

# Launch of the Northern Periphery Programme 2007-2013

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## Overcoming the barriers to transnational cooperation

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*Aviemore Highland Resort, 21 February 2008*



# European Policies Research Centre

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- specialises in comparative research on regional development throughout Europe
- provision of policy advice to EU, national and sub-national levels
- research on territorial cooperation, including:
  - studies for INTERACT on lessons and experiences of INTERREG
  - studies on Scottish-Nordic cooperation
  - UMTE of NPP, 2000-2006
  - ex ante appraisal and SEA of NPP, 2007-2013
  - research on organisational learning (with Nordregio) on transnational cooperation in NPP and North Sea Region

# Overcoming the barriers to transnational cooperation

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- European transnational cooperation
  - opportunities
  - challenges
  - implementation problems
  
- Overcoming barriers to cooperation and learning in the NPP, 2007-13
  - strategic issues
  - operational challenges

# European Transnational Cooperation: opportunities and challenges

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## European transnational cooperation, 2007-13:

- “actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to Community priorities”
- focus on innovation, environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development
- budget of c. €1.6 bn – 21% of territorial cooperation funding; 0.5% of Cohesion policy resources
- represents third generation of TNC programmes
  - 1994-99: 13 INTERREG IIC programmes, of which 7 were transnational cooperation (plus pilot actions)
  - 2000-06: 13 INTERREG IIIB programmes (including outermost regional programmes)
  - 2007-13: 13 ‘INTERREG IVB’ programmes

# European Transnational Cooperation: opportunities and challenges

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TNC has potential strategic benefits....

- policy additionality
  - enables specific problems to be addressed
    - which are not otherwise assisted
    - or at a new scale
    - or in a more effective or more efficient way
  - catalyst for changes in policy thinking or policy innovation
- local and regional engagement
  - opportunities for sub-national organisations to engage in learning and networking
- trans-border relationships
  - promotes increase in inter-regional/international contacts and other relationships
- political symbolism
  - supports European integration

# European Transnational Cooperation: opportunities and challenges

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...but TNC also involves a combination of challenges:

- working across different legal, administrative and cultural contexts (within and outside the EU)
- finding genuine connections around shared issues (rather than merely 'grant coalitions')
- varied interpretations of 'transnationality'
- achieving tangible results from (relatively) small-scale funding
  - project outcomes may be symbolic rather than substantial
  - short-term benefits may be elusive

# European Transnational Cooperation: opportunities and challenges

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...challenges (continued):

- lack of identification among partners with region (concerns about coherence, artificial boundaries, exclusion)
- translating individual/project learning into organisational action or policy change
- involving organisations that have the responsibility to make change happen
- higher level political/policy scepticism about TNC:
  - what does it actually mean (definition)?
  - can it be more than transnational networking (feasibility)?
  - should it be more than transnational networking (accountability)?
  - demonstrated by 2006 Inter-Institutional Agreement

# European Transnational Cooperation: opportunities and challenges

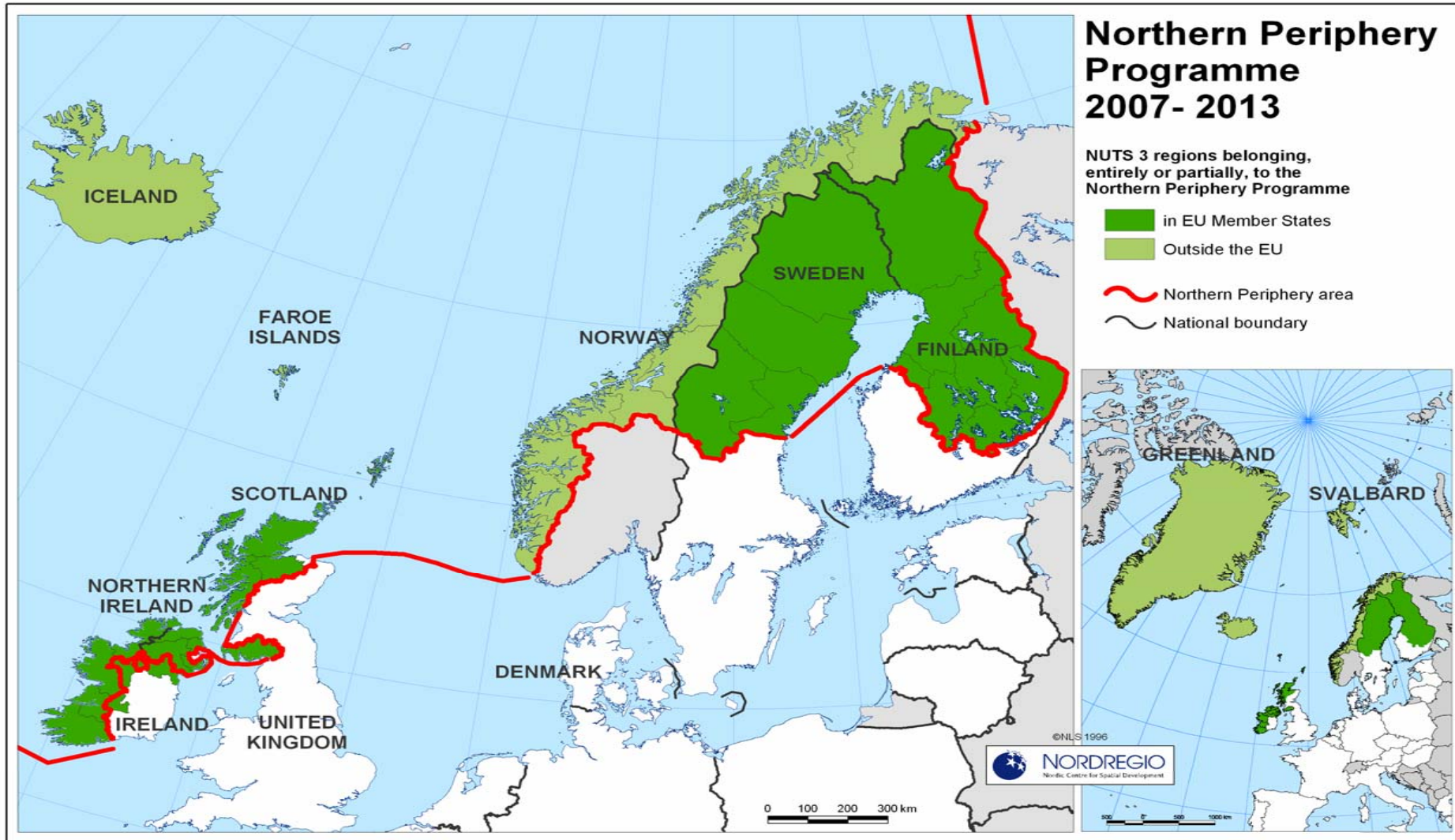
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## Specific implementation problems in 2000-06:

- programme management
  - ambiguities in defining responsibilities of management bodies
  - understaffed, over-burdened secretariats – inward looking, lack of strategic focus
  - deficiencies in coordination/communication
- project generation
  - inadequate quality, accessibility & targeting of information/support
  - dominance of experienced applicants
  - complexity of application processes
- project appraisal and selection
  - big differences in transparency of assessment processes, predictability of selection and information to applicants at all stages
- monitoring
  - uneven progress with indicators, IT systems, data collection, usability



# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13



# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Starting point is a long history of cooperation:

- Nordic Cooperation
  - long tradition of CBC, especially transport, tourism, agriculture, environment etc
  - NORA cooperation in R&D, fishery resources etc
- Nordic-Scottish Cooperation (SNAP)
  - focused on IT, university networking, forestry, SME development
- Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland
  - CBC and transnational cooperation through domestic and EU programmes
- INTERREG IIIB Northern Periphery Programme, 2000-06
  - strong link to Lisbon/Gothenburg
  - positive assessments in MTE and UMTE

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-2013

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- Comparative studies suggest NPP is among the leading TNC programmes
- Ex ante evaluation noted:
  - a robust and unifying strategic logic to the programme
    - focus on common and shared challenges, notably peripherality
  - new programme area and partners – fresh thinking, new opportunities
  - tried and tested implementation structure

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Nevertheless, the new period involves new challenges....

- meeting new strategic EU objectives
  - tensions between cohesion and competitiveness objectives?
  - relevance of priorities to the NPP?
  - ability to deliver 'strategic projects'?
- new administrative requirements for programme managers, e.g. compliance assessment of management and control, audit,
- new requirements for projects (lead partner obligations)
- expectation of 'concrete projects' with measurable impacts

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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...and the MTE/UMTE highlighted issues of concern:

- main message was the potential for a more ambitious, strategic and sophisticated approach to programme management
- specific recommendations:
  - clearer strategic purpose and shared understanding of aims
  - programme marketing and project development, e.g.
    - more pro-active roles of JPS and RCPs
    - greater involvement of more partners in project development
    - strengthened private sector involvement (to help foster Triple Helix projects)
  - pro-active approach to project implementation, e.g.
    - follow-up / aftercare service to projects
  - more emphasis on organisational learning

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Operational challenges:

- clarity on the 'transnational dimension' of projects
- achieving an appropriate mix of partners
- awareness and understanding of national, institutional, legal and cultural differences
- translating individual learning into organisational learning

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Need for clarity on the 'transnational dimension' of projects  
(*why is TNC relevant for this project?*)

- knowledge transfer?
  - facilitating the transfer of economic development solutions, and their practical application, from one country/region to another
- innovation?
  - working together to develop new or innovative economic development solutions that can be applied in practice in more than one country/region
- development of transboundary products?
  - working together to produce a new product or service that has a transnational or transregional character
- learning?
  - exchange of ideas, experience and good practice that improve the stock of organisational knowledge (rather than having short-term practical application or concrete results)

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Achieving an appropriate mix of partners  
*(who should I work with?)*

- common professional/institutional background makes it easier to start working quickly
- different backgrounds are more challenging but (with appropriate effort) can also be more stimulating and productive
- include a mix of skills – not just relating to the content of the project, but also expertise on networking, project collaboration, meeting facilitation etc



# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Awareness and understanding of national, institutional, legal and cultural differences  
*(what are my partners talking about?)*

- many projects have encountered difficulties in transferring knowledge or experience because of conceptual or practical barriers:
  - particularly prevalent for policy projects; may be less problematic for technical or practical projects
  - results in interesting exchanges but limited practical outcomes
  - in some cases, radical reappraisal of goals has been required
- need to invest 'acclimatisation' time in mutual cultural understanding – use of terminology, concepts, context etc
- scope for programme to organise induction courses and briefings
- learning from others

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Translating individual learning into organisational learning (*how can the results be exploited?*)

- there are big differences in the degree to which projects lead to organisational or policy change
- knowledge accumulated often remains with the individual
- need to develop strategies for 'organisational learning' at programme and project level

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Translating individual learning into organisational learning:

- individual learning – knowledge and experience exchanged by individuals as part of the project
- organisational learning – translation of individual learning leading to changes in attitudes, value or behaviour of organisations (or key organisation members)
- regional or national learning – outcomes that lead to changes in policies or practices beyond the organisation

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Translating individual learning into organisational learning:

- during project design, consider how the project will relate to the organisation and its internal management
- engage senior personnel/organisation leaders in the design and implementation
- ensure that organisational involvement in a project is not individualised
- regular re-appraisal of the project in relation to the benefits for the organisation

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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Ensuring that learning is embedded in the programme

- Integrating a 'dynamic of learning' e.g.
  - peer-to-peer learning - investment in comparative learning processes at regional and transnational levels
  - learning from past experience - facilitating knowledge exchange and skills transfer between experienced partners and 'newcomers'
  - using leading projects for motivation/inspiration
- codification of learning

# Overcoming barriers in the NPP, 2007-13

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## Learning from other TNC programmes:

- previous examples from 2000-06:
  - benchmarking of implementation arrangements (Sachsen-Poland IIIA, CADSES IIIB)
  - benchmarking of horizontal themes (Scotland-NRW)
- possible areas of collaborative interest in 2007-13:
  - efficiency of management & control systems (MED)
  - joint secretariat-project evaluations to measure impact and added value (NW Europe)
  - better targeting and support to partners (MED)
  - combining top-down and bottom-up project development to increase impact and legacy (North Sea)
  - more effective programme support to upgrade project quality (Alpine Space)

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**Thank you for your attention!**

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