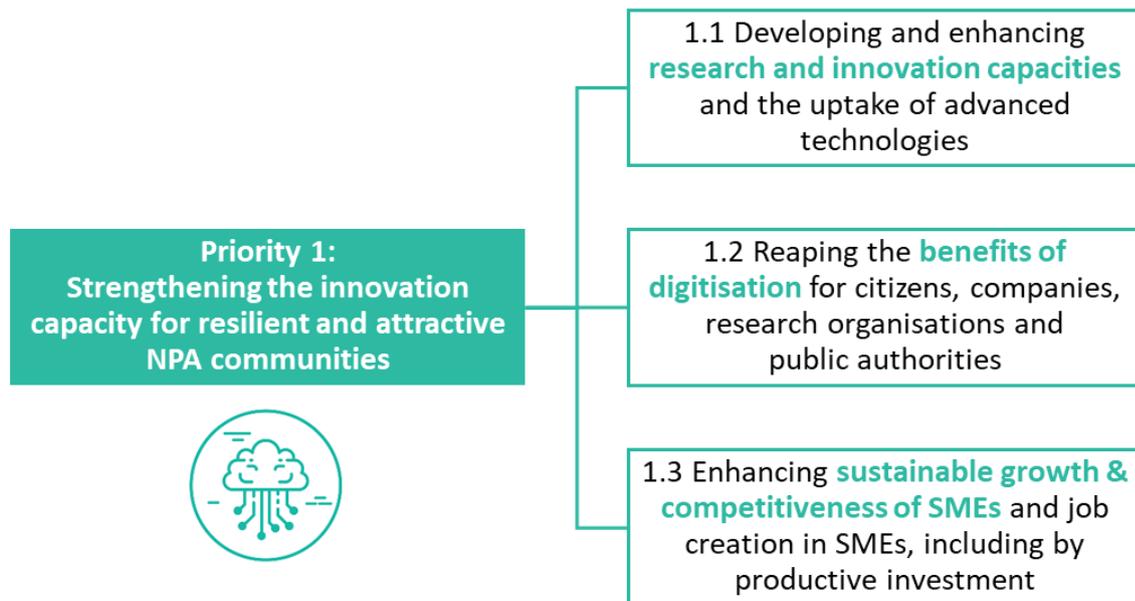


PRIORITY 1

Strengthening the innovation capacity for resilient and attractive NPA communities



**Specific Objective 1.1**  
Developing and enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies

Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies are of key importance for SMEs and micro enterprises, and related, the NPA area as a whole. Through innovation and pursuing higher value-added processes activities can be diversified and expanded, drawing on specialist sectoral knowledge and expertise in the area. Regional programmes and strategies, including smart specialisation strategies, which foster bottom-up policy approach for regional innovation and development can be the basis for identified key regional strengths.

In times of major change, most notably climate change, the vulnerable ecologies of the programme area place even more importance on innovation capacity as a means to adapt, manage and respond to change, and the innovation capacity is also of importance when other unforeseen catastrophes such as pandemics occur. To combat the climate change, green and blue technologies are of interest to the area.

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Recognising that the innovation process can take time and involve many stages, projects can engage at various stages in the innovation cycle, from inception to testing and pre-commercial development, to expanding application and adoption. It is important to involve SMEs already when developing innovations, but also in the application of existing technologies. Examples of sectors in which the programme can finance projects are healthcare, energy, the marine economy, circular economy, transport, environmental and natural resources as well as innovation with emphasis on tourism, culture and creative industries.

Types of actions to be funded:

- Facilitating technology transfer to, or across, the Programme area benefiting SMEs, including green technologies
- Facilitating commonly identified opportunities based on strengths in the programme area supported by research and innovation, including smart specialisation strategies.

In all activities that are approved by the NPA programme, there should be an integration of the horizontal criteria. This means that the activities should strive for sustainable development, with equal opportunities for men and women, non-discrimination and accessibility and inclusion of underrepresented groups, including indigenous peoples and other culturally and linguistically distinct groups originating from the NPA area. Activities should be carried out with respect for fundamental rights.

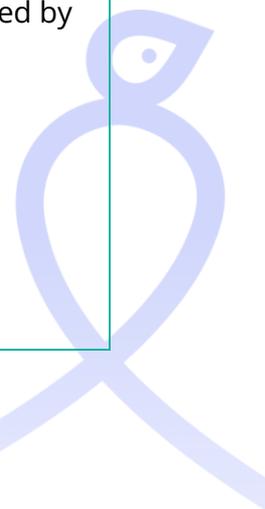
The objectives of the programme take into account the “do no significant harm” principle.

Main Target groups:

- Higher education and research
- Enterprise, except SME
- SME
- Business support organization
- Regional public authority
- National public authority
- Local public authority
- Non-profit organisations / Social enterprises

Indicators:

- Organisations cooperating across borders (RCO87)
- Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects (RCO84)
- Enterprises cooperating with research Organisations (RCO10)
- Jointly developed solutions (RCO116)
- SMEs introducing product or process
- innovation (RCR 03)
- Solutions taken up or upscaled by organizations (RCR 104)



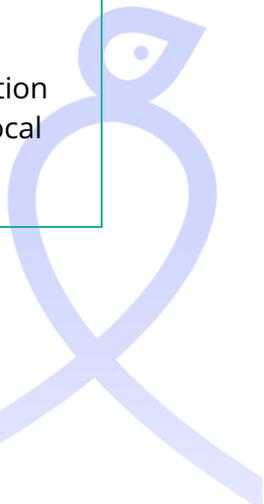
**Specific objective 1.2**  
Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies, research organisations and public authorities

Territories across the programme area experience challenges linked to long distances and access to markets and key services. Digitalisation and digital solutions are key to addressing and mitigating these challenges of importance for public service, SMEs and the communities and people who live in the area, e.g creating links between the public sector, networks of SMEs and education providers.

Digitisation can help to mitigate challenges linked to demographic change, mitigate crises such as pandemics, and also create opportunities for younger population in remote and peripheral communities, e.g through remote healthcare and smart mobility. In order to make the advantages of digitisation accessible for everyone, it is important to develop digital skills and also to build capacity in SMEs, in public service, and in organisations.

Transnational collaboration has a vital role in strengthening the expertise and experiences of working with digital solutions in the programme area, both to widen and deepen the expertise coming from these peripheral areas, and also to apply new solutions.

<p><b>Types of actions to be funded:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer and development of accessible digital solutions to create better conditions for people to live and work in the area. This includes technology-driven solutions for public service provision, as well as marketing models and solutions facilitating the use of distance-spanning technology to overcome long distance to market.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Main target groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local public authority</li> <li>• Regional public authority</li> <li>• National public authority</li> <li>• Sectoral agency</li> <li>• Infrastructure and (public) service provider</li> <li>• Interest groups including NGOs</li> <li>• Higher education and research</li> <li>• Education/training centre and school</li> <li>• SME</li> <li>• Enterprise, except SME</li> <li>• Business support organisation</li> <li>• General public (including local communities)</li> </ul>
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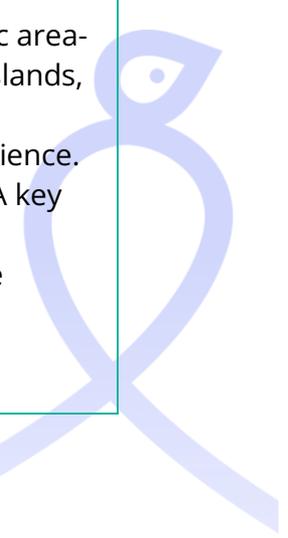
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<p>In all activities that are approved by the NPA programme, there should be an integration of the horizontal criteria. This means that the activities should strive for a performance with low carbon footprint, with equal opportunities for men and women and inclusion of underrepresented groups, including indigenous peoples and other culturally and linguistically distinct groups originating from the NPA area.</p> <p>The objectives of the programme take into account the “do no significant harm” principle.</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public institutions supported to develop digital services, products, and processes (RCO 14)</li> <li>• Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects (RCO 84)</li> <li>• Organizations cooperating across borders (RCO 87)</li> <li>• Jointly developed solutions (RCO 116)</li> <li>• Users of new and upgraded public digital services, products and processes (RCR 11)</li> <li>• Solutions taken up or upscaled by organizations (RCR 104)</li> </ul>
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Specific objective 1.3: Enhancing sustainable growth and competitiveness of SMEs and job creation in SMEs, including by productive investments

Through transnational cooperation, the programme will contribute to enhancing the entrepreneurial climate of the NPA area by facilitating the transfer and development of business support strategies and solutions to overcome the particular challenges faced by start-ups and existing SMEs in remote and peripheral regions. An example is building networks and clusters with capacity to tackle the challenge with long distance to market for SMEs. Overcoming these challenges will contribute to a more dynamic business sector, in particular for SMEs in nontraditional sectors.

In the programme area, there are area-based specialisms linked to specific area-based cultural or natural resources as for example uniqueness of Arctic, islands, coastal areas etc. To manage traditional business in remote and sparsely populated areas there is a need to build economic diversification and resilience. Through innovation, traditional sectors can be diversified and expanded. A key sector for the area that has particularly high number of SMEs and micro enterprises is tourism. This is also a sector where it is important to engage indigenous groups and local communities in planning and activities.



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<p>Types of actions to be funded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer and development of models and solutions for support to SMEs faced with commonly identified challenges and opportunities in peripheral regions with a particular focus on entrepreneurial skills and sustainable business models.</li> <li>• Transfer and development of concepts for creating networks and clusters of SMEs and connecting entrepreneurial capacities across regions as well as adapting marketing models for a greater market reach.</li> </ul> <p>In all activities that are approved by the NPA programme, there should be an integration of the horizontal criteria. This means that the activities should strive for a performance with low carbon footprint, with equal opportunities for men and women and inclusion of underrepresented groups, including indigenous peoples and other culturally and linguistically distinct groups originating from the NPA area.</p> <p>The objectives of the programme take into account the “do no significant harm” principle.</p>	<p>Main target groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local public authority</li> <li>• Regional public authority</li> <li>• Sectoral agency</li> <li>• Higher education and research</li> <li>• Education/training centre and school</li> <li>• SME</li> <li>• Business support organisation</li> <li>• General public (including local communities)</li> </ul> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprises supported (of which micro, small, medium, large) (RCO 01)</li> <li>• Enterprises with non-financial support (RCO 04)</li> <li>• New enterprises supported (RCO 05)</li> <li>• Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects (RCO 84)</li> <li>• Organizations cooperating across borders (RCO 87)</li> <li>• Jointly developed solutions (RCO 116)</li> <li>• Solutions taken up or upscaled by organizations (RCR 104)</li> </ul>
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