disaster and climate resilience. This may also include specific species and ecosystems within Natura 2000 areas if these projects are dedicated to promoting the priority’s goals. It could also include monitoring, assessment or mitigation of risks associated with pressures on the ecosystem arising from, for example, shipping accidents or other large-scale pollution incidents. If combined with the development of intelligent energy systems, monitoring the current impacts of renewable energy production on the environment and the development and dissemination of best practices could be positioned under this priority.

Sustainable Tourism

Projects focusing on the sub-topic of sustainable tourism can be allocated under the programme’s priority “An Attractive Region”. The focus here is on making use of the region’s cultural and natural richness but at the same time, it will be important to protect it to promote economic prosperity, inhabitants’ well-being, and social innovation. Opportunities for sustainable tourism projects for the WSWH may lie in the priority’s aim at advancing social innovation capacities. It can be expected that cross-border initiatives and projects that will include various stakeholders, and foster the inclusion of SMEs can be developed and implemented under this priority. Using already existing knowledge as well as gaining additional insight into sustainable tourism, how it can affect the region’s citizens’ well-being and how it can be improved and hence, social behaviour be changed in the long run, may also play an important role and could bear potential for the protection of the WSWH in the future.

Regional sustainable development in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage

Regional sustainable development in form of an exploration of possibilities on how to protect the WSWH while further developing the renewable energy sector, creating jobs in the region may

be fundable under the priority of a green region. Referring to the priority of a functional region, the involvement of the civil society through people-to-people activities will potentially be available to projects promoting not only environmental values but also intercultural exchange and understanding for creating a stronger bond between cross-border regions.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Partnership requirements: In this programme the partnership is defined by including at least one Danish and one German partner. Due to the variation that may exist between the eligibility of partners in Germany and Denmark it is strongly recommended to contact the Secretariat beforehand. A partnership consisting solely of private institutions is not eligible to apply. Moreover, only public institutions or any institution on an equal level may be lead partner of the projects. Further information on the requirements may be found in the manual for the next programming period (not yet available at editorial deadline).

Preparation costs: Once a project proposal is approved, it is possible to receive up to €19,500 of financial aid for preparation costs.

Interreg VI A

5.2 Interreg Germany-The Netherlands

Geographical scope: Parts of the German Federal States: Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia. Parts of the Dutch provinces: Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, Flevoland, Overijssel, Gelderland, North Brabant, and Limburg.

Areas located outside the programme area may also participate if relevance and necessity for the project can be proven.

Programme budget: €465,798 million, 65% to priorities 1 and 2, 35% to priorities 3 and 4

Project budget: from €750 per day to €5 million in total

Application procedure: unavailable at editorial deadline

Funding rate: 50-70%

Success rate: /

Project duration: between 1 day and 4 years

Target group: Education and training centres, universities, enterprises, start up companies, lobby groups / professional associations / trade unions, public services, NGOs / NPOs, associations, research institutions, federal states / regions / cities / municipalities / local authorities

Types of action: Applied research | Innovation/pre-commercial development | Demonstrator | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Policy implementation | Brand building/brand improvement | Mobility | Education | People to People | Awareness raising | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Nature management

Key links:

[Interreg Germany - The Netherlands Website](#)

Final Programme Document - unavailable at editorial deadline

[Project Database](#)

[Secretariat](#)

Programme Description

Interreg VI, Germany – The Netherlands 2021-2027 specifically focuses on the challenges faced by the German-Dutch cross-border region. The consultations led to the following priorities being set: (1) A more innovative Programme Area, (2) A greener Programme Area, (3) Working together for a connected border region, (4) A Europe closer to its citizen in the border region.

Priority 1 – A more innovative Programme Area: The overall political objective of this priority is to promote a more competitive and intelligent Europe through innovative economic change and the development of the regional ICT connectivity. Specific objectives

include the development and enhancement of research and innovation capacities as well as the introduction of advanced technologies. In addition, sustainable growth as well as the competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises shall be promoted. Job creation within SMEs through productive investments and further possible measures, does also lie within the specific objectives' ambitions.

Priority 2 – A greener Programme Area: This priority is dedicated to facilitating the transition toward a CO2 neutral economy and a more resilient Europe by promoting clean energy and a fair turnaround

in energy policy. This includes blue and green investments, investments in a circular economy, climate protection and climate change adaptation as well as actions aiming at risk prevention and risk management. It further encompasses ambitions to achieve more sustainable urban mobility. Its specific objectives are mainly the promotion of adaptation measures mitigating the risks generated by climate change and the promotion of a transition toward a resource efficient and circular economy. The prevention of risks and crises and building up the region's resilience shall be further developed - taking ecosystem-based approaches into consideration.

Priority 3 – Working together for a more connected border region: Through the implementation of the European pillar dedicated to social rights, this priority focuses on a more social and inclusive Europe. Specific objectives target a more efficient and inclusive labour market, and better access to quality employment through the development of an infrastructure for social innovation. The

infrastructure for providing long-distance and online vocational education and training shall be made more resilient, just, accessible, and improved in quality. Furthermore, the programme supports equal and just access to healthcare through improving the related infrastructure, including primary care, and a shift from institutional to family and community-based care.

Priority 4 – A Europe closer to its citizen in the border region: This priority aims at achieving better cooperation governance. Its specific objectives encompass the enhancement of public administration services by promoting legal and administrative cooperation, and cooperation between the region's citizen, actors of civil society and institutions. Special attention shall be given to the elimination of legal as well as other various obstacles in the border region. Creating mutual trust through e.g. people-to-people activities will also be an important objective within this priority.

Focal topics selected for the new programming period



Figure 3: Programme priorities of Interreg Germany - The Netherlands

are (1) Agro and Food, (2) Health and Care, (3) High Tech Systems and Materials (HTSM), (4) Energy and Climate, and (5) Integration, Vocational Education, and the Labour Market. These topics will set the framework for all projects that will be implemented in one of these sectors. Hence, projects falling under one of these topics shall consider the strategic documents accompanying each of the topics.

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

Nature conservation and Sustainable use of renewables

Under the priority "A Greener Region", Interreg DE-NL allows for projects focusing on topics related to energy transition, climate change, disaster prevention, and circular economy. It offers opportunities for projects within the WSWH that focus on the development, testing and demonstrating of mitigation and adaptation strategies to build up the region's disaster and climate resilience. This may also include specific species and ecosystems within the Natura 2000 network if these projects are focussed on achieving the priority's goals. Available documents indicate that investments in blue economy may also be fundable under this action.

Regional sustainable development in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage

Within its priority of a Europe closer to its citizen in the border region, the programme aims at improving cooperation governance. Projects targeting cooperation improvement between citizens, actors of the civil society, and further institutions are encouraged. Enhancing cross-border cooperation structures to address key challenges could be fundable as well as long as it stays connected to the priority's main objectives. The involvement of the civil society through people-to-people activities will potentially be available to projects promoting not only environmental values but mainly intercultural exchange and understanding for creating a stronger bond between cross-border regions.

Education and Interpretation

Through its project type that allows for small-sized projects based on a daily lump-sum, the programme may offer funding for student exchange projects, trainings or further projects having a rather narrow scope. Nonetheless, these small projects still have to match one of the programme's priorities to be successful and gain final approval.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: There will be no specific calls. Applications will be accepted during the whole programming period. First projects may possibly start in Q3 of 2022.

Partnership requirements: For a successful project proposal certain requirements must be met, one of these being that one project partner has to be Dutch and one project partner has to be German. A partnership may consist of up to 10 partners. Furthermore, the project partners have to go through the project application as well as the implementation in a joined manner.

Preparation Costs: In case of a successful proposal, a budget allocated for preparation costs will be paid out. The exact amount still has to be decided and should be available once the final programme document is released. There will be, however, no budget allocated to seed money projects.

Success rate: There is no specific success rate available for this programme. The chance of submitting a successful proposal is, however, very high due to intensive support and guidance from the programme contact points.

Scope of fundable projects: At the point of the creation of this funding guide, the Final Programme Document has not been published yet and hence, the following requirements could still be subject to change. Three different types of projects are planned: (1) large projects, (2) medium-sized projects, and (3) small projects. Large projects will have a maximum budget of €5 million, a maximum co-financing rate of 50-70%, and a maximum duration of 4 years. Medium-sized projects will have a maximum budget of €25,000, a maximum co-financing rate of 50%, and a maximum duration of 2 years. Small projects are on a lump-sum basis of €750 per day, e.g. school exchanges.

Interreg VI B

5.3 Interreg North Sea Region

Geographical scope: 43 regions in 7 countries: France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway

Programme budget: €179 million, breakdown by priority: P1: 31%; P2: 32%; P3: 28%; P4: 9%

Project budget: €2-6 million (regular projects), €200.000 - 500.000 (small-scale projects)

Application procedure: 2-step for regular projects, 1-step for small-scale projects

Funding rate: 60% for EU-Member State partners, 50% for Norwegian partners

Success rate: 61% for full applications (2014-2020)

Project duration: 3-5 years for regular projects, 18 months for small scale projects

Target group: public sector organisations, universities (public-sector or private-sector based), private sector (SMEs and/or large companies), third sector (interest groups, NGOs, etc.)

Partnership: at least 3 partners from 3 different NSR countries

Types of action: Applied research | Innovation/pre-commercial development | Demonstrator | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Policy implementation | Brand building/brand improvement | Education | People to People | Awareness raising | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Nature management

Key links:

[Interreg North Sea website](#)

[Draft Programme 2021-2027, as of December 2021](#)

[Webinar series on the new programme 2021-2027](#)

[Project Database 2014-2020](#)

[Secretariat and National Contact Points](#)

Programme Description

The next Interreg North Sea Programme 2021-2027, expected to be launched in early 2022, underpins core EU policies, such as such as the [EU Green Deal](#), the [EU Digital Strategy](#) or the [EU Green Digital Coalition](#), and aims to further develop the region towards a smarter, greener, more connected and more social Europe that is closer to its citizens. Accordingly, the draft programme for 2021-2027 defines three horizontal spotlight themes which projects are encouraged to tackle regardless of the priority they apply in: digitalisation, rural-urban linkages, and strengths and challenges in the North Sea basin. Future projects are encouraged (but not required) to tackle these so-called Spotlight Themes as integral part of their solution-driven process to meet the territorial needs in the North Sea Region. While funded activities to develop solutions, implement them in the region and embed them in related policies and practices may vary in scale and scope, the following four programme priorities, each including one to three

specific objectives (SO), set the thematic frame for the development of specific project ideas. Projects funded under priorities 1-3 are expected to pilot practical solutions, while priority 4 is meant for projects that improve the framework conditions for durability and transferability of individuals solutions.

Priority 1 – Robust and smart economies: Within this priority, the programme aims at building capacity for innovation for a broad range of sectors and challenge-driven fields (from tourism, green² and blue economy, maritime sector, transport to public sector innovation), and to carve out new innovation-focused economic and social opportunities. The

² "The green economy came into being in the late nineteen eighties as a strategic approach for implementing sustainable development. It represents a paradigm shift towards economic development in harmony with ecological and social goals, taking planetary boundaries into consideration, aiming at a ‚green transformation‘ ([Umweltbundesamt 2015](#))".



Figure 4: Programme priorities of Interreg North Sea Region

programme points out that “[i]nnovation is hereby to be understood in broad terms, encompassing process, product and service innovation, and multi-sectoral approaches. It is related to technical solutions as well as public services and societal challenges.” While the SO 1.1 focuses on transnational RDI cooperation and applied sciences aiming at testing, demonstrating and scaling up innovative solutions to feed into strategies and action plans for policy or embed them in the economy, SO 1.2 focuses on human capital and fostering the development of new skills for the uptake and development of product, service and process innovations, especially in common focus areas of Regional Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3).

Priority 2 – A green transition: This priority encompasses a broad range of objectives that support a green transition and contribute to EU goals and strategies related to sustainable development

and climate neutrality. While SO 1-3 put the energy sector at the center of demonstrator and knowledge transfer actions, reaching from energy efficiency technologies and processes, solutions for greenhouse gas and carbon emission reduction, sustainable renewable energy technologies and maintenance concepts to smart energy system and grid development including storage solutions, SOs 4 and 5 focus on the transition to a circular economy and resource efficient economy and the promotion of sustainable mobility and transport models.

Priority 3 – Climate resilience: Strengthening resilience of both economies/societies and the environment is at the forefront of priority 3. SO 3.1 puts climate change effects into the focus and the promotes the development of climate adaptation and resilience strategies of coastal and mountain communities. Due to close interlinkages with issues and challenges for sustainable water management

of catchments, watercourses, rivers and coastal waters, climate adaptation and sustainable water management, including flood protection and risk management, should be addressed jointly under this specific objective. Conversely, SO 3.2 highlights environmental protection, ecosystem restoration and sustainable management of ecosystems as action fields for future projects with the aim to restore and maintain healthy ecosystems and to preserve biodiversity assets and ecosystem services both for nature and the regional development of the NSR.

Priority 4 – Better Governance: Priority 4 is about setting up and developing multi-level governance structures to address the challenges that the NSR faces, whereas actors involved by future projects can derive from national-level authorities down to local grass-root organisations and the topics focused can be any of the topics mentioned in priority 1-3. The Programme expects that projects address land and or sea-based governance challenges. However, of particular interest are those related to the North Sea Basin, integrated territorial development and urban-rural collaboration. The broad aim of projects in priority 4 is to improve coordination between actors and actions in the region, ensure enduring long-term effects across the region and increase the cumulative impact of good governance in the region.

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

The Interreg North Sea Region Programme is probably the most obvious funding option for trilateral cooperation related to the Wadden Sea: In geographical terms, the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site is at the very core of the programme area, and the thematic programme framework allows partners to work transnationally on many of the core topics and challenges related to the WSWH.

Nature Conservation and Climate change adaptation

With the prioritisation on climate resilience focusing both on the environment as well as on socioeconomic systems, the NSR programme aims at enabling the development of sustainable and nature-based solutions via transnational cooperation and demonstration. SO 3.1 puts a strong emphasis on the interlinkages between climate change adaptation and water management, thus, funding actions focusing on improved water management and monitoring practices as well as testing, demonstrating and mainstreaming nature-based solutions and nature

restoration to mitigate the effects of climate change. This may include, for example, the protection of coasts, estuaries and rivers in the Wadden Sea region against erosion and storm surges, or the implementation of ecosystem services such as carbon storage, soil formation or water quality and flows. SO 3.2 supports specific actions that improve the sustainable management of marine ecosystems especially in conjunction with maritime spatial planning, and that are part of operational follow-up of EU marine policies and strategies, and conventions such as OSPAR. This may include the deployment of new methods and technologies for environmental monitoring and management, the testing of nature restoration methods for the management of degraded ecosystems in the Wadden Sea or the strengthening of methods to align offshore renewable energy production with the protection of marine ecosystems.

Sustainable use of renewables

With the aim to achieve climate-neutrality by 2050, SO 2.2 focuses on the exploitation of offshore wind energy. At the same time, the programme highlights that all activities – be they economic-driven, propelled by EU policies or both, such as the exploitation of offshore wind energy – should consider challenges and conflicting interests and aim for sustainable solutions in marine protected areas. This provides points of reference to projects, aiming at e.g. monitoring the impacts of renewable energy production on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and fostering knowledge exchange on e.g. best practices for environmentally-sound planning, constructing and operating high voltage submarine power cables traversing the Wadden Sea and connecting offshore wind farms with the on-shore power grid.

WSWH governance

Priority 4 opens up opportunities for projects that aim to develop or enhance multi-level governance structures and involve a multitude of actors including civil society and economic players both within the trilateral Partnership Hub of the WSWH and beyond. For example, future projects can develop and exchange on innovative management concepts and governance tools that support better transnational cooperation of existing and new actors in, for example, maritime spatial planning, coastal management or marine protection. This links up to funding opportunities for the development of new, or the improvement of existing networks – such as the trilateral Partnership Hub of the WSWH – with the aim e.g. to foster the dialogue with relevant stakeholders or within the-

matic communities, or to translate international EU or UN strategies and policies (e.g. UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme) into joint transnational action plans for the Wadden Sea. Furthermore, institutional capacity building for actors on all levels can be funded under this priority, aiming at the adaption of territorial needs and challenges in the field of e.g. marine protection, digitalisation or social innovation.

Sustainable Tourism and Brand building/ improvement

While the topic of sustainable tourism is not highlighted as a priority, several specific objectives bear the opportunity for a sustainable regional development, including the tourism sector, in favour of the protection of the WSWH. This is particularly applicable to the promotion of or the exchange unsustainable products and services linking innovative and sustainable technologies or processes with nature protection goals. While SO 1.1 promotes the development of research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies to e.g. exploiting new sources of SME growth and place-based development opportunities, SO 1.2 rather focuses on the development of skills to enhance regional innovation. Funded actions may be the provision of training schemes for entrepreneurs to help them identify and adopt new sustainable and smart business concepts, linking tourism with nature conservation objectives or sustainable development goals. Other actors of a regional innovation system such as public administration, science and civil society can, however, also be targeted. Connecting hinterland activities with a "Nature-Business-Benefit-Cycle" approach and the WSWH protection goals, Priority 2 has further potential for cross-linkages. The specific objective 2.5, for example, calls out for promoting sustainable, climate neutral transport modes within and beyond the region, connecting specific tourist destinations in the NSR with neighbouring urban centres and thereby contributing to a net zero carbon economy with positive effects for the Wadden Sea ecosystem. The promotion of regional green transport modes – or other sustainable technologies and processes focused under Priority 2 – could be integrated into a cross-border marketing strategy for sustainable tourism within the Wadden Sea World Heritage Brand.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process – All projects must address one of the priorities and select one of the specific objectives. In addition, applicants are encouraged to consider if any of the spotlight themes apply to their project idea. For regular projects a 2-step application procedure is required from the second call for proposals onward. Applicants first submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) and only projects which are approved at this stage are asked to submit a full application. According to the [Programme evaluation](#), the timeframe from the submission of EOIs to the approval/rejection of a full application was 12 months (from call 5 on in 2017). **Preparation costs** – €40,000 funded at a 50% rate paid to the Lead Beneficiary – cover the full preparation period from the time before approval, including time spent on preparing the EOI, and include costs such as the travel and staff costs involved in planning, meetings and writing the application. Preparation costs are granted only to those projects approved for implementation. Costs will be reimbursed as part of the first regular project payment. **Small Scale Projects** – are funded under all four programme priorities and may thus develop solutions and implement actions for all specific objectives listed. However, small scale projects are limited to a maximum project duration of 18 months, €500.000 in total budget, and a partnership of three to seven partners. Small-scale projects benefit from a shorter application procedure (1-step application), a modified full application, less complexity (only one work package) and an easier reporting. This is meant to attract new partners and organisations to the programme, in particular new programme region's partners with an easier entry to the NSR funding scheme.

Interreg VI B

5.4 Interreg North-West Europe

Geographical scope: 7 countries: Belgium, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland; Parts of France, Germany and Ireland

Programme Budget: €310 million

Project Budget: above €200,000.00

Application Procedure: 2-step

Funding rate: 60%

Success rate: 27% (1st stage of calls in previous funding period), 44% (2nd stage of calls in previous funding period)

Project duration: can be defined by the partnership

Target group: individuals, enterprises, public + private institutions (government / public organisations, industry / businesses, research / academia, civil society / citizen representation), public administrations, NGOs

Partnership: /

Types of action: Applied research | Innovation/pre-commercial development | Demonstrator | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Policy implementation | Brand building/brand improvement | Education | Awareness raising | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Nature management

Key links:

[Interreg North-West Website](#)

[Draft Programme 2021-2027, as of February 2022](#)

[Project Database 2014-2020](#)

[National Contact Points](#)

[Secretariat](#)

Programme Description

The next Interreg North-West Europe Programme 2021-2027, expected to be launched in the first quarter of 2022, underpins core EU policies and aims to further develop the region towards a smarter, greener, more connected and more social region to support a balanced development and make all regions more resilient. Accordingly, the [draft programme for 2021-2027](#) defines five overall topics which mirror several EU-level strategies and initiatives such as the [European Green Deal](#) and the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#) 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17. While funded activities to develop solutions, implement them in the region and embed them in related policies and practices may vary in scale and scope, the following five programme priorities, each including one to three specific objectives, set the thematic frame for the development of specific project ideas.

Priority 1 – Smart climate and environmental resilience for NWE territories: With its focus on this priority, the programme aims at building up the regions' resilience when it comes to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Due to rising temperatures and air pollution, the population's health and safety is at stake. This being said, the topic of green and blue infrastructure receives particular attention under this priority. To withstand the effects of climate change, the protection and restoration of ecosystems and protected areas shall be improved, and the communities' capacities be strengthened.

Priority 2 – Smart and just energy transition: In this priority, the programme wants to increase energy efficiency while also reducing the risk of energy poverty in the region. Energy consumption in general shall be reduced and measures reducing greenhouse

gas emissions are equally important within this priority. Another aspect receiving attention is the improvement of renewable energy production and consumption to reduce fossil-based dependency in the region. Citizens, consumers, and communities shall be engaged and awareness raised.

Priority 3 - Transition towards a place-based circular economy: The programme already resumes that the region is already relatively resource-efficient but sees potential for improvement in the areas of waste management and stakeholder engagement. Competencies shall be developed in circular economy and eco-design to foster reuse and recycling of resources in order to use these more efficiently and to prevent waste. Pressure on businesses and governments to implement actions shall be increased to accelerate this transition. However,

this action also strongly encourages policy makers to actively participate by exploring pilots with their stakeholders.

Priority 4 - Improving territorial resilience in NWE through innovative and smart transformation: Public and private innovation players shall take up technological as well as non-technological R&D results and innovative solutions, and support innovative actors in various ways through e.g., financing, capacity building or technical support activities, thereby reinforcing the region’s value chains. Smart Specialisation Strategies are of particular interest when it comes to challenges like the demographic change, mobility transition, housing, health, and the gathering of diversified economic structures including the 4-helix actors. Smart approaches are requested to promote transnational networks, value



Figure 5: Programme priorities of Interreg North-West Europe

chains, sectors, solutions, products, processes, and services.

Priority 5 – Inclusive NWE: With this priority, the programme wishes to promote 3 objectives for an inclusive society: (1) the effectiveness and inclusiveness of labour markets, and the access to quality employment shall be increased through fostering social infrastructure and social economy, (2) access to healthcare shall be improved through the development of infrastructure, incl. primary care, and a transition from institutional to family and community-based care shall be encouraged, (3) the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion, and social innovation shall be enhanced.

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

As the North-West Interreg Programme 2021-2027 covers only parts of the Wadden Sea World Heritage (WSWH) in the Netherlands as well as in Germany, it is of particular relevance to cross-border cooperation in support of the WSWH. With climate change as one of the core foci, there are potential opportunities in relation to adaptation, mitigation and ecosystem restoration.

Nature conservation, International Cooperation beyond the Wadden Sea Region, and Education

Priority 1, SO 2.4 provides opportunities for projects focusing on either land or water management, including adaptation and mitigation measures to reduce heat stress, air pollution, and other negative effects of human activities such as floods and droughts. Whereas the water management focus within this priority rather targets the improvement of ground water quality and availability in the region, the heat stress and air pollution focus aims at enhancing the region's climate resilience and its ability to adapt as well as to mitigate the adverse effects of these two factors. While SO 2.4 has a very narrow scope when it comes to the desired outcome of the fundable measures, SO 2.7 promises more opportunities in the field of protected areas and preservation of nature, green infrastructure, and biodiversity. It also draws attention to better connecting protected areas, not only but also, through community engagement in maintaining green and blue infrastructure. Opportunities for projects lie in the objective's search for stronger stakeholder cooperation networks uniting areas facing similar

issues in enabling innovative approaches in relation to biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure. Nature-based solutions to Wadden Sea coastal management may be considered in terms of green/blue infrastructure in this context. Embedding key strategies of biodiversity preservation (species/habitats) as well as green and blue infrastructure into territorial strategies and local initiatives is just as important under this objective as the increase of knowledge and capacity of stakeholders in the NWE area. This feeds into the overall goal of priority 1 that is building climate resilience. Within priority 4, projects develop and implement strategies and action plans enabling organisations to sustain existing transnational partnerships, adopting innovative and smart approaches, solutions, services, and business models.

Sustainable Tourism and WSWH brand management

Priority 5, SO 4.6, bears opportunities for projects aiming at developing new tourist destinations and cross-border initiatives between the Netherlands and Germany. The programme, therefore, requests a focus on sustainability, natural heritage, and/or the role of culture in terms of cultural heritage or cultural and creative industries. A focus on inclusion of vulnerable groups and social cohesion is also a desired but not mandatory aspect of measures envisaged in support of this specific objective. Place-based strategies or action plans as well as further solutions (technical or non-technical) for the valorisation and promotion of the natural heritage of the Wadden Sea could be developed and implemented, together with the development of risk management and response tools. Exchange of knowledge and best practices between authorities and further stakeholders is encouraged, and the demonstration and implementation of integrated monitoring system to facilitate decisions on tourism and culture related issues is also among the fundable activities within this objective. Furthermore, awareness and acceptance raising campaigns about the natural heritage of the Wadden Sea but also its cultural heritage would be suitable for projects aiming at submitting their application in the NWE Interreg programme.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: Specificities of the new programming period were not available at editorial deadline. However, it can be said that the application procedure will consist of two steps. This means that if project applications meet the eligibility criteria as set

by the programme, the applicants will be informed and invited to submit a full application.

Preparation costs: Preparation costs will be paid in form of a lump sum in case of project approval. The amount is not available yet at the time of the editorial deadline.

Partnership requirements: There are no specific requirements with regards to the number of partners that have to be involved in a project. Only in case of specific calls for predefined target groups there may be specifications as to the composition of the partnership. This would be specified in the respective calls.

Success rate: For the programme period of 2014-2020 the average success rate for the first stage of application was at roughly 27%, varied, however, greatly depending on the call and had hence a range from the lowest being 10% to the highest being 58%. For the second stage, the average success rate was at about 44%.

Small-scale projects: As the Final Programme Document has not been published yet at the point of the creation of this funding guide, the following could still be subject to changes. In contrast to other Interreg programmes, it is planned that the Interreg North-West Europe does not put article 25 of the Interreg Regulation into practice, and therefore does not specifically offer the small project funds possibility. However, small-scale projects are welcome to apply as the NWE programme has decided to be open to any project size. This translates into free choice by the applicants as to the number of partners, the scope, the duration as well as the budget (EUR 200,000.00 minimum). The programme does not exclude the possibility of there being the need for small-scale project at some point during the programming period (labs, preparation, for thematic gaps). Therefore, it is possible that some projects will be limited in their partnership requirements, duration, and financial volume. This may also include adaptations to the requirements (e. g. monitoring processes) at the different stages of the project cycle as well as the application.

Interreg C

5.5 Interreg Europe

Geographical scope: EU27 + Norway and Switzerland as Partner States (242 regions at NUTS 2 level in the EU27, 6 regions in Norway and 7 regions in Switzerland)

Programme budget: €334 million, 80% on Priorities: Smarter Europe, Greener Europe, and More Social Europe (labour markets, health care, and culture and sustainable tourism); 20% on Priorities: More Connected Europe, Europe closer to Citizens, More Social Europe (education, socioeconomic inclusion, integration of third country nationals)

Project budget: €1-2 million per project

Application procedure: 1-step procedure

Funding rate: 80% for public or public equivalent organisations from the EU, 70% for private non-profit from the EU, 50% for Norwegian organisations, Swiss funding has yet to be defined

Success rate: 29,45% (2014-2020)

Project duration: 4 years

Target group: National, regional, local public authorities; further bodies relevant for the development and implementation of policies; if relevance to policy development can be proven: business support organisations, environmental organisations, education and research institutions, etc.

Partnership: /

Types of action: Policy improvement | Policy implementation | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building

Key links:

[Programme Website](#)

[Programme Manual \(as of March 2022\)](#)

[Webinar series on the new programme 2021-2027](#)

[Project Database](#)

[National contact points \(for Germany, please use the \[contact form\]\(#\)\)](#)

[Secretariat](#)

Programme Description

The next Interreg Europe Programme 2021-2027 is expected to be launched in early 2022. The overall objective of the programme is to “improve the implementation of regional development policies, including Investment for jobs and growth goal programmes, by promoting the exchange of experience, innovative approaches and capacity building in relation to the identification, dissemination and transfer of good practices among regional policy actors”. Its strategy is among other reports based on the Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion. My Region, My Europe, Our Future; the State of the European Territory – Contribution to the debate on Cohesion Policy post 2020 – ESPON; and the Territorial Agenda 2030. The five thematic

areas covered by this programme are in line with the [Cohesion Policy 2021-2027](#): (1) Smarter Europe, (2) Greener Europe, (3) More connected Europe, (4) More social Europe, and (5) Europe closer to Citizens. The general objective is “A better cooperation governance”. However, it has not yet been taken into consideration for the budgeting and further information on specifications and budget allocation may follow in the future. Nevertheless, it is envisaged that projects focusing on non-thematic governance issues only, will be eligible for funding.

In general, all topics in line with the policy objectives and specific objectives of the cohesion policy as presented in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR), Article 5 and Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on ERDF, Article 3, can be addressed.

Priority 1 – A more competitive and smarter Europe:

With this focus, the Programme aims to support the development of policies for technological and non-technological innovations in regions that are less developed and have low diversification. Businesses, research centres and specialized services to businesses in different regions shall be connected. A specific focus is here laid on cultural and creative assets contributing to these innovation processes. Innovation capacities as well as knowledge, and digital connectivity between regions is unequal and shall be levelled out. In addition, less advanced regions are expected to take up a central role in future innovation processes. Promoting entrepreneurship and SME creation are further important aspects of this priority. Smart specialization strategies of European regions are also expected to improve with the support of projects under this priority.

Priority 2 – A greener, climate-neutral and resilient Europe:

Climate change affects the environment, ecosystems, as well as food, water, and energy systems. It leads to economic losses, environmental damage and negatively impacts people’s health and well-being. Therefore, this priority focuses on implementing the European Green Deal, the European Climate Pact and the “Fit for 55” package. A major aspect of these is the reduction of emissions by e.g., identifying renewable energy potentials, increase energy efficiency, promote contributions toward a circular economy and a more sustainable transport sector. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is an additional focus under this priority and aims at protecting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems at land and sea. This transition shall be supported on all governance levels.

Priority 3 – A more connected Europe:

Sustainable, intelligent and multimodal mobility shall be

reached to better connect the regions and increase accessibility of mountain and coastal regions, and sparsely populated places and islands. The Programme intends to do so by the support of policy learning and capacity building related to the policies associated.

Priority 4 – A more social and inclusive Europe:

This priority also puts its focus on the disparities between the different regions, and there, especially focuses on the topics of general employment, youth employment, and employment of workers 50+. A further focus is on how recovery plan budgets and related packages may be used and coordinated at different levels of governance. The priority additionally intends to ameliorate working conditions, migration policies, and access to services of general interest. Addressing the demographic challenge through policy improvements is considered equally important.

Priority 5 – A Europe closer to citizens:

Interreg Europe, here, wishes to enable stronger cooperation between places and regions across territorial boundaries as well as different sectors. This shall be achieved by capacity building and the empowerment of the actors involved. The goal is to leave no place or citizens behind.

Better regional governance is the general objective of Interreg Europe, and an additional priority. How much funding it will receive is not yet set. The Partner States will approach this question in the future. Either they could consider that the topic of governance is part of the priorities receiving 20% of the programme budget or they could decide that the 80%/20% concentration applies to the projects budget excluding the amount allocated to the projects focusing on governance.

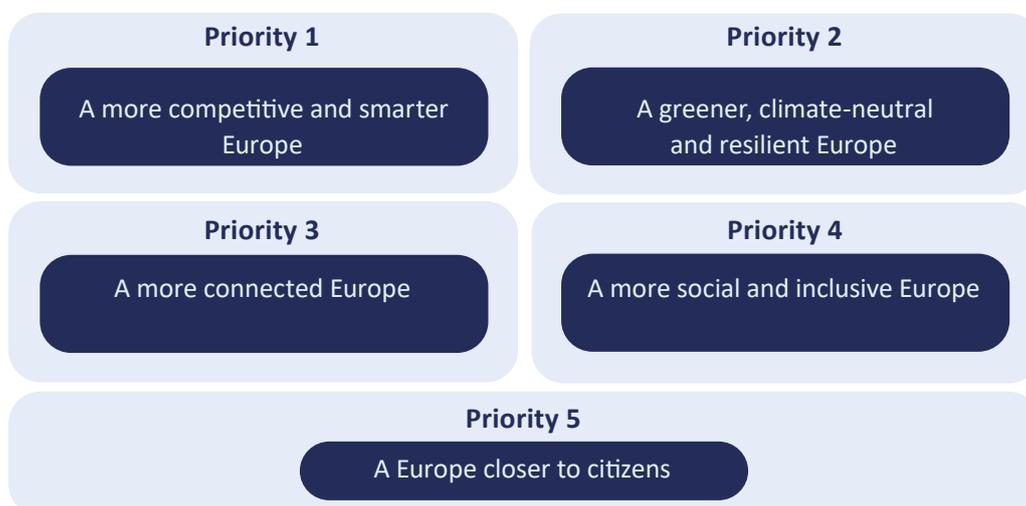


Figure 6: Programme priorities of Interreg Europe

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

The Interreg Europe Programme only bears opportunities for projects in connection to the Wadden Sea World Heritage if these wish to address policy-related issues that can be better solved together with other European macro-regions facing similar challenges. The draft programme document available at the editorial deadline indicated that each project will have to include at least one partner

from each of the four following macro-regions. If one partner from the outermost regions is involved, only three areas will have to be covered. It would, therefore, rather be feasible for actors in the WSWH to take part in projects in which the WSWH is not the main topic but actors in the WSWH may contribute and bring value to a more general challenge in the policy field.

North: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden

East: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

South: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain

West: Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Switzerland

A project will, however, need a broader European focus and engagement. The [Programme](#) therefore states that “[g]iven the pan-European nature of the Interreg Europe programme, it is not opportune to introduce a specific focus on, or give priority to Interregional Cooperation Projects or activities that target a specific macro-regional strategy or a sea-basin strategy (or initiative). However, proposals [...]

that include issues related to one or more macro-regional strategies and/or sea-basin strategy, as part of the practice sharing and policy learning among regional actors from different parts of Europe, will be welcomed by the programme, as long as the proposal includes a geographical balance in terms of countries represented in the partnership”.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: The application procedure is a 1-step procedure in which projects will firstly be evaluated against the eligibility criteria set for the specific call. If a project application does not fulfil the eligibility criteria, it will not be considered for the quality assessment that follows. It is important to note that no corrected or updated documents may be sent after the deadline of the respective call. In the previous programming period, about one fourth of the applications failed the eligibility assessment. Applicants are, therefore, encouraged to carefully read the eligibility criteria and to contact the Joint Secretariat for guidance in case of doubts. Furthermore, it shall be noted that projects have to address one of the five programme topics as well as the cross-cutting priority on capacity building. At least one policy instrument per project has to be an investment for jobs and growth programme. Pilot actions for innovative approaches are possible either

right from the start of the project or at mid-term, but the focus of the project should still be on “exchange of experience, innovative approaches and capacity building”.

Project phases: Projects will have to implement 2 project phases: (1) Core Phase, and (2) Follow Up Phase. The Core Phase has a length of 3 years and is mainly targeted at the capacity building and knowledge exchange necessary to achieve the desired policy improvements. The Follow Up Phase will last 1 year, and it will be up to each project to define their activities. It is mainly for monitoring policy achievements, but exchange of experience will still be possible.

Partnership requirements: The partnership is not limited in numbers but should be proportionate to the activities and budget associated with the project. Eligible beneficiaries are public authorities, bodies governed by public law, and private non-profit

bodies. Private non-profit bodies, however, cannot be lead partner. The geographical coverage of the partnership is still being defined but a partnership will most likely have to cover at least 3 or even all 4 macro-regions. For 50% of the policies targeted, it will be compulsory to involve the policy responsible authorities as partners. For the remaining policies, the involvement of associated policy authorities will be mandatory.

Preparation Costs: Preparation costs will be a fixed lump-sum of €17,500, in case projects are approved. It is automatically included in the lead partner's budget as indicated in the project application. The preparation costs will then be added to the lead partner's expenditure and the corresponding funding will be paid upon approval of the progress report. The allocation will be made to the lead partner's budget only but shall be shared with the partnership in a fair and transparent manner.

Success rate: The success rate during the programming period of 2014-2020 was at 29,45%.

Small-scale projects: Unlike other Interreg Programmes, Interreg Europe will not fund small-scale projects as it deems them inapt to fulfil the programme's requirements with respect to the desired impact and geographical scale of the fundable projects.



5.6 Horizon Europe

Geographical scope: EU member states and overseas countries or territories associated, third countries if within the Programme's regulation

Programme budget: €95.5 billion, breakdown by three pillars and 15 components

Project budget: depend on specific call conditions

Application procedure: 1-stage or 2-stage procedure depending on the call announcement

Funding rate: depending on the type of action, e.g. Research and Innovation (100%), Innovation (70%, for non-profit entities 100%), Coordination and Support (100%)

Success rate: 12% (2014-2020)

Project duration: 3-4 years

Target group: research organisations, universities, SMEs and industry

Partnership: for grants under Pillar 2 (clusters) at least 3 partners from 3 different partner countries

Types of action: Fundamental research | Applied research | Innovation/pre-commercial development | Demonstrator | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Policy implementation | Policy improvement | Education | People to People | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Awareness raising | Nature management | Infrastructure

Key links:

[Horizon Europe Website](#)

[Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#)

[Work Programme and Calls for Proposals for 2021-2022](#)

[Programme Budget for funding period 2021-2027](#)

[National Contact Points](#)

Programme Description

Horizon Europe, the ninth European Research and Innovation Framework programme (2021-2027), is the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation with the aim to strengthen the European Research Area (ERA) through scientific and technological excellence and frontier research, to tackle policy priorities and key strategic orientations as set out in the strategic plan 2021-2024, such as green and digital transitions, restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity and Sustainable Development Goals, and to spur breakthrough innovation and support the development, demonstration and uptake of innovative solutions. The funding is divided mainly amongst 3 pillars to support all areas of Research and Innovation. Whilst grants under pillars 1 and 3 will mostly be to one beneficiary (mono-beneficiary schemes), the largest share - more than €53 billion - goes to Pillar II supporting transnational consortia to tackle pressing global and societal challenges and to reinforce technological and industrial capacities within six different thematic clusters. Within each of these

clusters, the programme focuses mainly on grants for Research and Innovation Actions (RIA) and Innovation Actions (IA). While RIAs are research-driven and shall aim to establish new knowledge and/or to explore the feasibility of a new or improved technology, product, process, service or solution, IAs are close-to-market projects aiming for commercialisation and producing plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. The general conditions for projects, such as the indicative budget, eligibility rules or award criteria, as well as the expected outcome and scope of project proposals is always defined on a specific call in the Funding and Tender Portal and may differ fundamentally within each of the six clusters.

Cluster 1: With health and care in the limelight, this cluster aims at generating new knowledge and developing innovative solutions and health technologies to prevent, diagnose, monitor, treat and cure diseases, mitigate health risks and promote

good-health and well-being in general and at work. Furthermore, this cluster focuses the improvement of public health systems by making them more cost-effective, equitable and sustainable, prevent and tackle poverty-related diseases and enable patients' participation and self-management.

Cluster 2: Cluster 2 aims at enhancing democratic governance and citizens participation, provide better access and engagement with cultural heritage and improve its protection, enhancement and restoration, and tackle social, economic and political inequalities, support human capital development and contribute to a comprehensive EU strategy for inclusive growth while responding to the impacts of technological advancements and economic interconnectedness with a view to social resilience.

Cluster 3: This cluster supports the implementation of EU policy priorities related to security, including cybersecurity, and disaster risk reduction, including climate-related risks and extreme events, and resilience. [Protection actions](#) are focused on developing solutions in a systemic way in terms of preventive actions, mitigation, better societal preparedness, resilience and capacity building as well as improved European disaster risk management.

Cluster 4: With a clear focus on digital and industrial technologies within all sectors of the economy and society, including space, this cluster aims at developing and deploying competitive technologies for manufacturing and production, industrial value chains, or data operation and computing to foster a green transition and digital transformation in Europe.

Cluster 5: This cluster aims to achieve climate neutrality and the zero-pollution ambition by reducing the negative impacts of mobility and energy generation and use on air quality, ecosystems and biodiversity. The energy and transport sectors are particularly focused as substantial global growth markets with high potential on developing sustainable, effective and efficient pathways towards climate neutrality and low-carbon transition. This includes the development of crosscutting solutions and digitalised services for securing provision of cleaner energy at lower costs, coping with intermittence and energy storage issues, smarter connection of industrial installations to the energy system, more competitive and cleaner transport as well as smarter and safer mobility solutions for goods and people.

Cluster 6: In line with the objectives of the European Green Deal and related Strategies, such as the [Biodiversity Strategy to 2030](#), the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) and the [European Climate Pact](#), Cluster 6 aims at: restoring degraded ecosystems; halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and associated ecosystem functions on land, inland waters and sea; reducing disaster risks and enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation potential of ecosystems and primary production systems, including through maintaining or increasing natural carbon sinks; enhancing sustainable and circular management of natural resources, including the development of nature-based solutions. Furthermore, with a focus on food and nutrition security, the cluster supports a resource efficient circular, zero-carbon industry that provides sustainable and climate-smart agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry as well as a circular climate neutral, sustainable industry that provides bio-based materials and products with low ecological footprint, preventing and mitigating pollution.



Figure 7: Programme priorities of Horizon Europe

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

Nature Conservation, WSWH governance and International Cooperation

Protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems, their capacity to deliver a wide range of essential services both to nature and society, and the sustainable management of natural resources on land and at sea, is one of the key destinations of cluster 6. Hence, the cluster calls out for RIA projects that empower ocean observation by developing, for example, new and/or innovative observation, mapping and monitoring tools (from remote sensing to eDNA, AI, robotics and citizen science framework) to provide data for the prediction of biodiversity decline and good health status for selected ecosystems such as the Wadden Sea. These kinds of projects are very much research-driven, in this case with a systemic approach to create more user-friendly, cost-efficient and standardised monitoring, data analysis and prediction models to improve environmental monitoring (e.g. in the frame of Marine Strategy Framework Directive) throughout

Europe. Data and knowledge gained through these projects on, for example, climate-change effects on and stressors, such as invasive species, for good environmental status of ecosystems are usually shared and communicated via existing platforms such as the EC Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity or the Global Biodiversity Information Facility – thus, providing the trilateral partnership of the WSWH with up-to-date knowledge of the Wadden Sea ecosystem(s) and management recommendations. Innovation-driven projects (IA) are also strongly presented in this cluster, such as the development of a coherent and resilient trans-European nature network of protected areas, including through the set-up of ecological corridors allowing for species migration as well as responses to climate change and biodiversity decline. A strong focus here is to implement innovative cooperation and participatory

approaches across borders among Member States (and beyond) on different levels that involve a wide range of stakeholders across sectors. There may be significant opportunities here to further develop the Flyway and Swimway initiatives, cooperate with other natural sites or contribute to the UNESCO World Heritage Programme.

Sustainable Regional Development

Different calls, primarily within cluster 6, call out for the development of partnerships between a range of multi-sector organisations, authorities and coastal communities and a general community-led socio-economic and sustainable development and management of coastal areas. Related to this, the programme highlights the value of coastal ecosystems as the basis of important socio-economic activities such as tourism and wellbeing, fisheries and aquaculture, and calls out to better integrate ecosystem service valuation, management, conservation and restoration in socio-economic models via multi-actor partnerships – e.g. within the Programme Destination ‘Biodiversity and ecosystem services’ or ‘Resilient, inclusive, healthy and green rural, coastal and urban communities’. This opens up opportunities to link the WSWH nature conservation goals with the nature and Wadden Sea connectedness of coastal communities and develop nature-based, socio-economic models and land and sea-based businesses (production, service provision, socio-economic empowerment) with simultaneous benefit for the local economy, local jobs and the environment. Furthermore, by creating multi-actor approaches and implementing participatory process with an integrated coastal zone management, traditional conflicts between human-based activities and nature protection may be overcome and support critical ecosystem services in order to ensure a good environmental status of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, social cohesion and sustainable development of coastal/island communities and economies.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: Horizon Europe Funding opportunities and important information needed to submit a proposal are published through calls for proposals at the European Commission’s [Funding and Tender Portal](#). The related topic description defines the requirements of a specific call including, for example, the scope, targeted objectives and mandatory outcomes, eligibility and evaluation criteria, 1-stage or 2-stage application procedure.

Once an application is submitted, the evaluation phase last up to 5 months and if successful, another 3 months is needed to finalise the Grant Agreement before starting a project. As competition for EU funding is generally high – with a success rate of just under 12 per cent over the first six years of the predecessor H2020 programme 2014-2020 – applicants are encouraged to read these requirements with extreme care to ensure that their project proposal matches perfectly with mentioned requirements. Depending on the call and the size of consortium, a project development phase between 3-6 months is recommended. A [step-by-step guide online manual](#) assist applicants through all Portal processes from proposal preparation and submission to reporting on on-going projects.

Horizon Missions

EU Missions are a novelty of the Horizon Europe programme with the aim to pool resources and mobilise multiple public and private actors to meet common challenges on Europe’s transformation into a greener, healthier, more inclusive and resilient continent. Each mission operates as a portfolio of actions – such as research projects, policy measures or even legislative initiatives – to achieve clearly defined and measurable goals until 2030 that could not be achieved through individual actions. Besides a cross-discipline approach and the involvement of different types or research and innovation actions, the missions highlight citizen engagement and public awareness as key to value European R&I investments and finally create successful collaboration and governance approaches.

As a first step to reach the ambitious goals, most of the missions will be implemented in two phases in which the first phase and related calls consists of coordination and support or research and innovation actions. They are foreseen, for example, to outline strategic agendas or roadmaps for specific topics, action fields, regions or communities or to develop, test, pilot and validate a portfolio of innovative solutions. In a second phase, these identified solutions shall be further deployed, replicated and upscaled on a larger and more systemic scale throughout Europe.

Furthermore, Mission actors are encouraged to create synergies between R&I funding instruments (European and national), by actively seek

complementarities with other EU, national or regional funding programmes, such as EMFF/EMFAF, LIFE, ERDF, ESF+, JTF, CEF (Connecting Europe Facility) Inland Waterways or Maritime and InvestEU, as well as private funds or financial instruments.

Each Mission will develop implementation and support platforms fostering not only the coordination and exchange between involved actors and regions but also supporting networking, knowledge transfer, education, stakeholder engagement and outreach beyond the funded projects and involved initiatives.

Out of [5 selected EU Missions](#) the Mission ‘Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030’ and ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’ are of particular relevance in support of the WSWH, Upcoming calls published at the European Commission’s [Funding and Tender Portal](#) should be scanned with special care to evaluate cooperation and funding opportunities.

Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030: The objective of this Mission is to restore, protect and preserve the health of the EU’s ocean, seas and waters by 2030. Quantified and measurable targets are set to:

- protect and restore marine and freshwater ecosystems and biodiversity, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030
- prevent and eliminate pollution of ocean, seas and waters, in line with the EU Action Plan Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil
- make the sustainable blue economy carbon-neutral and circular, in line with the proposed European Climate Law and the new approach for a Sustainable Blue Economy

In 2022, the Commission envisages developing a call in which the following non-exhaustive list of themes are of relevance for trilateral cooperation related to the Wadden Sea:

- environmentally friendly and sustainable fisheries
- European Blue Parks
- blue carbon: nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Lighthouse in the Baltic and North Sea basins - Coordinated approach for algae production
- Lighthouse in the Baltic and the North Sea basins
- Biodiversity monitoring in the European Digital Twin Ocean

Adaptation to Climate Change: The objective of this Mission is foster climate resilience of regions

and communities by 2030 to be better prepared for unavoidable changes and extreme events via [three key elements](#):

- **Preparing and Planning:** provide general support to regions and communities to better understand, prepare for and manage climate risks and opportunities, by providing access to climate risk profiles, enhanced early warning systems, and guidance for the development of risk management plans
- **Accelerating transformations:** supporting at least 150 regions and communities in the co-creation of transformative innovation pathways to climate resilience, and in the development and testing of solutions for safe transformative adaptation.
- **Demonstrating systemic transformations:** supporting regions and communities to deliver at least 75 large-scale demonstrations of systemic transformations to climate resilience.

Particular attention will be paid to less developed regions that are more vulnerable to climate impacts and often have low adaptive capacities. Thus, front-runners European regions in research and innovation on climate adaptation shall share their experience and accompany other regions in finding solutions adapted to their own climatic situation and economy.

For 2021, the Mission focused on Research and Innovation as well as Coordination and Support Actions to develop a common risk assessment framework, based on which a first set of regions and communities will receive support for better understanding their climate risks and to outline a roadmap to local climate resilience, including a few demonstrations of replicable climate resilience solutions.

In 2022, the Mission concentrates on the coordination of climate adaptation innovations and the identification of remaining gaps across the areas of innovation and transformation. Envisaged calls will support the development and testing of solutions identified as key for climate resilience building, and demonstrate solutions towards climate neutrality and climate resilience, while protecting water.

5.7 LIFE

Geographical scope: EU member states and overseas countries or territories associated, third countries: members of European Economic Area (EEA), European Neighbourhood Policy countries, other third countries if within the Programme's regulations

Programme budget: €5.432 billion

Project budget: depends on specific call conditions and project type

Application procedure: 1-stage or 2-stage procedure depending on the project type

Funding rate: 60-75% (in exceptional cases 95-100%) (SAPs 75%, SNAPs and SIPs 60%, OAs 95% max., except for the small grants for biodiversity in Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories that constitute the continuation of the Board of European Students of Technology programme, where the EU co-financing is max. 100%)

Success rate: 14-36% (2014-2020)

Project duration: SAPs 10 years max., SNAPs and SIPs 14 years max., TAs 5 years max., OA incl. CSAs 10 years max.

Target group: any public or private legal entities in eligible programme areas, a legal entity created under Union law or any international organisation, international organisations if relevant

Partnership: /

Types of action: Applied research | Policy implementation | Policy improvement | Innovation/ pre-commercial development | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | Capacity building | Citizen engagement/citizen science | Nature management | Infrastructure

Key links:

[LIFE Website](#)

[EU Regulation for the programme period 2021-2027](#)

[Work Programme 2021-2024](#)

[LIFE Support for Applicants](#)

[Project Database](#)

[National contact points](#)

Programme Description

LIFE is the EU's Programme for Environment and Climate Action. Its objectives are designed to be in line with the priorities set in the European Green Deal that target at transformations within the EU's society and economy in a way that it will become more resource-efficient and reach zero-net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The protection of the EU's natural capital as well as the health and well-being of its citizens from negative environmental impacts lie at the core of these priorities.

The LIFE programme is therefore divided into two fields and four sub-programmes:

Field 1: Environment

Sub-programme: Nature and Biodiversity

Sub-programme: Circular Economy and Quality of Life

Field 2: Climate Action

Sub-programme: Climate Change and Mitigation

Sub-programme: Clean Energy Transition

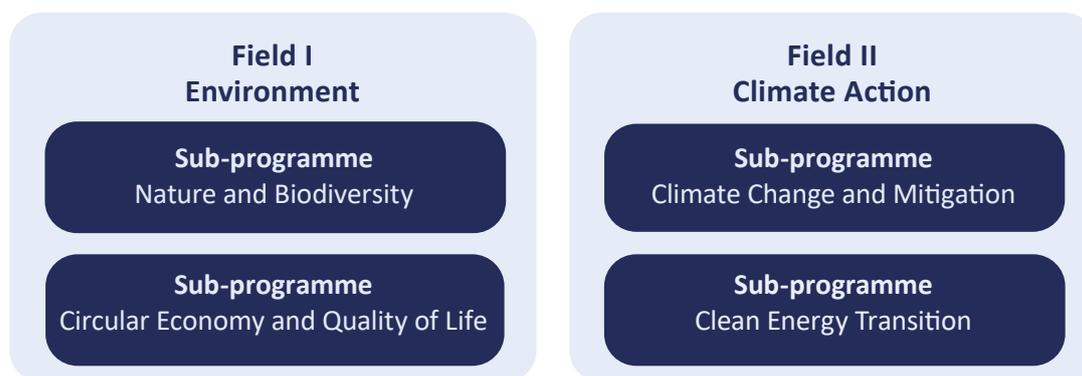


Figure 8: Programme priorities of LIFE

Field Environment – Sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity:

Originating from the need for funding as identified by the Natura 2000 network, the Nature Directives' fitness check, the Action plan for nature, people, and the economy as well as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, this sub-programme focuses its objectives on supporting nature and biodiversity protection. Innovative techniques and approaches that assist the accomplishment of these objectives, the increase of knowledge as well as the application of best practices receive particular attention. To improve governance through capacity building of public and private actors as well as the involvement of the civil society, also in forms of citizen science, are also encouraged in this sub-programme. The translation of the projects' positive results on nature and biodiversity into policies but also private and public sector practices is deemed just as important to ensure the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the EU's natural capital (marine, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems).

Field Environment – Sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life:

This sub-programme focuses on various areas of nature and biodiversity. It wishes to contribute to the domains of circular economy, including the rethinking of key product value chains and business models as well as approaches to waste management. Reducing pollution in accordance with the Zero Pollution Action Plan just as decreasing the exposure to harmful noise levels are further areas of intervention. Under the overall term of "Environmental health" this sub-programme summarizes actions aiming at advancing chemical management, but also the protection and improvements within topics such as water and seas, air and noise, and soil. Projects with a focus on environmental governance stimulating behavioural change and capacity building activities

involving all stakeholders shall facilitate this societal transformation together with actions establishing a circular economy, resource efficiency, and further environmental targets, including the promotion of upscaling and access to finance. The overarching initiative called "New European Bauhaus" is situated within this sub-programme and will be a project of economic, cultural, and environmental nature by combining sustainability, accessibility, and affordability with design in support of the European Green Deal.

Field Climate Action - Sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:

In the field of climate change mitigation, this sub-programme focuses on fostering the implementation of the 2030 Energy and Climate Policy, the EU Member States' National Energy and Climate Plans, and the European Union's Mid-Century and Long-Term Climate and Energy Strategy. In order to reach the EU's climate neutrality target as well as a better energy efficiency, the sub-programme promotes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and ozone depleting substances, and wished to strengthen the Emissions Trading System. This may be reached, among other activities, by implementing low-carbon or energy efficient products and services, e.g. in the transport sector, but also by supporting sustainable management practices for land, forest, soil, sea, and ocean. Solutions for carbon capture and carbon removal shall also be promoted.

In the field of climate change adaptation, it focuses on the support of the new EU strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change as well as the EU and Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, and the European Climate Pact. It aims at enhancing adaptation strategies across all sectors and wishes to promote state-of-the-art solutions and tools for adaptation modelling, risk assessment, management,

and decision support. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation as well as the development and use of related assessment tools also form part of this sub-programme. Further fundable areas include water management, resilience of infrastructure and the building sector, preparedness for extreme weather events at local level and in the outermost regions, promotion of financial instruments and innovative solutions, and public-private collaboration.

Governance and Information is another field of intervention within this sub-programme. Here, it notably aspires to enhance citizens' knowledge and awareness and wishes to promote changes in behavior that will lead to mainstreaming emissions reduction and resource efficiency. In addition to this, knowledge exchange and information on best practices shall be promoted, including climate-proofing of infrastructure investment and policies. Strategies are expected to be developed and implemented at local, regional, and national level. Monitoring of policies shall be facilitated through improved greenhouse gas emission monitoring, accounting, and reporting. Eventually, the sub-programme aims at funding the development of climate services and the promotion of climate science as well as sustainable finance instruments, and seeks to support climate diplomacy.

Field Climate Action – Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition: This sub-programme aims at supporting actions in favour of the European Green Deal, the therein described “Renovation wave” initiative for the building sector and the territories that are not connected to the European grids, e.g. the EU outermost regions. The objective is to mobilise various small and medium-sized stakeholders, including local and regional public authorities and non-profit organisations, involving consumers altogether as well. Therefore, it focuses on 5 different interventions: (1) Building a national, regional and local policy framework supporting clean energy transition, (2) Accelerating technology roll-out, digitalization, new services and business models and enhancement of the related professional skills on the market for the clean energy transition, (3) Attracting private finance for sustainable energy, (4) Supporting the development of local and regional investment projects, (5) Involving and empowering citizens in the clean energy transition. Within these interventions, the programme promotes activities increasing the coherence of governance, enhancing stakeholder dialogue, and capacity building. It, primarily, aims at supporting the development and effective implementation of policies, market uptake

of innovative solutions, and thereby wishes to address current market barriers. Investments in sustainable energy and further investment possibilities shall be upscaled, and the management of sustainable investments improved. Citizens shall be empowered to take an active role via collected actions, community, and citizen-led initiatives as well as the advancement of new solutions, and collaboration between local authorities and citizens shall be strengthened. Activities such as technology development, research and innovation for clean energy transition will not be included.

LIFE funds different types of projects:

Standard Action Projects (SAPs): bottom-up approach, applicants can realise their own ideas and develop fit-for-purpose project solutions.

Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs) and Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs): top-down approach, interested parties apply for specific tenders for the implementation of environmental or climate strategies and plans.

Technical Assistance (TA): Technical Assistance projects are either preparation projects for SNAPs or SIPs (TA-PP), capacity building activities for authorities (TA-CAP) or preparation projects for facilitating up-scaling and replication of results from other LIFE projects or other EU funds.

Other Actions (OA): top-down approach, particular fields will be covered by various specific types of grants and actions, e.g. Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) under the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

In general, the programme is mainly focused on the implementation of different legislation and policies in the environmental field. Research and Innovation actions are not the programme's main focus and can be located within the Horizon Europe programme. Most of the projects are of local or sub-national rather than of transnational nature.

Nature conservation and Regional Sustainable Development

Under the sub-programme "Nature and Biodiversity" the programme allows for a vast variety of topics. Important to note, however, is that the programme is asking for tangible improvements that are also measurable. One focus is on SAPs that deal with area and non-area-based conservation and restoration of habitats / ecosystems and species. Projects targeting the Wadden Sea Swimway or Flyway and aiming for specific outcomes and by this, contribute to the conservation of the WSWH may be fundable under this sub-programme. Further fundable actions could involve the restoration of salt and sweet water interactions or light and noise pollution. Projects monitoring habitats, e.g. Natura 2000, and/or species may be fundable if they are either an element of a broader project scheme or if they significantly contribute to existing policies and are not yet covered by any other programme or project. Governance projects bringing about behavioural change and change in practice in soil, land, and water management (marine areas included) are equally of interest under this sub-programme.

As the sub-programme "Circular Economy and Quality of Life" is directed toward the improvement of the quality of the environment, projects focusing on prevention and elimination of pollutants to the marine environment are one of the many foci. Reduction of air pollutants and noise is another fundable aspect, however, mainly targeting the urban environment. Therefore, a consultation should be organised to evaluate whether a project focusing on noise pollution in the marine environment would qualify. Nevertheless, in addition to the aforementioned, governance projects triggering behavioural change including capacity building at all levels can also take place under this sub-programme. Resource efficiency constitutes a further area of interest in which, for example, the development, testing and demonstration of sustainable solutions

for marine management and use of maritime resources could be situated.

As far as climate change mitigation and adaptation measures are concerned, the LIFE sub-programme offers the possibility to implement feasible nature-based solutions in the management of coastal and marine areas. These may include assessments, guidance, capacity building as well as financial approaches and products, and could, hence, provide good opportunity for projects focusing on the WSWH. Projects targeting the protection and restoration of wetlands within the WSWH could also be fundable under this LIFE target.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: A one-stage procedure that will be used for: 1. standard action projects 2. TA projects and 3. "Other Actions".

A two-stage procedure that will be used for: SNAPs and SIPs. This means that a concept note will have to be handed in and approved by the evaluators before the submission of a full proposal. It may also occur that Standard Action Projects will fall under the category of two-stage procedures. This procedure, however, will not be implemented for SAPs in 2022.

Preparation Costs: The [guide of applicants](#) indicates: Certain other costs incurred before or after the action duration may be considered exceptionally eligible if the timing is imposed by us (i.e. a bank guarantee to be provided before the action starting date (if any); kick-off meeting organised before the action starting date).

Success rate: In the past for "one stage" call for proposals, the rate were for Nature/Biodiversity was at 36%, for Environment – Resource efficiency at 16%, for Environmental Information and Governance at 14% and for Climate Action at 24%. However, those figures must be applied with caution as they depended on the budget available at the time of those calls.

5.8 Erasmus+

Geographical scope: EU Member States, third countries associated to the programme: Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein; North Macedonia, Republic of Turkey, and Republic of Serbia; entities from other third countries non-associated to the Programme can be eligible in Erasmus+ actions in duly justified cases and in the Union interest. A more detailed list can be found [here](#).

Programme budget: €26.2 billion (30% cooperation projects and policy development activities, 70% mobility and lifelong learning)

Project budget: Key Action 1: between €100 and €575 per participant (+ travel costs, inclusion support, cost of subsistence, course fees), Key Action 2: between €55,000 and €4 mio., Key Action 3: between €150,000 and €500,000; Jean Monnet Actions: up to €300,000

Application procedure: 1-stage procedure

Funding rate: Key Action 1: between 80-100% depending on the specific cost element, Key Action 2: between 80-90%, Key Action 3: 80%; Jean Monnet Actions: 75-80%

Success rate: vary significantly between funded Key Actions (KAs), see indicative figures in [annual reports](#)

Project duration: Key Action 1: starting from 1 day+ up to 36 months depending on the specific action/project, for some projects an extension is available after a 12 month period; Key Action 2: between 6 and 48 months; Key Action 3: 24 months; Jean Monnet Actions: 3 years

Target group: Educational institutions, individuals (administrative and teaching staff, students, pupils, adult learners), NGOs, public authorities, and other organisations active in the field of education. More information can be found [here](#).

Partnership: /

Types of action: Mobility | Education | Capacity building | Awareness raising | Policy improvement | Network building | Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices | People to people | Citizen engagement/citizen science

Key links:

[Erasmus+ Website](#)

[Latest Programme Guide](#) (Please note that the programme guide is updated on a regular basis)

[Erasmus+ Resources and Tools](#)

[Project Database](#)

[National contact points](#)

Programme Description

Erasmus+ is an EU funding programme that focuses on the fields of education, training, youth and sports in the European Union and beyond. By facilitating learning mobility and cooperation projects, it not only wishes to contribute to social cohesion and quality jobs but also to a European identity and active citizenship. The overall programme wishes to contribute to four priorities and is divided into three different Key Actions plus the so-called Jean Monnet Actions.

(Horizontal) Priorities

Erasmus+ focuses on four different priorities for the implementation of its programme:

- 1. Inclusion and Diversity:** Identified challenges and the programme's vision are laid out in the [Inclusion and Diversity Strategy](#) and encompass the fields of disabilities, health problems, education and training systems, cultural differences, social and economic barriers, discrimination as well as geographical barriers.

2. **Digital Transformation:** Referring to the [Digital Education Action Plan](#), this programme priority focuses on promoting the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem and enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.
3. **Environment and Fight against Climate Change:** Based on the [European Green Deal Communication](#), Erasmus+ intends to expand mobility opportunities in the green field to create valuable knowledge exchange and strengthening of competences. The environment and the fight against climate change will be a horizontal priority taken into consideration for the selection of projects.
4. **Participation in Democratic Life, Common Values and Civic Engagement:** Being closely linked to the [Youth Participation Strategy](#), this priority aims at improving the citizens' understanding of the European Union via formal and non-formal learning activities.

Key Actions

Key Action 1 – Mobility of individuals: This key action focuses on the funding of different mobility schemes for any kind of learner and staff in educational institutions. It also promotes activities that increase youth participation in democratic life and awareness on the EU's common values. Intercultural skills and competences shall be built up and reinforced via travel experiences, language learning opportunities, and virtual exchanges.

Key Action 2 – Cooperation among organisations and institutions: This key action includes various types of cooperation opportunities. Partnerships for excellence are to foster quality education

through networks among higher education institutions (European Universities) and vocational training institutions (Centres for Vocational Excellence). Improvement of teacher education is to be achieved via Erasmus+ Teachers Academies. Higher education shall be internationalised by developing and implementing international master study programmes (Erasmus Mundus Action). Further activities may also concentrate on strategic cooperation among higher and vocational education, training institutions, businesses, and research for innovation and modernisation of the education systems to match the labour markets (Alliances for Innovation), or on activities in various fields of education and training that promote creativity and innovation and social entrepreneurship, especially, with regards to methods and practices (Forward-looking projects). International cooperation projects focusing on capacity building in the fields of higher education, vocational education and training or on non-formal capacity building for the youth or sport are also welcome.

Key Action 3 – Support to policy development and cooperation: Youth grass-root as well as larger organisations are encouraged to build international partnerships. Traditional as well as digital channels shall help creating sustainable networks and partnerships (European Youth Together). High-level public authorities may perform policy experimentations including field trials on policy measures. Actions in support of reaching mutual recognition of credits, skills, and qualifications on formal and non-formal education receive similar attention.

Jean Monnet Actions: Jean Monnet Actions aim at supporting European integration and promoting policy debates among academia and various policy actors.

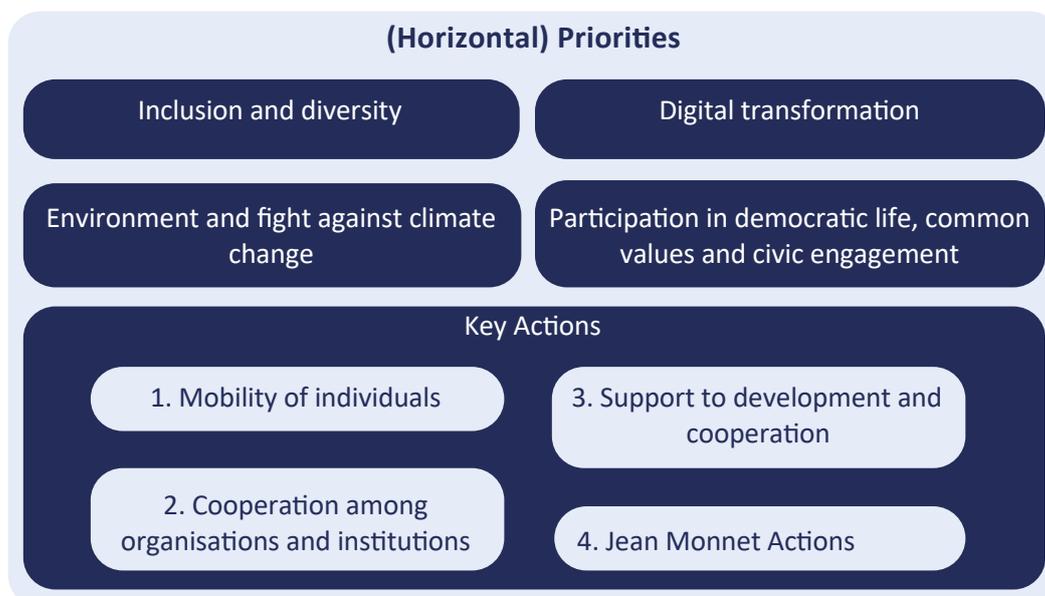


Figure 9: Programme priorities of Erasmus+

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

Erasmus+ offers opportunities for the WSWH in the field of education. One of its main priorities for the programming period 2021-2027 is the environment and the fight against climate change. Hence, it bears opportunities for various education-centred projects and mobility within the WSWH.

Nature conservation and Education

Key Action 1:

1. Mobility for Higher Education Students and Staff

Student mobility can consist of a study period abroad, a traineeship, doctoral or post-doc study or traineeship abroad, possible to be carried out as blended mobility (partially physical and partially virtual mobility). Whereas the study-related mobility actions rather target educational institutions and their students, other private and public institutions as well as NGOs and the like can act as receiving institutions for traineeships. The TRIWAD CREW partnership of universities in Germany, the Netherlands and Germany has benefited from Erasmus+ staff and student mobility to fund Wadden Sea focused exchange activities over a period of more than ten years.

Staff mobility is relevant for administrative and teaching staff of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and has to be compatible with the staff's professional development. It is also possible for staff from businesses, other private and public organisations or NGOs to teach and train staff and students from HEIs. It is, however, primarily aimed

at facilitating exchange between universities. This way, knowledge exchange between different universities in Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark can be made possible, not only for students but also for university staff. Public organisations can receive Higher Education staff and train them. They are not, however, eligible for being trained themselves. Blended intensive programmes primarily focus on building capacity (on and offline) for innovative teaching and learning practices among the Higher Education Institutions participating.

2. Mobility in the field of Youth:

Youth Exchanges focus on non-formal learning experiences (from and for) young people (between 13 and 30 years old). Organisations within the area of environmental protection are eligible to apply for funds and implement thematic related projects. The same applies for Mobility projects for youth workers. Within Youth Participation Activities, organisations or youth groups can get funding to foster their participation in democratic life for thematic topics related to the environment, e.g.. dialogue and discussions with decision makers. Implementation can take place either at a local, regional, national or transnational level, and does not necessarily have to include groups or organisations from more than one country.

3. Mobility in the field of school education and pupils

This strand may prove relevant for projects focusing on school children or educational staff. It is possible to include topics around the

protection of the WSWH, specifically, in terms of environmental protection and others in line with the general programme's priorities. An example could be a project including schools from The Netherlands, Germany, and Denmark, engaging pupils in a scientific project benefiting the protection of the WSWH.

4. Mobility in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET), and Adult Education

Mobility for learners and staff in VET: The focus is on initial and continuous vocational education and training and its betterment in quality. Topics around the protection of the WSWH are fundable if they are organised by initial or continuous VET institutions, and these are the main organisations profiting from the actions. An example could be a VET mobility project in the field of tourism management focusing on exchange of knowledge and practices of sustainable tourism and its application to the areas of the WSWH.

Mobility for learners and staff in Adult Education:

This strand not only aims at supporting well-established organisations in adult education but also smaller providers, newcomers to the Programme, and community-based grassroots organisations. Short-term mobility projects bear opportunities not only for organisations that provide formal, informal and non-formal adult education (excl. VET providers) but also local and regional public authorities, coordinators and other organisations withholding a role in the field of adult education. Organisations in the field of adult education can apply for projects covering topics such as protection of the WSWH if they are in line with the general programme's priorities.

Key Action 2:

Partnerships for Cooperation

For Cooperation Partnerships and Small-scale Partnerships each of the projects has to address one horizontal priority as outlined for all Erasmus+ projects in Key Action 2 and/or one [sector-specific priority](#).

Cooperation partnerships may be applied for by organisations active in the sector-specific fields as well as any organisation carrying out activities that are transversal to different fields like local, regional and national authorities, recognition and validation centres, chambers of commerce, guidance

centres, and cultural organisations, etc. However, a diverse range of partners appropriate for the actions is required for a successful proposal. Since a Cooperation Partnership requires a minimum of three organisations from three different EU Member States and third countries associated to the Programme, projects focusing on the three countries of the Trilateral Partnership may be eligible if they comply with the remaining quality criteria set out by the Programme. Projects addressing the horizontal priority of focusing on the environment and fight against climate change within the WSWH are eligible for funding. Small-scale Partnerships have similar requirements to those of Cooperation Partnerships but are more apt for less experienced and smaller actors with a shorter project duration and smaller project budget.

Capacity Building in Higher Education, VET, Youth, Sport:

These actions are predominantly aimed at the development of such institutions in third countries not associated to the programme (third countries).

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: For Erasmus+ funding, the Programme Guide is adapted and changed every year. Hence, it remains important to keep up to date with new eligibility criteria on a regular basis. Due to the vast scope of the programme, contacting the National Contact Points for consultations and advice on envisaged projects, is considered necessary. Application deadlines and further information on the submission of proposals can also be found in the Programme Guide, [Part C – Information for applicants](#). Once the application is submitted, the Programme might ask for additional supporting documents that will have to be provided or which need clarification. The Programme will then rank eligible projects by quality and will provide funding to projects accordingly until the maximum budget of the call is reached.

Partnership requirements: It is important to note that partnership requirements for the different activities within each Key Action may vary greatly. It is therefore necessary and recommended to study the Programme Guide thoroughly before planning. National Contact Points can be contacted for any further requests and inquiries.

Success rate: Success rates may vary significantly. Indicative figures may be found in the [annual reports](#) published by the programme.

5.9 European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund

Geographical scope: EU member states and third countries (non-EU countries) concerned

Programme budget: €6.108 billion (shared management³ €5,311 billion; direct management⁴ €797 million)

Project budget and duration: The dedicated amount for a project may vary.

Application procedure: specific procedures, contact [national authorities](#)

Funding rate: 50%; up to 100% for projects combining innovation, collective interest and collective beneficiaries and projects related to protecting marine biodiversity; 40% for individual investments in fishing vessels; 100% for coastal fisheries (small-scale) projects

Success rate: /

Target group: legal entities established in a member state, legal entities created under Union law or any international organisation

Partnership: /

Types of action: Innovation/pre-commercial development | Capacity building | Policy improvement | Policy implementation | Nature management

Key links:

[EMFAF Website](#)

[Work Programme](#)

[Support for Applicants](#)

[Project database](#)

[Contact](#)

³ Provided through national programmes co-financed by the EU budget and EU countries, prepared by member states and adopted by the commission

⁴ Work programmes are prepared by the commission and then adopted

Programme Description

The European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) replaces the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Aquaculture is included as a topic in the fund since it has become an increasingly important way of securing food in the European Union. The EMFAF supports the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the EU maritime policy, and the EU agenda for international ocean governance. The projects funded should deal with the sustainable use of aquatic and maritime resources and develop innovative projects both on a national or transnational level.

The first priority of the fund sets the focus on fostering sustainable fisheries and conserving marine biological resources. The second priority focuses on

food security, achieved through competitive but at the same time sustainable aquaculture and markets. The third priority set by the fund is the enablement of growing a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities. The foundation for the fourth priority is laid down by the topic of international ocean governance. Strengthening said governance as well as facilitating seas and oceans that are safe, secure, clean, and sustainably managed are the key areas in this priority.

Priority 1 – Foster sustainable fisheries, restore and conserve aquatic biological resources: There are several specific objectives included in this first priority. To be able to work towards economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable fisheries,

CO₂ should be reduced and the use of renewable energy increased. A solution to achieving this is the modernisation or replacement of engines of the fishing boats. Measures like this will also contribute to the protection as well as restoration of aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems. Another specification comprises the promotion of a level playing field for the fishery as well as aquaculture products from the outermost regions. Furthermore, more effective fisheries control and enforcement, which also includes fighting against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, is a part of this priority. To ensure reliable data for knowledge-based decision-making, data has to be made available. The last specification focuses on adjusting the fishing capacity to fishing opportunities in the event of permanent cessation of fishing activities and contributing to an adequate standard of living in the event of temporary cessation of fishing activities.

Priority 2 – Foster sustainable aquaculture activities, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, thus contributing to food security in the Union: The second priority and its objectives aim at the promotion of long-term sustainable aquaculture activities as well as sustainable aquaculture production, while also strengthening the competitiveness of the production. Furthermore, promotion of marketing, quality, and added value of

fishery and aquaculture products and the processing of those is named.

Priority 3 – Enablement of actions that help enable a sustainable blue economy in coastal, island, and inland areas and promote the sustainable development of fishing and aquaculture communities: As outlined in this priority designation, with this Programme priority EMFAF wishes to support interventions that contribute to sustainable ocean governance of all sea basins. For the years 2022/23, priorities have already been set and encompass maritime spatial planning and the protection of marine ecosystems. Actions are expected to contribute to the European Green Deal, the new European Skills Agenda, the twin digital and green transition of the European economy as well as the Union Gender Equality strategy for 2020-2025. This shall support the establishment of a sustainable blue economy.

Priority 4 – Strengthening international ocean governance and promoting sustainable, safe, and clean management of the seas and oceans: Interventions are supported that contribute to priority 4 through the promotion of marine knowledge, maritime surveillance or coast guard cooperation.



Figure 10: Programme priorities of EMFAF

What's in it for the Wadden Sea World Heritage?

Sustainable tourism, nature conservation, and regional sustainable economy

With priority 3, EMFAF sets the objective to enable the growth of a sustainable blue economy. Examples of projects that are supported, in particular, are maritime policy decision-making for the sustainable coordination of human activities at sea (this can be achieved through maritime spatial planning) or the dissemination of marine and maritime environmental and socioeconomic data. For the years 2022/2023, the fund specifically wishes to fund maritime spatial planning cross-border cooperation projects which could prove relevant for projects focusing on the protection of the environment within the WSWH. Capacity building in the blue economy and hence, projects aiming at increasing capacities in e.g. economic sectors like sustainable tourism, could equally be of interest to this EMFAF programme priority. If initiatives would like to exploit opportunities to support the reorientation of fishers from regular fishing activities towards ocean regeneration activities (ocean farmers). The reduction of underwater noise, and other contaminants and pollutants could bear further opportunities for projects within the WSWH. These so-called ocean stressors could be monitored in the Wadden Sea by using Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments to attain good environmental status. Priority 3 also focuses on the protection of marine biodiversity and habitats in particular. This includes conservation actions in line with the Birds and Habitats Directives, and is further extended towards the improvement of maritime policies for marine environmental protection by engaging public authorities and promoting good practices. Furthermore, there is the possibility to receive funding for regional networks and partnerships that encompass various blue economy stakeholders, research institutes and/or citizen.

Specific requirements and opportunities:

Application process: To apply for EMFAF funds, it is necessary to first contact the national authority in charge of managing the programme in your country. Thereafter, specific application procedures will have to be followed to allow the managing authority to check the eligibility of your project. A list of contact points can be downloaded on the [EMFAF website](#).

Since the EMFAF is a rather small fund, every euro that gets invested in a project should generate much more especially in terms of collective benefits and the common good. Funding should support investment with a clear added value. These investments can address market failures or sub-optimal investment situations. Rather than duplicating or displacing private funding or creating distortions in competition, private investments should be facilitated.

The EMFAF direct management is mostly delegated to the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency ([CINEA](#)). The CINEA is responsible for launching and managing open [calls for proposals](#) and [calls for tenders](#). But there are more tasks that are managed by the CINEA like sharing best practices, managing innovative and cooperation projects or service requests among others.

5.10 European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

The [EAFRD](#) is one of two funds for the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union, with a financial volume of 95.5 billion EUR in the funding period 2021-2027. The vast majority of this budget falls under the shared management mechanism, where national or regional rural development programmes (RDP) are set up in the different Member States. Each RDP must work towards at least four of the six priorities of the EAFRD:

- fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
- enhancing the viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture, and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
- promoting food chain organisation, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
- promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift toward a low-carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
- restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
- promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

The EAFRD is distinct from other EU programmes in that there is a transition period (2021/2022) where existing rules from the 2014-2020 period have been extended until the new CAP is in place in 2023. The new regulations and programme requirements are not yet known at the time of writing of this guide and can therefore not be described in detail. The RDPs of the German, Danish and Dutch Wadden Sea regions that still apply in the transition period are listed in the following chapter on National and Sub-national Programmes.

One notable part of the Rural Development Programmes is LEADER, a bottom-up method for local development that is financed primarily by the EAFRD, but can also be implemented using ERDF, ESF or EMFAF funds. For the implementation of LEADER, RDPs foresee the formation of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in rural areas. Each LAG develops a local development strategy that is aligned with the respective RDP of the region or country. Funding is provided for small-scale projects and initiatives at the local level that contribute to the local development strategy. An interesting, but little-known aspect of LEADER that makes it interesting for the WSWH is that it allows and encourages also inter-territorial and transnational cooperation. LAGs from different Member States can plan and implement joint projects, where each LAG finances its activities from their own local development strategy budget. Usually, such transnational LEADER projects have very concrete objectives with a strong local impact. Examples of projects with relevance for the Wadden Sea Region could be the joint preparation of education material on biodiversity in the WSWH, the development of a sustainable tourism route including signing or cooperation between information centres.

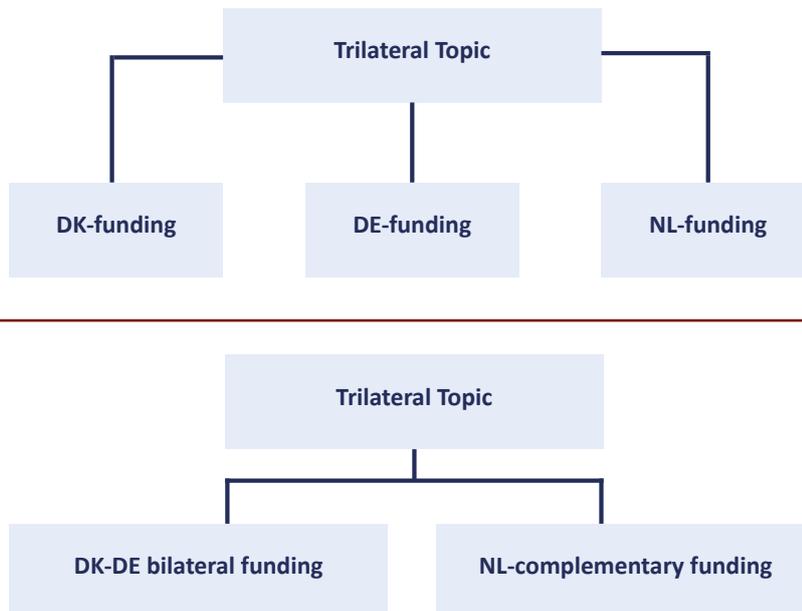
Information about LEADER, including a database of all LAGs and a very useful partner search database, can be found [here](#). A map on LEADER local action groups is available [here](#). It should be noted, however, that LEADER is also currently in the transition phase, during which new LAGs are created and new local development strategies are prepared.

6 National and Sub-national Funding Programmes and other funds

This section of the guide provides a review of relevant funding programmes at national and sub-national levels in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. Within each national context, there is a very wide range of potentially relevant funding programmes and those of government ministries and their agencies to private foundations with a local reach. National and sub-national funds can provide a very significant source of third-party funding for activities at the local level, particularly for those which lie outside the formal competences of public authorities. They can, however, also play a significant, if secondary, role

at the trilateral level, complementing international funding sources. National / subnational funding sources may also serve to complement bilateral funding (e.g. Interreg DE-DK or DE-NL programmes (Figure 11)). Positioning a locally or regionally focussed project within a wider international context may also prove strategically advantageous in developing a project proposal for a national funding programme. With respect to private philanthropic foundations, in particular, it is advisable to contact the funding body in advance of an application to discuss the degree of match with the foundation’s objectives.

Figure 11: Integrating national funding within a trilateral framework, two possible scenarios



The review of funding programmes presented here does not claim to be comprehensive. The scope of the review was dependent among other factors on the degree to which information is publicly available. In some cases, public authorities (e.g. national and regional ministries and their agencies) may provide important sources of additional funding. This may be on a case-by-case basis or through advertised programmes. We are, however, confident that the most relevant funding programmes within each national/regional context have been included. It

will become evident that the funding structures in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands are each distinct and follow their own logics. They are products of specific legal contexts and governance cultures. In the following we provide an overview of the national and subnational funding programmes / bodies in each national context. We provide examples of previously funded Wadden Sea projects which may be helpful in gaining more of an insight into the types of projects that are funded under specific programmes.

6.1 Denmark

Philanthropic foundations play a strong role in the Danish national funding landscape. The foundations listed below do not have a primary focus on nature conservation or protected area management. They do, however, have complementary objectives and may provide an important source of funding for local projects. The scale of operation varies considerably, from small-scale grants of €7000 or less to large scale

investment projects. The primary source of public funding comprises the Innovation Fund Denmark. This funding programme provides applied research and development funding focussed on the development of innovative solutions to societal challenges. Given the primary focus of the programme on economic development and competitiveness, relevance to the Wadden Sea may be limited.

Table 6: EAFRD Denmark

Funding Body		Scale of Operation	
EAFRD Denmark		€1.481 million (2014-2022)	
Funding Body	Types of action	Target applicants	Relevant thematic priorities
EAFRD (Denmark)	Nature Management, Network Building, Applied Research, Demonstrator, Innovation/ pre-commercial development	Research institutions, producers, entrepreneurs, public and private organisations	Green production, Nature Protection of habitats influenced by agriculture and forestry (reduction of agricultural emissions)

Table 7: Denmark National and Sub-national Funding Programmes

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
A.P. Moeller Foundation	Large-scale: €900 million from 2013-2019, a few hundred successful applications per year (various sizes)	Infrastructure, Capacity building, Demonstrator	Municipalities/ enterprises	thematic calls (e.g. Nordic Cohesion), maritime issues
Augustinus Foundation	Medium-scale: €44 million in 2020	Infrastructure, Capacity building, Demonstrator	Municipalities/ enterprises	Art, culture, minor focus on knowledge and education
Bevica Foundation	Small-scale: max. of 50,000 DKK per grant (less than €7000)	Infrastructure, Capacity building, Demonstrator	Municipalities/ enterprises	accessibility for people with mobility impairments

cont. Table 7: Denmark National and Sub-national Funding Programmes

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Friluftsradet / Outdoor Council	Medium-scale: most grants of €15,000 to €100,000	Nature management, Awareness-raising, Demonstrator	municipalities, NGOs, some funds restricted to member organisations	Outdoor recreation, environment and nature
Realdania	Large-scale	Infrastructure	Municipalities/enterprises	Environmental Sustainability
15. Juni Fonden	Small to medium scale, most projects less than €50,000	Applied research, Nature management, Awareness-raising	Private, NGOs, public authorities	Nature, climate, science, environment
Aage V. Jensen Foundation	Small to medium scale	Applied research, Fundamental research, Awareness-raising, Nature management	Mainly focused on own areas, private and NGOs, research institutes	Nature, environment
Nordea Fonden	Annual budget: about €67 million, mostly small grants of less than €50,000, plus investment	Infrastructure, Capacity building, Demonstrator, Nature management	Private, NGOs, public	Nature, culture, environment, youth, outdoor
Velux / Villum Foundations	annual budget: €244 million, small to large-scale	Applied research, Fundamental research, Education	Research Institutes / consortia, other public and private partners	clean seas, sustainable and low impact fisheries, marine ecosystem restoration
Novo-Nodisk Foundation (incl. Novo-LIFE)	annual budget: about €670 million per year	Applied research, Fundamental research, Education	Research Institutes / consortia, other public and private partners	sustainability, green transition, nature education and research

cont. Table 7: Denmark National and Sub-national Funding Programmes

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Miljø og Energifonden	Small grants, typically less than €10,000	Innovation/ pre-commercial development	SMEs	Renewable energy and environmental protection
BJH Foundation	Annual budget of €470 million, small to medium-scale	Nature management, Citizen engagement	Community groups, NGOs, SMEs (focus on southern Jutland)	Thematically open
Innovation Fund Denmark	Large-scale, €924 million since 2014	Applied research, Innovation/ pre-commercial development	Businesses and researchers	Innovative solutions to society's challenges, climate, environment, green innovation, rural development

Table 8: Examples of nationally / sub-nationally funded projects in Denmark

Funding Body / Programme	Project	Recipient Organisation	Year of Grant	Value of Grant
Nordea Fonden	Welcome to Wadden Sea National Park	Wadden Sea National Park	2019	almost €2 million
A.P. Moeller, Augustinus, Bevica	Wadden Sea Centre at Vester Vedsted	Wadden Sea Centre	various years	
Friluftsradet – national lottery funding	Nature Guidance Across Borders	Tonder municipality		Approx. €50,000
Realdania	Wadden Sea National Park Gateway, Rømø dam	Wadden Sea National Park	2017	Approx. €330,000

6.2 The Netherlands

The Wadden Funds represents the most significant source of funding for Wadden Sea related initiatives in the Netherlands. This fund was established in 2007 following an agreement to allow for gas extraction at the island of Ameland. The funds are jointly administered by the provinces of North Holland, Fryslân and Groningen. The fund invests in initiatives and projects which strengthen both ecology of the Wadden Sea, and support sustainable economic development of the Wadden region. The Wadden Funds also contribute to the Wadden Region Investment Framework. The Programme for a Rich

Wadden Sea follows a distinct model. It acts as a platform and catalyst for project implementation, itself receiving funding from multiple public sector sources. The Wadden Academy constitutes a platform for Wadden Sea research activities. Small grants for certain research networking and coordination activities may be available from the Wadden Academy. In general, a higher degree of governmental steering is found in the Dutch context. At the same time, considerable emphasis is placed on collaborative working among public authorities, NGOs, businesses and local communities.

Table 9: EAFRD The Netherlands

Funding Body		Scale of Operation	
EAFRD The Netherlands		€2.08 billion (2014-2022)	
Funding Body	Types of action	Target applicants	Relevant thematic priorities
EAFRD (Province Fryslân)	Nature management, Infrastructure	Landowners, Land users, Farmers, Agricultural organisations, Nature and landscape organisations, Provinces, a partnership of the above parties	Preservation and strengthening of biodiversity and the quality of the environment, with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture, Nature Protection through non-productive hydrological measures with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture
EAFRD (Province Groningen)	Nature management, Infrastructure	Farmers, partnerships between agricultural businesses, water boards, municipalities, agricultural nature associations, companies and research and knowledge institutions	Preservation and strengthening of biodiversity and the quality of the environment, with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture, Nature Protection through non-productive hydrological measures with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture
EAFRD (North Holland)	Nature management, Infrastructure	Farmers, nature and landscape associations Governments, including water associations and cooperating organisations	Preservation and strengthening of biodiversity and the quality of the environment, with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture, Nature Protection through non-productive hydrological measures with a demonstrated direct link to agriculture

Table 10: The Netherlands National and Sub-national Funding Programmes

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Wadden Funds	600 million total volume: 2007-2027, Small and medium size grants €5000 - €1,000,000	Applied research, Demonstrator, Awareness-raising, Nature management	Small businesses, municipalities, communities	Nature; Water, soil, light and sound; World Heritage, Cultural History and Landscape Development; Sustainable tourism and recreation; Renewable energy; sustainable Wadden ports
Wadden Region Investment Framework (Investeringskader Wadden-gebied)	Large grants of €500,000 to €10 million, funding from Wadden Fonds	Infrastructure, Capacity building, Brand promotion	Provinces, municipalities, public authorities	Wadden Sea ecosystem, Vital coast, port development and nature improvement, independent islands, World Heritage promotion, Ems-Dollard in balance
Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea⁵	Medium and large-scale projects	Applied research, Demonstrator, Awareness-raising, Capacity building	Provinces, municipalities, public authorities, SMEs, NGOs	Ecosystem protection and restoration, improved social and ecological connections between Wadden Sea and hinterland, coastal protection, biodiversity
Delta Plan for Biodiversity Recovery (Samen voor Biodiversiteit Innovatie Fonds)	€200,000 annual budget (2021) small grants - max. €25,000	Nature management, Awareness-raising, Demonstrator	Communities, local businesses, municipalities, public authorities	Biodiversity restoration, collaborative land management

⁵ Note: the Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea will come to a close in 2022.

cont. Table 10: The Netherlands National and Sub-national Funding Programmes

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Regio Deals	€950 million provided by central government 2018-2022	Infrastructure, Capacity-building, Demonstrator	Public authorities, provinces	Sustainable regional development / transformation
Wadden Academy	Approx. €1.2 million per year	Fundamental research, Applied research, Education	Research institutes, universities	Nature conservation, regional development, landscape and cultural heritage

Table 11: Examples of nationally / sub-nationally funded projects in the Netherlands

Funding Body / Programme	Project	Recipient Organisation	Value of Grant
Wadden Funds	“One with the Natural Environment” (Sustainable tourism accommodation)	Puur Teerschelling (touristic SME)	€268,544
Wadden Funds	“Rest for Birds, Space for People” (new breeding sites and bird-watching posts)	Vogelbescherming Nederland	€3,485,247
Wadden Region Investment Framework	Demo-Project: Combined Residual Heat Pipeline Bio-Economy	Groningen Seaports N.V.	€1,865,441
Wadden Region Investment Framework	Marketing the Wadden Sea World Heritage	Merk Fryslân	€ 2,893,500
Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea	Recovery Project and Awareness of the Natural Dynamics of Island Spits	Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea	

6.3 Germany

In Germany, we also find a wide range of funding bodies and programmes from a diverse set of organisations. Some foundations (Stiftungen) are specific to one federal state (e.g. Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein or Hamburg). Others operate

at a national or supra-regional level. Most relevant foundations are either founded according to public law or according to private law but acting in the general interest⁶.

⁶ Stiftung des öffentlichen Rechts, gemeinnützige Stiftungen des bürgerlichen Rechts

Table 12: EAFRD Germany

Funding Body		Scale of Operation	
EAFRD Germany		13,18 billion (2014-2022)	
Funding Body	Types of action	Target applicants	Relevant thematic priorities
EAFRD (Lower Saxony - PFEIL)	Nature management, Policy improvement, Network building	Owner of agricultural businesses, national park authorities, nature conservation authorities/ associations, regional authorities, foundations	Nature Protection of habitats influenced by agriculture and forestry (reduction of agricultural emissions, protection of species and habitats, esp Natura 2000), Development and improvement of management plans (Natura 2000, etc.), Development of networks for nature protection
EAFRD (Schleswig-Holstein)	Nature management, Coastal protection, Network building	Owner of agricultural businesses, national park authorities, nature conservation authorities/ associations, regional authorities, foundations	Nature Protection of habitats influenced by agriculture and forestry (reduction of agricultural emissions, protection of species and habitats, esp Natura 2000), Development of networks for nature and coastal protection

Table 13: National / supra-regional funding programmes in Germany

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt	current capital volume: €2.33 billion, medium to large-scale projects	Applied research, Demonstrator, Capacity building	Focus on SMEs, also NGOs, universities, research institutes	environmental protection, nature conservation, biodiversity, climate change
Umweltbundesamt	medium to large-scale projects	Applied research, Demonstrator, Awareness-raising	Universities, research institutes, public authorities, NGOs	environmental protection, nature conservation, biodiversity, climate change
Bundesamt für Naturschutz	medium to large-scale projects	Applied research, Nature management	Universities, research institutes, NGOs	nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape
Ingrid und Wilfried Hoppe Stiftung Naturschutz	small-scale projects	Applied research, Nature management, Awareness-raising	NGOs, public authorities	nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape

Table 14: Funding Programmes in Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Nationalparkstiftung Schleswig-Holstein	overall budget: c. €250,000 in 2021, small to medium size projects (€5000 - over €200,000)	Nature management, Awareness-raising, Applied research	NGOs, local authorities	nature conservation, interpretation / education
Stiftung Naturschutz Schleswig-Holstein	small-scale projects: average of approx €20,000	Nature management, Demonstrator	NGOs, local authorities	nature conservation
Bingo! Projektförderung	small-scale projects	Nature management, Awareness-raising	NGOs	nature conservation, interpretation / education, sustainable regional development
ILE Ländliche Entwicklung (Integrated rural development funds), Schleswig-Holstein	medium-scale (€100,000 to €750,000) per project	Infrastructure	Local authorities, public authorities	provision of basic infrastructure and services for rural areas, including education initiatives and infrastructure in national parks
Michael-Otto Stiftung Hamburg	small to medium scale projects	Demonstrator, Nature management, Awareness-raising	NGOs, municipalities, voluntary engagement is an important criterion	nature conservation, education, dialogue, awareness, engagement with young people

Table 15: Funding Programmes in Lower Saxony

Funding Body	Scale of Operation	Types of Action	Target Applicants	Relevant Thematic Priorities
Nieder-sächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung	annual budget (€5.6 million - 2020), small-scale projects - average c. €9,000	Demonstrator, Nature management, Awareness-raising	NGOs, municipalities, voluntary engagement is an important criterion	nature conservation, biodiversity, interpretation / education, nature experience, specific focus on ecological restoration in Ems-Dollart region
Nieder-sächsische Wattenmeerstiftung	small and medium size projects	Applied research, Demonstrator, Nature management	NGOs, municipalities, SMEs	nature conservation, biodiversity, interpretation / education, renewable energy, energy efficiency
Naturschutzstiftung Friesland Wittmund Wilhelmshaven	small-scale projects	Applied research, Demonstrator, Nature management	NGOs	nature conservation, biodiversity, landscape

Table 16: Examples of previously funded projects in Germany

Funding Body / Programme	Project	Recipient Organisation	Year of Grant
Umweltbundesamt	Wattfossilfrei – Supporting the transition of recreational shipping to fossil-free fuels	Mellumrat e.V. Naturschutz- und Forschungsgemeinschaft	2021
Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt	development of cross-sectoral and cross-stakeholder concepts for sustainable shipping in the trilateral Wadden Sea	Wadden Sea Forum	2021
Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt	from marine research to the national park houses: development, testing and implementation of new environmental education offers	University of Oldenburg	2016
Ingrid und Wilfried Hoppe-Stiftung Naturschutz	Visitor management to protect endangered beach nesting birds	Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park	2012
Nationalparkstiftung Schleswig-Holstein	Control of the rat population on the islands and halligs	Schutzstation Wattenmeer	2022
Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung	Virtual Reality Film - Wadden Sea ecosystem	Nationalpark-Haus Dornumersiel	2019
Naturschutzstiftung Friesland Wittmund Wilhelmshaven	International youth camps (annual event) on Wangerooge	Internationale Jugendgemeinschaftsdienste e.V. (IJGD)	annual event, 2010-2021

Part C - Matching



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7 Matching Programmes and Topics

European Funding Programmes

The table below provides an overview on matching European funding programmes and the Trilateral WSWH partnership priority topics; the darker the shade of blue, the greater the match. The LIFE, Horizon Europe and INTERREG North Sea Region programmes provide a high degree of match in relation to nature conservation. There is, however, considerable variation between the funding programmes, in terms of how nature conservation issues are addressed. For example, projects focussed on local-scale practical nature conservation measures will be better suited to the LIFE programme than Horizon Europe. Regional sustainable development themes will, in

most cases find suitable funding options within the Interreg programmes and to a lesser extent within other programmes. The degree to which project objectives can be oriented towards supporting the achievement of the trilateral WSWH partnership objectives is variable. Opportunities for funding international cooperation beyond the Wadden Sea region are comparatively limited, at least within the scope of the European programmes reviewed here. Opportunities may, however, be found within the Horizon Europe programme. Here it is also possible to include partners from outside of Europe (e.g. in West Africa). It may also be possible under Interreg

Table 17: European funding sources matched with Wadden Sea WH topics

	Interreg A: DE-DK	Interreg A: DE-NL	Interreg B: NSR	Interreg B: NWE	Interreg C: Europe	Horizon Europe	LIFE	Erasmus+	EMFAF	LEADER (EAFRD)
1. Nature Conservation										
2. Regional sustainable development in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage										
3. International cooperation beyond the Wadden Sea Region										
4. Education and interpretation										
5. Governance and WH Brand Management										

B (e.g. NSR) to combine / link with activities outside of Europe. There may also be opportunities to fund international cooperation or knowledge exchange between the Wadden Sea and other protected areas within Europe (e.g. coastal National parks) under Interreg North Sea or, Interreg Northwest Europe or indeed, Interreg Europe. Funding for education and interpretation activities is possible via a number of programmes. Nature education / interpretation activities may form part of a project under the various Interreg programmes (in particular Interreg A). For more specific educational activities, and in particular, those involving institutes of higher education, ERASMUS+ may be the preferred option. Opportunities to address governance and WH brand management issues are found primarily within the Interreg North Sea Region programme. Some aspects (e.g. staff exchange and training) may be possible to fund within the Erasmus+ programme. Broader marine governance issues (e.g. related to sustainable fisheries management or the role of the Wadden Sea within the context of ecosystem-based marine spatial planning) could be funded from within the EMFAF programme. The table below, provides an overview of the degree of match between funding

programme and action type. A higher score (darker colour) indicates a closer match. This represents an assessment on the basis of information currently available. The purpose is to provide an orientation for those seeking to initiate a project in this context. Note, infrastructure projects are generally not eligible for funding under the programmes considered here. Actions and measures related to infrastructure provision (particularly concerning blue and green infrastructure) may be funded through the LIFE or, in some cases, the Interreg programmes. Each individual project is likely to include a combination of action types. From this perspective, it is important strategically, to decide at an early stage where the primary emphasis lies, both in terms of topic and type of action and to select a funding programme accordingly. Please note that we have not included governance as an additional category within this matching exercise. The following action types taken together, reflect key aspects of WSWH governance activities: Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices, Capacity building, Policy improvement, Brand building/brand improvement, Citizen engagement / citizen science, Brand building/brand improvement.

Table 18: Matching of European funding programmes and action types

	Interreg DE-DK	Interreg DE-NL	Interreg NSR	Interreg NWE	Interreg Europe	Horizon Europe	LIFE	Erasmus+	EMFAF	LEADER (EAFRD)
Fundamental research						Dark Blue		Medium Blue		
Applied research	Light Blue	Light Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue		Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue		
Innovation / pre-commercial development	Light Blue	Light Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue				Light Blue
Demonstrator	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue		Light Blue		Light Blue
Network building	Dark Blue		Dark Blue	Dark Blue			Light Blue	Dark Blue		Medium Blue
Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue		Medium Blue
Capacity building	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue		Light Blue
Policy implementation	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue		Medium Blue	
Policy improvement					Dark Blue	Dark Blue				
Brand building / improvement	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue			Medium Blue		Dark Blue
Mobility								Dark Blue		
Education	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue	Light Blue		Dark Blue		Medium Blue
People to People	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue		Dark Blue		Dark Blue
Citizen engagement / Citizen science	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue			Medium Blue
Awareness raising	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue				Medium Blue
Nature management	Light Blue	Light Blue	Dark Blue	Medium Blue	Medium Blue	Dark Blue	Dark Blue	Light Blue		Medium Blue
Infrastructure										

National Funding Programmes

The table below provides a comparative overview of the national / subnational funding programmes that might be most suitable for pursuing a project under the five topics. The funding programmes have been identified based on the analysis presented in Chapter 6, including

a review of relevant previously funded projects. A higher resolution matching at the level of sub-topics (within each topic) is not practicable, given the degree of information available on the funding bodies in question and the relatively broad scope of their activities.

Table 19: National funding sources matched with Wadden Sea WH topics

	Denmark	Netherlands	Germany
1. Nature Conservation	Friluftsradet / Outdoor Council, 15. Juni Fonden, Aage V. Jensen Foundation, Nordea Fonden, BJH Foundation, EAFRD	Wadden Funds, Delta Plan for Biodiversity Recovery, Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea, EAFRD	Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Umweltbundesamt, Ingrid und Wilfried Hoppe-Stiftung Naturschutz, Nationalparkstiftung SH, Stiftung Naturschutz SH, Michael Otto Stiftung, Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung, Niedersächsische Wattenmeerstiftung, Naturschutzstiftung Friesland Wittmund Wilhelmshaven, EAFRD
2. Regional sustainable development in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage	A.P. Moeller Foundation, Realdania, 15. Juni Fonden, Nordea Fonden, Novo-Nodisk Foundation, BJH Foundation, Innovation Fund Denmark, EAFRD	Wadden Funds, Wadden Region Investment Framework, Regio Deals, EAFRD	Umweltbundesamt, ILE Ländliche Entwicklung (SH), Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung, EAFRD
3. International cooperation beyond the Wadden Sea Region			
4. Education and interpretation	Augustinus Foundation, Aage V. Jensen Foundation, Velux / Villum Foundations, Friluftsradet / Outdoor Council	Wadden Academy, Wadden Funds, Programme for a Rich Wadden Sea	Nationalpark-stiftung Schleswig-Holstein, Michael Otto Stiftung, Niedersächsische Wattenmeerstiftung, Niedersächsische Bingo-Umweltstiftung
5. Governance and WH Brand Management	EAFRD	Wadden Region Investment Framework	EAFRD

8 Matching Scenarios

Scenario 1: Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is both an important economic factor for the North Sea coastal regions and a potential threat to the sensitive Wadden Sea ecosystem. The challenge at hand is to balance tourism activities and nature protection to achieve both economic and ecologic sustainability. On the flipside, sustainable tourism that not only has minimal effects on greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity, but also valorises and brings to public attention the natural and cultural heritage of the region as wealth as health and

well-being potentials can be a positive factor for regional development without compromising nature protection. Sustainable tourism is a broad field that needs to be broken down into smaller parts to assess which action fits into which programme. The following table sets possible activities and objectives of future sustainable tourism projects (that were brought up in a workshop by WSWH stakeholders) into relation with corresponding types of action and funding options:

Table 20: Activities, actions and funding opportunities for sustainable tourism

Potential project activities / objectives	Types of action	Most suitable funding opportunities
Develop a framework for multi-stakeholder involvement	Network building	Interreg NSR, SO 4.1 or 3.2 Interreg DE-DK, Priority 3
Enhance cross-sector cooperation (e.g. public authorities, nature conservation NGOs, hospitality sector, tourism stakeholders and health sector)		
Awareness raising for visitors, improving visitor guidance	Awareness-raising / Education	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 3 Interreg NSR, SO 3.2 or 4.1 Interreg NWE, SO 4.6
Piloting nature-oriented tourism offers such as whale or seal watching boat trips	Demonstrator / Innovation/ pre-commercial development	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 3 Interreg NSR, 1.1 (if they have demonstration character)
Study socio-economic interdependencies of climate change, tourism and culture	Applied research	Horizon Europe – if a suitable call e.g. in cluster 6 comes up in a future work programme
Improve monitoring of tourism impacts	Applied research / Capacity building / Policy improvement	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 3 Interreg NSR, SO 3.2 Interreg NWE, SO 4.6 Horizon Europe, cluster 6
Evaluate and update sustainable tourism strategy	Policy improvement	Interreg NSR, SO 4.1 (Interreg NWE, SO 4.6 – not for whole WSWH) Interreg Europe (only in cooperation with other EU regions)
Development of measures for sustainability, certification for real sustainable tourism offers		Interreg NSR, SO 1.2 Interreg DE-DK, Priority 3 Interreg NWE, SO 4.6
Research into how nature benefits health	Fundamental research / Applied research	Horizon Europe – if a suitable call e.g. in cluster 6 comes up in a future work programme

Possible matches with funding programmes

Applicants in the field of sustainable tourism may find the following funding programmes to be suitable for their project ideas (programmes are ranked by suitability in terms of thematic fit, geographic coverage, complexity and competition level).

Option 1: Interreg North Sea Region

In the North Sea Region Programme, sustainable tourism is not the subject of a specific priority. It can, however, be addressed in projects funded under various programme priorities:

Under priority 1, activities that aim to support the generation of innovation in the tourism sector (with particular focus on SME) and to build capacities for innovation, digitalisation and intersectoral cooperation among tourism actors could be supported. Setting sustainability standards for tourism offers and raising the knowledge of, for example, SME in the hospitality sector to develop and implement such offers, would seem to fit well in this mould. It is important that in this programme, it is not enough to support one-off cases of innovation and individual actors – instead, approaches and solutions should be transferable and connected to the overall innovation ecosystem. Fundamental research is also not supported in this priority.

Under priority 3, projects that assess and mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on ecosystems may be supported. Multi-stakeholder participatory processes in which public authorities work with various interest groups including the tourism and recreation sector and nature conservation to find measures that reduce the ecological footprint of tourism would seem to fit as well.

Finally, the resolution of conflicts of interest of the tourism and recreation sector with other sectors (including nature conservation) may be addressed in projects funded under Priority 4. Since the focus of this priority is on long-term multi-level governance networks and mechanisms rather than on piloting practical solutions, the development or update of sustainable tourism strategies and trans-sectoral multi-stakeholder networks could be supported here.

The North Sea Region Programme offers the best geographic coverage for projects related to the WSWH, a broad range of types of actions and partners and favourable financial conditions.

Option 2: Interreg Germany-Denmark

Sustainable tourism projects can be funded under Priority 3 – “An attractive region”. The programme aims to better exploit the natural potentials of the programme area (located between the North and Baltic Sea), but also highlights the role of culture and sustainable tourism for economic development (especially recovery from COVID-19), social inclusion and social innovation. Any proposal in this programme should consider these aspects alongside the ecologic sustainability of “gentle tourism”.

In principle, all of the activities and types of action listed above (except fundamental research) are eligible in Interreg Germany-Denmark, but the programme is especially suitable for hands-on projects with strong impact at the local level. As a cross-border programme, Interreg Germany-Denmark allows not only for network building, exchange of experience and capacity building among tourism actors but also for the development and marketing of tangible products such as cross-border-tourism packages or innovative touristic offers. Unlike in other Interreg programmes, these products do not necessarily have to have demonstrator character. Direct involvement of tourism actors such as destination managers or enterprises is possible in this programme. From what is known about the programme priorities, the Interreg Germany-Denmark programme offers the most flexibility when it comes to sustainable tourism activities. The main drawback is that only a limited part of the WSWH site (Region South Denmark and County of Nordfriesland) is covered by the Programme area. Moreover, projects are comparatively small in size.

Option 3: Interreg Europe

The Interreg Europe programme with its focus on policy improvement would, in principle, allow for only one specific option: a project in which WSWH actors cooperate with world heritage sites or other protected areas in other parts of Europe on the topic of better integration of sustainable tourism objectives into regional development policies, e.g. regional or national ERDF programmes. Cooperation of actors only from the Wadden Sea region is not possible in this programme.

Option 4: Interreg North West Europe

In its priority 5, Interreg NWE takes up the same policy objective as the Interreg Germany-Denmark programme: “Enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation”. Actions that develop

and promote sustainable tourism (which here explicitly includes environmental aspects such as eco-friendlier and “slow” approaches or sustainable access and mobility modes), are supported, and the programme expects projects to better embed sustainable tourism into territorial strategies and local initiatives. Based on this explicit mentioning of sustainable tourism, the Interreg NWE programme would have ranked higher if not for the geographic scope that is limited to the Dutch and part of the German Wadden Sea areas. Unlike in a cross-border programme, projects have to involve partners from at least three countries, so participation of at least one partner from outside the trilateral WS cooperation would be necessary or cross-border Wadden Sea related activities would have to be embedded into a larger transnational project framework.

Option 5: EMFAF

In its priority 3, the EMFAF intends to announce call for proposals related to a sustainable blue economy (which coastal tourism is a part of) in coastal, island

and inland areas and fostering the development of fishing and aquaculture communities, coordinated under direct management by CINEA (European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency). The work programme for 2022/2023 includes a forthcoming call on “Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy and promotion of healthy seas and oceans”, under which projects that support the transition to more sustainability in specific blue economy value chains will be supported, as will regional networks and partnerships involving various blue economy stakeholders, research institutes and citizens. This call will be open to non-profit organisations, public authorities, universities, educational institutions, research centres and enterprises. As long as the exact provisions of the call are not known, it is difficult to assess to what degree projects on sustainable tourism may be supported. The forthcoming blue economy window calls may be relevant for SME that want to bring innovative products or services in the field of sustainable tourism closer to the market.

Scenario 2: Nature-friendly energy transition

In the frame of the European Green Deal and the European Climate Pact, an environmentally sound energy transition, the promotion and sustainable use of renewable energy and the further improvement of techniques, services and grid infrastructure is core. At the same time, the negative impacts of the expansion of the renewable energy sector on air quality, ecosystems and biodiversity need to be monitored and reduced. This particularly applies to the North Sea with its expanding off-shore wind energy installations and grid infrastructure located adjacent to, and in some cases crossing the sensitive Wadden Sea ecosystem (e.g. cabling). For the trilateral WSWH Partnership, this comes with the challenge

of reviewing, monitoring and mitigating potential negative impacts of renewable energy production and infrastructure on the Wadden Sea ecosystem. The promotion of an environmentally sound energy transition aiming at the sustainable use of natural resources while preserving the health of ecosystems is a broad field that may be processed by diverse action fields, such as maritime spatial planning or the development of new and smart technologies and methods. The following table sets possible activities and objectives of future projects of the trilateral WSWH partnership into relation with corresponding types of action and funding options:

Table 21: Activities, actions and funding opportunities for nature-friendly energy transition

Potential project activities / objectives	Types of action	Most suitable funding opportunities
Develop a framework for multi-stakeholder involvement	Network building	Interreg NSR, Priority 2, 3, 4.1 Interreg DE-DK, Priority 2 Interreg DE-NL, Priority 2 LIFE Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition
Enhance cross-sector cooperation (e.g. public authorities, nature conservation NGOs, energy sector, local communities)		
Promoting clean energy and blue economy	Awareness-raising / Education / Capacity building	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 2 Interreg DE-NL, Priority 2 Interreg NSR, Priority 2, 3 Horizon, Cluster 5 LIFE, Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition
Monitoring the current impacts of renewable energy production on the environment	Applied research	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 2 Interreg NSR, Priority 2, 3
Develop, test and deploy methods and technologies for environmental monitoring and improved management of marine ecosystems (e.g. ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning)	Demonstrator / Applied research / Fundamental research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	Interreg NSR, Priority 3, 4.1 Horizon, Cluster 6 LIFE, Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition
Develop and test effective, efficient and sustainable solutions for transporting offshore energy (e.g. blue economy)	Demonstrator / Applied research / Fundamental research / Innovation/ pre-commercial development	Interreg DE-DK, Priority 2 Interreg DE-NL, Priority 2 Interreg NSR, Priority 2, 3 Horizon, Cluster 5
Develop and improve national, regional and local policy framework supporting clean energy transition	Policy improvement	LIFE, Sub-programme Clean Energy Transition

Possible matches with funding programmes

Applicants in the field of nature-friendly energy transition may find the following funding programmes to be suitable for their project ideas (programmes are ranked by suitability in terms of thematic fit, geographic coverage, complexity and competition level).

Option 1: Interreg North Sea Region

Under Priority 3, specific objective 3.2, the programme supports actions that improve the sustainable management of marine ecosystems. In this context, the programme supports specific actions that are part of the operational follow-up of EU marine policies, strategies and environmental conventions such as OSPAR, for which transnational cooperation between authorities working on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive must be considered. With regard to the field of nature-friendly energy transition, actions under SO 3.2 may include the development, testing and deployment of new methods and technologies for environmental monitoring and management, the implementation of environmental measures or the strengthening of methods to align offshore renewable energy production with the protection and needs of marine ecosystems. The use of participatory processes, multi-stakeholder approaches and actions, such as capacity building, awareness raising and exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices are obligatory elements of transnational projects in this programme.

Priority 2, specific objective 2.2, puts exploitation of offshore wind energy at the centre of actions. While the overarching aim is on promoting renewable energy to achieve climate-neutrality by 2050, the programme also calls for projects to consider challenges and conflicting interests triggered by the expansion of renewable energy and to find sustainable solutions – in particular, in marine protected areas. This may include monitoring and assessment of impacts of renewable energy production on the Wadden Sea ecosystem or knowledge exchange on e.g. good practices for environmentally-sound planning, constructing and operating high voltage power cables traversing the Wadden Sea. Moreover, Priority 4 supports the development of multi-level governance networks and mechanisms that could be used to counterbalance conflicting interests between different stakeholders and sectors and to

develop or update management strategies of marine ecosystems.

The North Sea Region Programme offers the best geographic coverage for projects related to the WSWH, a broad range of types of actions and partners and favourable financial conditions.

Option 2: Interreg Germany-Denmark, Interreg Germany-Netherlands

Projects with a focus on environmentally sound energy transition can be funded under Priority “A green Region” (Interreg DE-DK) and under Priority “A Greener Programme Area” (Interreg DE-NL). While the further development of the renewable energy sector, investments in blue and green economy and the creation of jobs is core, both programmes also aim to counterbalance pressures on the ecosystem arising from human activities, such as the further promotion and exploration of renewable energy sources, taking ecosystem-based approaches into consideration. This may include the monitoring of current impacts of renewable energy production on the environment or the development, testing and demonstrating of mitigation and adaptation strategies to build up resilience of ecosystems.

Besides network building, exchange of experience and capacity building, e.g. among public authority actors and site-managers, the development of innovative and sustainable solutions for transporting off-shore energy in cooperation with the local energy sector is also possible. Both programmes cover only a limited part of the WSWH site and projects are comparatively small in size.

Option 3: Horizon Europe

Within Horizon Europe, the topic of environmental sound energy transition is covered by two clusters with different focuses.

Cluster 5 addresses the energy sector as a substantial global growth market. With the overall aim to achieve climate neutrality and zero-pollution, this cluster aims at fostering the development of technical and digitalised solutions and services via fundamental and applied research and innovation actions. The main goal of transnational projects shall be on developing, testing and upscaling innovative, cost-efficient and smart technologies that provide cleaner energy, coping with intermittence and energy storage issues, and smarter connection of industrial installations to the energy system.

Cluster 6 addresses nature conservation and biodiversity strategy goals, thus focusing mainly on the conservation and restoration of degraded or pressurised ecosystems, and on halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functions. This may include the development, testing and EU-wide up-scaling of methods and technologies for environmental monitoring as well as the improvement of management schemes and planning processes of marine ecosystems, such as the WSWH. Transnational projects could develop or improve innovative and cost-efficient observation and monitoring methods and technologies and/or risk assessment tools and models supporting ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning processes for practitioners and policy decision makers.

Projects within Horizon Europe have a wide geographical scope that goes beyond the trilateral WSWH Partnership and that calls out for an involvement of a multitude of stakeholders across sectors and disciplines.

Option 4: LIFE, Sub-Programme Clean Energy Transition

The LIFE sub-programme Clean Energy Transition aims at supporting the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of policies on the transition to

sustainable renewable energy or increased energy efficiency. While a strong focus is on building up organisational networks fostering best practice exchange on innovative techniques and services, business models and financial schemes, and enhancing capacity building of public and private actors to overcome market barriers and mobilise investments in clean energy, the sub-programme also promotes a multi-stakeholder and governance related dialogue between public authorities at all levels and both on national/regional as well as EU level to align the clean energy transition with other relevant EU-plans and strategies. For the trilateral WSWH Partnership, this may open up opportunities to introduce nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and environmental objectives into national, regional and local policy and planning processes.

A significant part of the sub-programme budget for 2021-2024 will be used to finance coordination and support actions across Europe with the aim to promote governance coherence, enhance stakeholder dialogues and foster knowledge exchange and capacity building. Activities such as technology development or research and innovation for clean energy transition are not being targeted.

Scenario 3: Climate Change Adaptation in Nature Conservation

Climate change represents a key challenge to the Wadden Sea ecosystem. The capacity of the various components of the Wadden Sea ecosystem to adapt to rising sea-levels, warmer water and air temperatures and other projected impacts is the subject of ongoing research. Previous projects have

examined the role of nature-based solutions. In order to progress this theme at the trilateral level, projects with applied research and demonstration focus, as well as those focussed on an exchange of good practices may be suitable.

Table 22: Activities, actions and funding opportunities for climate change adaptation in nature conservation

Potential project activities / objectives	Types of action	Most suitable funding opportunities
Assess the potential for ecological adaptation at the Wadden Sea and its implications for biodiversity and ecosystem integrity	Applied research / Fundamental research	LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity Horizon Cluster 6
Develop and test mechanisms for mitigating the impacts of sea-level rise (e.g. sediment deficit) through nature-based solutions	Demonstrator / Applied research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	LIFE Sub-Programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.1 3.2
Pilot nature-based solutions for ecosystem-based coastal management and assess the scope for synergies with nature conservation objectives	Demonstrator / Applied research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	LIFE Sub-Programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.1, 3.2
Assess the value of Wadden Sea salt-marshes and mudflats as carbon sinks and the implications for Wadden Sea conservation	Applied research / Fundamental research	LIFE Sub-Programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Horizon Cluster 6

Possible matches with funding programmes

Applicants in the field of Climate Change Adaptation in Nature Conservation may find the following funding programmes to be suitable for their project ideas (programmes are ranked by suitability in terms of thematic fit, geographic coverage, complexity and competition level).

Option 1: LIFE, Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity

The LIFE Sub-programme on Nature and Biodiversity provides a strong match for this theme. The objectives of the sub-programme include support for the “implementation, monitoring and enforcement” of the relevant EU legislation and policy on or related to nature and biodiversity, as well as the development of innovative measures (including nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based

approaches) which contribute to EU environmental objectives. The LIFE Programme has an explicit focus on sites designated under the Birds and Habitats Directives but also applies to other areas of the WSWH. Involvement of public and private actors and civil society is encouraged. Funding may take various forms including Standard Action Projects (SAPs), with a focus on area-based conservation and restoration measures and Strategic Nature Projects (SNAPs), as detailed in chapter 5.

Note that climate change adaptation is not a specific focus of this Sub-Programme. Consequently, applications would need to focus on biodiversity and nature conservation with climate change adaptation as an area of focus within this broader context.

Option 2: LIFE, Sub-Programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

This LIFE Sub-programme also provides a very strong match. One area of intervention is particularly relevant: “Support the rollout of viable nature-based solutions in the management of land, coastal and marine areas including through assessments, guidance, capacity building, and suitable financial approaches and products”.

Which of the above LIFE Sub-Programmes will be most suitable, will depend on the objectives and orientation of the project proposal, as indicated in Table 19 above.

Option 3: Interreg North Sea Region

Opportunities to fund this theme are found under the following Specific Objectives:

- SO 3.1: Promoting climate change adaptation and disaster risk prevention, resilience, taking into account eco-system based approaches;
- SO 3.2: Enhancing protection and preservation of nature, biodiversity, and green infrastructure, including in urban areas, and reducing all forms of pollution.

In line with the North Sea Commission’s 2030 Climate Adaptation Strategy, the Interreg NSR Programme under SO 3.1 calls for climate adaptation and

water (including coastal) management issues to be addressed jointly through transnational cooperation efforts. Investigations of nature-based solutions for coasts and estuaries may be funded under this specific objective. The programme text, however, states explicitly that “actions promoting nature protection, biodiversity and green infrastructure... must apply under... priority 3, specific objective 2” (SO 3.2).

SO 3.2 has a stronger focus on nature conservation and biodiversity. Here it is recommended that projects focus on, or calibrate their objectives in relation to the achievement and maintenance of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. It may be assumed that climate change will impact on the ability an ecosystem to achieve or maintain GES and also that potential adaptation measures (such as sand nourishment) will negatively impact on GES, whether within the boundaries of the WSWH or beyond. The Interreg NSR programme will under SO 3.2 fund measures that support “the long-term sustainable protection and restoration of marine biodiversity... environmentally protected areas”. The WSWH Trilateral Partnership is in a strong position to avail of such funding.

The North Sea Region Programme offers the best geographic coverage for projects related to the WSWH, a broad range of types of actions and partners and favourable financial conditions.

Option 4: Horizon Europe

The cluster 6 (Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture & Environment) specifically references climate change impacts on ecosystems and natural resources, including biodiversity and marine resources. Biodiversity recovery is a core objective of this cluster (among many others) as is the ‘balanced development’ of coastal areas.

Applications under Horizon Europe would need to respond to thematic calls when they are announced, would require a strong research component and require multiple additional partners from across Europe. Applications to this programme require a substantial commitment of resources over a longer period time (often six months or more).

Scenario 4: Ecological corridors

Supporting ecological connectivity at the landscape scale or between landscape types is an important objective of Wadden Sea conservation. This may be relevant in relation to restoring connectivity at the fresh-saltwater interface, as for example supported by initiatives under the Dutch Programme for Rich Wadden Sea or, for example with regard to the

relationships between dune, mudflat, saltmarsh and island ecology. One example might be the restoration of mobile dunes on Sylt or Fanø. The need for a holistic approach acknowledging the role of ecosystems adjoining the WSWH is increasingly recognised.

Table 23: Activities, actions and funding opportunities for ecological corridors

Potential project activities / objectives	Types of action	Most suitable funding opportunities
Piloting measures for strengthening ecological connectivities at the salt-freshwater interface	Demonstrator / Applied research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity Horizon Cluster 6 Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.2 Interreg NW Europe Priority 1
Analysing patterns of connectivity between habitats on land and sea	Applied research / Fundamental research	LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity Horizon Cluster 6
Developing and testing measures to restore mudflat / saltmarsh / dune ecosystems	Demonstrator / Applied research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity Horizon Cluster 6 Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.2 Interreg NW Europe Priority 1
Exchanging best practice and knowledge on nature-based solutions for coastal protection – with a focus on ecological connectivity	Demonstrator / Applied research / Exchange of experience, knowledge and good practices	LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity Horizon Cluster 6 Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.2 Interreg NW Europe Priority 1

Possible matches with funding programmes

Applicants in the field of ‘Ecological corridors’ may find the following funding programmes to be suitable for their project ideas (programmes are ranked by suitability in terms of thematic fit, geographic coverage, complexity and competition level).

- **Option 1: LIFE Sub-Programme Nature and Biodiversity** (see scenario 2 above)
- **Option 2: Interreg North Sea Region: SO 3.2** (see Scenario 2 above)
- **Option 3: Horizon Europe Cluster 6** (see Scenario 2 above)

Option 4: Interreg North West Europe

The Interreg Northwest Europe programme has, under Priority 1, a specific focus on nature management plans for green and blue infrastructure, including scope for the development of demonstration measures, exchange of good practice and related actions. This Interreg Programme does not, however, cover the whole Wadden Sea region and complementary funding (for Denmark and large parts of the German North Sea coast) would be needed to achieve trilateral coverage.

Part D - Conclusion

There is truly a wealth of opportunities from both European and national funding programmes to fund the collaborative, trilateral work aligned with the core objectives of the trilateral WSWH partnership. Identifying the most suitable funding programme and framing a project to fit the underlying scope and rationale of the programme can, nevertheless, prove to be challenging. Indeed, the complexity of the funding landscape has only increased in recent years. Therefore, this funding guide has sought to reduce that complexity, providing at one glance concise guidance on funding opportunities relevant to the specific context of the Wadden Sea World Heritage and its diverse range of stakeholders. It is intended to aid potential applicants in choosing the most promising funding opportunity for a given topic and invest their available resources wisely and efficiently.

In preparing the guide, we have come at the issue from two directions; firstly, an analysis of Wadden Sea thematic challenges, referred to as potential topics and sub-topics throughout the document and based on available WSWH documents and input from a survey of stakeholders, and secondly, a detailed analysis of what both European and national funds have to offer. The analysis represents to some extent a snapshot in time, as the funding landscape remains dynamic, and in some cases (e.g. Horizon Europe), calls will be announced at regular intervals throughout the programming period. Nevertheless, we can expect the key aspects will remain unchanged. This is also true of the matching analysis as presented in Chapter 7 and the development of project scenarios in chapter 8.

For each potential sub-topic or project idea, there will be a number of different possible pathways or opportunities, each of which may lead to a successful project. In some cases, it may be opportune to work with national or sub-national projects operating in parallel under a common thematic framework, or a combination of bilateral and national / sub-national funding. There is potentially a stronger role for the

WSWH Partnership Hub in the thematic coordination of projects with running in parallel with similar objectives. It is important to recognise that some types of actions are more likely to be fundable at national / subnational level, whereas others will work better within a European framework. Our analysis indicates that the Interreg North Sea Region and Life programmes will provide the best match at European level. This is, fortunately, also where the Wadden Sea community can build on extensive experience.

Overall, the WSWH Partnership Hub may consider as a possible next step, the development of a funding strategy for the current programming period. Such a strategy would ideally include a mix of high-ambition, high value projects and smaller-scale projects with strong local impact. The Partnership Hub might also consider the preparation of a 'virtual visitor card', to be used, for example, in virtual partner search databases and at matchmaking events. These can take the form of a concise document which summarises in abstract form what the Wadden Sea has to offer as a potential case study, model region or subset of partners within a larger consortium. This type of approach is particularly applicable within larger-scale programmes, where a project consortium would require partners from beyond the Wadden Sea region, such as Interreg North Sea Region or Horizon Europe.

With strong networks of experienced and motivated actors, a longstanding tradition of cooperation and a known brand, the WSWH is in a strong position when it comes to untapping funding opportunities. We hope that this funding guide has made you curious to explore this funding landscape and realise your ideas in successful and meaningful projects.

We wish the trilateral WSWH Partnership and the wider Wadden Sea community every success in the development of project ideas and preparation of funding applications.



**Nationalpark
Wattenmeer**
NIEDERSACHSEN



Interreg
North Sea Region
PROWAD LINK
European Regional Development Fund

