

KARELIA CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME 2021-2027

Karelia cross-border cooperation programme is financed by the European Union, the Republic of Finland and Russian Federation. Total financing is to be confirmed during the autumn 2021.

Programme area

The programme area covers Kainuu, North Karelia and Oulu region from Finland and the Republic of Karelia from the Russian Federation.



Programme strategy

General regional development challenges were identified in the programming process:

- The population of the programme region is decreasing and ageing. The population is sparse and slowly concentrates to the major cities within the region.
- The regional GDP is behind national averages in both countries. The unemployment rate is higher than the national averages but some businesses still lack of competent labour.
- Climate change and loss of biodiversity affect the programme region.

- Pandemic has challenged regional economies and some industries, such as tourism, and has stopped the cross-border contacts between the people.

The programme priorities have been built to tackle the above-mentioned challenges.

Priority 1 Competitive regional economy.

Competitive regional economy and businesses establish a backbone for the development of the programme area and wellbeing of the people living in this sparsely populated area.

Two specific objectives were defined for the priority: research and innovations and SME competitiveness. These specific objectives focus to

- establish cross border research and innovation partnerships
- develop cross border economic clusters and ecosystems
- improve the competitiveness of SMEs

In addition, digitalisation is seen as an important and practical tool to develop the regional competitiveness.

Priority 2 Environment

Environment is seen as a competitive advantage for the programme area but also as an attraction factor for the residents living in the area. Cross-border cooperation brings the regions together to consider the joint environmental challenges

Four specific objectives were defined for the priority: energy efficiency, sustainable water management, circular economy and the nature protection and biodiversity. These specific objectives focus through cross-border cooperation to

- reduce overall energy consumption and the greenhouse gas and black carbon emissions
- reduce the environmental load to the surface waters
- improve the accessibility to clean drinking water
- facilitate the transition to the circular economies
- protect and preserve the biodiversity
- develop the green infrastructure in built environment
- facilitate the nature protection

Priority 3 Tourism

Tourism plays an important role on the regional economy. Tourism also employs a notable number of people in the region.

The tourism priority helps this economic sector to adopt to the new situation, challenges and trends after the pandemic. Implementation of the priority is based on the multisectoral tourism sub-strategy built by local and regional stakeholders under the Euregio Karelia main strategy. The priority calls for interconnected actions to develop the area as a tourism destination.

Priority 4 Culture

Culture is seen as an attraction factor for the programme region and as a tool to develop and support the regional economy.

The culture priority is built to improve the cultural sector cross the border for the benefit of the regional attractiveness and economy as well as to build the cross-border cultural identity. Implementation of the priority is based on the multisectoral culture strategy built by local and regional stakeholders under Euregio Karelia main strategy.

Priority 5 People to people

People to people actions are in the core of the cross-border cooperation.

The priority works to increase the knowhow concerning the neighbours and to increase the mutual trust by

- developing people contacts cross the border
- strengthening the cooperation between the NGOs

Programme implementation

The programme and its priorities are implemented through projects, which are selected through calls for proposals. Support by the programme is provided as grants. Projects have to meet the criteria defined by the Monitoring Committee, which is responsible for the selection of projects.

Programme management structures

The Monitoring Committee is the highest decision making body in the programme. The members represent at least National Ministries from Finland and Russian federation and the regional authorities from the programme area.

The Managing Authority is responsible for the implementation of the programme with the assistance of the secretariat and the Programme Branch Office in Petrozavodsk.

Contact details / more information

<http://www.kareliacbc.fi>

