

Trans-national Nordic-Scottish Co-operation: Lessons for Policy and Practice

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Nordic co-operation

takes place among the countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as the autonomous territories of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

The Nordic Council

is a forum for co-operation between the Nordic parliaments and governments. The Council consists of 87 parliamentarians from the Nordic countries. The Nordic Council takes policy initiatives and monitors Nordic co-operation. Founded in 1952.

The Nordic Council of Ministers

is a forum for co-operation between the Nordic governments. The Nordic Council of Ministers implements Nordic co-operation. The prime ministers have the overall responsibility. Its activities are co-ordinated by the Nordic ministers for co-operation, the Nordic Committee for co-operation and portfolio ministers. Founded in 1971.

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Preface

Trans-national and inter-regional co-operation between Norden and Scotland has been an active area of policy for almost a decade. At the policy level, there have been a series of high-level meetings of senior officials, complemented by bilateral exchanges. Within the framework of EU co-funded programmes, 79 projects have been supported through Interreg and Article 10 during the 1990s. This co-operation is continuing under the new generation of Interreg III programmes covering the North Sea and Northern Periphery areas over the 2000-06 period.

The basis for this study is that it is an opportune moment to reflect on the experiences of the past decade. The aim of the study is to analyse the lessons learned by regions and other partners in trans-national and inter-regional co-operation projects in the fields of spatial planning and regional development in this part of Europe, and to identify the practical and policy lessons for effective inter-regional co-operation projects.

In co-operation with the European Policies Research Centre (EPRC) Nordregio has analysed experiences from inter-regional co-operation projects under the previous North Sea and Northern Periphery programmes, to disseminate learning from the projects, to highlight the practical results achieved and to identify policy lessons with regard to effective project co-operation for the new programmes.

This study was jointly financed by the Nordic Senior Officials' Committee for Regional Policy (NÄRP) and the Scottish Executive.

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SUMMARY

Trans-national Nordic-Scottish Co-operation: Lessons for Policy and Practice

Trans-national and inter-regional co-operation between the Nordic Countries and Scotland has been an active policy area for almost a decade. With the growing interest in trans-national co-operation in an increasingly integrated EU, this is an opportune time to reflect on the experiences of recent co-operation programmes. By looking at project co-operation carried out under the Article 10 programme Northern Periphery and the Interreg IIC North Sea Programme, this study provides insights into the lessons learned by regions and other partners in trans-national and inter-regional co-operation projects in the field of spatial planning and regional development. This study is not to be understood as an evaluation of the programmes or projects discussed, but as a thematic study focusing on the learning aspect in trans-national co-operation.

This study reflects on the process of learning which is integral to effective co-operation, in order to investigate the nature of the *tacit knowledge and experience* of project participants, and to make it usable for future co-operation projects and policy making.

Projects funded under the Interreg IIC North Sea and the Article 10 Northern Periphery programmes have made a substantive and meaningful contribution to the topics for Nordic Scottish co-operation although they were not designed specifically to serve the policy aims for Nordic-Scottish co-operation and trans-national EU programmes. This occurs because both programmes allowed for projects dealing with issues related to spatial commonalities, in particular joint or common challenges in the field of regional development and peripherality.

The commonalities in the spatial conditions in the Nordic countries and in Scotland are one of the cornerstones of the projects assessed. Facing similar challenges and similar problems has often been a starting point for co-operation. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that many projects centred on 'regional policy and sustainable development', 'regional policy in rural and peripheral areas' and 'new economy and the information society', the latter having a special focus with regard to overcoming remoteness. However, despite geographical commonalities, the differences in the administrative and legal systems, as well as in culture, hampered the transfer of experience between countries. Thus, the production of joint results has often been experienced as challenging, and the exchange of experience and good practice usually dominated over the finding of joint solutions and the creation of common knowledge. Regardless of the geographical orientation, trans-national outputs lie mostly in the field of networking and reporting among the project partners. As a consequence, concrete project outputs often focused on single sub-projects and regions.

Individual and organisational learning

A discussion of learning in co-operation projects needs to distinguish between individual learning and collective/organisational learning. The study identified three 'moments' of learning.

First, there is learning about co-operation and about the project content in the trans-national project group. Second, there is learning in national, regional or local sub-groups of the trans-national project group. In both cases the individual participant can learn something in this new co-operation context. Third, the major question is: how this learning is transported from the individual participant in the project to his/her home organisation i.e. sharing of the new knowledge with colleagues. This last step is important as regards the use and implementation of knowledge gained in trans-national co-operation.

The crucial link between trans-national, regional and organisation learning is individual learning. The discussion has shown that it is first and foremost the individual project participants taking part in the activities at the various fora, who learn, and who are responsible for passing on knowledge from one forum to another.

The changing of routines is considered to be a major indication of the use and implementation of results. Once a single project member has learned something in a co-operation process, this knowledge can remain as personal information or be used for changing personal routines, or it can be transferred into the home organisation of the project member where it then contributes to institutional learning, i.e. changing routines in the organisation. In this respect, case studies illustrated that it has proven difficult to transfer experience and knowledge from co-operation projects to colleagues who did not participate in the project. As the knowledge to a significant degree stayed with the project participants, individual learning dominates over organisational learning and thus the translation of learning into changes of routines.

There are at least two factors that emphasise individual learning and hinder the transfer to organisational learning. First, a lot of issues handled in these projects require a 'hands-on' approach, and knowledge can only rarely be acquired through reading or lecturing. Second, the projects are often not considered to be part of the individual participant's 'ordinary workload', but rather are conceived as additional tasks. Moreover, there is often insufficient integration of the project activity or results into the work of the participating organisation.

In short, therefore, the outcomes are largely individualised. The impact of such co-operation is often limited to the personal level, i.e. to the actual participants.

Learning in interdisciplinary and trans-national co-operation

The projects were designed and developed by partners from different countries and different professional backgrounds. Thus, the co-operation, i.e. learning environment, was characterised by interdisciplinary and trans-national diversity, which involves working within the constraints of one or more foreign languages and the cultural diversity of the team as well as the challenges of communicating across traditional sectoral boundaries.

The broad variety of national differences (of all kinds) has been experienced by almost every project, not at least by those aiming to share experiences and/or compare national/regional sub-projects and activities. At least once during almost every project, participants considered that it might be impossible to transfer knowledge and experience between countries, because of cultural, administrative and/or legal differences. Indeed, in a number of projects, these differences implied that the sharing

of experience was considered as interesting as regards personal learning, but of little use as regards applying more generally what had been learned. Generally, it seems that projects with rather concrete, practical tasks and hands-on approaches or joint tasks, faced fewer difficulties than more strategic, generalised and policy-oriented projects. Indeed in some of the more practical projects, the trans-national experiences resulted in considerable changes of routine.

At the same time, the study shows that the projects are associated with important effects on learning at national and sub-national levels. Indeed, in many projects, this national and regional learning (as opposed to trans-national learning) is considered to be the most important aspects of the learning process. To a certain extent, actors from the same region – who had not been in contact previously - found benefits in working together through these projects. The importance of the regional sub-projects is often explained by the fact the projects have their origin in local problems. However, the crucial question – asked for each project – is to what degree did the trans-national co-operation facilitate or contribute to regional or national learning. Generally, it seems that the trans-national element shows unused potentials capable of being exploited further.

The interdisciplinarity of projects was very variable. Some projects involved participants with very diverse professional and institutional backgrounds, while others were relatively homogenous.

In general, the more homogenous project teams tended to engage in quite technical discussions which made it difficult for other stakeholders outside the partnership to understand the content of the debate and to feel involved. Furthermore, it was partly felt that the homogeneity resulted in a lack of alternative opinions and challenging viewpoints. However, these teams usually shared a common understanding and professional language which allowed them to work directly on the content of the project and gain new knowledge in the field.

On the other hand, the more heterogeneous groups (networks) needed more time to establish a common understanding. In such cases, the work on the actual content of the project could facilitate process-related learning about different aspects, especially on establishing trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation. The more heterogeneous groups could turn their diversity into an additional asset if they managed to establish a common platform and understanding, which mostly required a sufficient degree of communality and strong interest in the joint exercise.

The study shows that good relationships at personal level were often crucial for overcoming the challenges of trans-national and interdisciplinary diversity and turning them into an asset.

Main Findings

The individual project participant is crucial to the personal networking required for smooth co-operation, and to the transfer of knowledge/learning from the co-operation fora to the home organisation. Thus, it may not be a surprise that the main results of the projects were often considered to be:

- better understanding between partners across national and sectoral borders,
- well functioning networks,

- experience associated with participation in an international project, and
- the personal knowledge gained on the project issue.

The challenges of both trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation have each been a major concern for many projects, as they are seen to hamper the translation of common challenges into joint or common action. The projects studied managed to overcome these challenges and most of them turned the diversity into an asset.

Thus the Interreg IIC and Article 10 projects studied in this report illustrate that this form of trans-national co-operation generates added value to the implementation of both European and the Nordic-Scottish policy aims. The study shows that these trans-national programmes have effects that extend beyond the fulfilment of formal programmes, with a wide range of achievements in the field of learning.

The study also shows that Interreg is a form of risk-taking both for the partners getting involved in the projects and for the various sponsors. The framework provided and the combination of trans-national and interdisciplinary partnerships are a platform offering good opportunities for valuable results, but there is no guarantee without the motivation and commitment of individuals.

The study concludes with some recommendations for project participants, project leaders, programme managers and policy-makers that could assist in promoting the role of learning the design and implementation of future programmes.

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1 Project objectives

Nordic-Scottish co-operation involves many different participants who collectively have an enormous amount of tacit knowledge and experience on inter-regional co-operation projects. Although the programmes under which this co-operation takes place are formally evaluated, to establish the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, the remit of these evaluations does not always permit the qualitative processes of cooperation to be analysed. This thematic study, which is not to be mistaken as a programme evaluation, attempts to reflect on the process of learning which is integral to effective co-operation, to investigate the nature of the tacit knowledge and experience of project participants, and to make it usable for future co-operation projects and policy making.

1.1 Context

Over the past decade, Nordic-Scottish co-operation has operated at two important levels. On the one hand, there has been an active process of policy co-operation involving a series of high-level meetings of senior officials from Scotland and the Nordic countries, as well as a continuing series of exchanges between government heads, politicians and civil servants. Operational exchanges have also been arranged with secondments of personnel between the central government administrations of Finland, Sweden and Scotland. The third chapter of this report will give a broader overview of the development of Nordic Scottish co-operation.

On the other hand, there has also been a series of practical co-operation initiatives, involving a wide range of partners engaged in regional development and spatial planning from Scotland and the Nordic countries. Some of these have been funded under the North Sea Interreg IIB programme (1995-99) and the Northern Periphery Article 10 programme (1997-99), which arose out of an *ad hoc* Nordic-Scottish co-operation initiative covering projects in the SME, IT, forestry and higher education sectors. The fourth chapter provides an introduction to the EU programmes for trans-national co-operation that have been used to support Nordic-Scottish co-operation.

Within the various co-operation projects learning together, from each other and about co-operation is an important feature. Much of this tacit knowledge can be of great use to policy-makers, programme managers, project managers and project participants, though it often remains hidden or only partially exposed. The scope of the present study is related to Nordic Scottish co-operation projects or, more extensively, regional and economic development policies. In this area, learning has progressively become a key-element of policies in the European Union. Consequently, the fifth chapter will provide a more theoretical introduction to learning in co-operation processes.

From this we turn to learning in concrete Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects. We look at the stories projects can tell us about the experience of co-operation, and how this contributes to solving regional development challenges. For this we approach the projects from three directions: first, *what* has been learned in terms of content; second, *how* has this learning taken place; and last, what *changes* occurred as a result.

In chapter six, we discuss *what* has been learned. This focuses mainly on the content of the projects and what new knowledge has actually been created by Nordic-Scottish co-operation. Furthermore, it also provides us with insights on the project outputs, the modes and geographies of co-operation and the challenges of joint and common action.

In chapter seven, we focus on what can be learned on *how* Nordic-Scottish co-operation takes place. This involves an analysis of the benefits and challenges of trans-national co-operation. As the funding mechanisms for Nordic-Scottish co-operation emphasise interdisciplinary project teams, we also discuss the implications of cross-sectoral co-operation. Finally we round off with a brief discussion of the personal dimension of co-operation.

Thereafter we assess whether learning is restricted to individual people participating in a project or whether there is a wider scope of learning. An indication of organisational learning is the *change* of routines. In chapter 8, we look at what actually has changed because of experience or learning in Nordic Scottish co-operation projects. This brings together the results of the *what* and *how* of learning and leads us finally to the lessons to be learned and recommendations for future Nordic-Scottish co-operation endeavours.

1.2 Aim and task of the project

The aim of the present study is to analyse experiences from inter-regional co-operation projects under the previous North Sea and Northern Periphery programmes, to disseminate learning from the projects, to highlight the practical results achieved, and to identify policy lessons on effective project co-operation for the new programmes.

Specifically, the study has the following five objectives:

- (i) to screen all projects with Nordic and Scottish participation assisted under the North Sea Interreg IIB and Northern Periphery Article 10 projects and to compile an overview of the project content and implementation arrangements of the projects;
- (ii) to highlight the practical results and lessons learned - organised under the seven 'topic headings' identified as important for Nordic-Scottish co-operation, i.e.:
 - Regional Policy and Sustainable Development
 - Regional Policy in Rural and Peripheral Areas
 - New Economy and the Information Society
 - Business Growth
 - Skills and Learning
 - Global Connections
 - Community Development
- (iii) to identify case studies of 'good practice' (for each of the above seven headings if possible) and to investigate their characteristics;
- (iv) to prepare a report containing lessons and policy recommendations on effective inter-regional co-operation projects for project applicants, programme managers and policy officials; and

- (v) to provide input into the next Nordic-Scottish ‘summit’ meeting in the form of (a) a plenary paper on effective inter-regional co-operation; and (b) prepared case studies for the seven headings to provide a starting point and/or focus for workshop discussions.

2 Methodology

The work has been carried out in two steps. A first screening procedure started with the analysis of all 79 projects carried out under the Interreg IIC North Sea Region and Article 10 Northern Periphery Programmes. From that the analysis successively focused on the 44 Nordic-Scottish projects, finally identifying 16 projects for detailed analysis.

2.1 Screening and reviewing of all 79 Projects

After the first screening procedures, a questionnaire on learning in Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects was compiled. The questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all project partners involved in an Article 10 Northern Periphery or an Interreg IIC North Sea Programme. No distinction was made as to whether the project involved Nordic-Scottish co-operation or not. About 250 questionnaires were sent out and 39 projects replied to the questionnaire. Up to four different partners of the same project answered the questionnaire.

Cases where we received several answers regarding the same project illustrate how differently a co-operation process is considered. The main differences were between lead partners and project partners. 42 returned questionnaires regard Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects directly.

In the next step, the project information gathered during the screening process was compiled and assessed in a systematic way regarding the content and output of the projects. A first typology of projects followed the priority issues for Nordic-Scottish co-operation identified at the Nordic-Scottish meeting in Skibo, March 2001. The nine themes of this typology were based on seven topics that had been identified in the Skibo conclusions as important for future Nordic-Scottish co-operation: *Regional Policy and Sustainable Development, Regional Policy in Rural Peripheral Areas, New Economy and the Information Society, Business Growth, Skills and Learning, Global Connections, Community Development*, in addition to two topics that were added later, *Natural Resources* and *Cultural Heritage*.

Thereafter, we concentrated on further reviewing projects involving Nordic Scottish co-operation. In total, 44 projects have both Scottish and Nordic partners, nine Interreg IIC and 35 NPP. Final reports and additional information available for these projects were analysed and synthesised in brief project descriptions including a description of main aims, outputs and results.

Based on the project descriptions, where the main focus was on project results, a new typology was then created, and all 44 projects categorized accordingly. This was related in particular to the question of whether new knowledge has been produced by the projects, and how the focus of knowledge production relates to the main issues of Nordic-Scottish co-operation outlined at the Skibo meeting. The new typology comprises four themes:

- *New or Improved Methods and Technique for Private Business Development;*
- *New or Improved Methods and Technique for Public Sector Services and Management;*

- *Sustaining and Utilising Natural, Cultural and Social Resources*; and
- *Analysing Spatial Characteristics*.

This work was followed by an internal workshop addressing the question of how learning in trans-national co-operation processes can be defined and assessed. In the discussion different types of learning and their interrelations were identified. The first differentiation (individual versus collective learning) relates to the nature of the subject who is active in the learning process. This can be an individual (individual learning) or an organisation (e.g. a public body, a private firm, or indeed, a policy network). Collective learning is considered to be the learning of an organisation itself considered as an entity, rather than the simple sum of the individual learning of people acting within the organisation. Furthermore, the distinction between simple and complex learning is to be considered when discussing the effects of problem setting and goal-identification as well as goal-achievement. Following this debate, which is presented in further detail elsewhere in this report, a structure for analysing learning in Nordic-Scottish co-operation was developed.

2.2 In-depth analysis of selected Nordic-Scottish projects

The results of the questionnaires were then used to identify 16 projects that might be interesting to select as case studies for further investigation. The questionnaire asked people to rank the benefits from their project (four possibilities from important to unimportant) divided into eight different topics. Two of those topics, *identification of innovative ideas/new solution* and *knowledge transfer*, were considered as important for learning and projects that marked these as *important* received special attention. Furthermore, respondents were asked to identify the impact of the project on their daily work (benefits and use of contacts, benefit of gained knowledge/achieved results, change of working routines procedures). Projects where the partner believed that it had impacted on their daily work were regarded as interesting, particularly in respect of impacts related to the change of routine procedures.

The questionnaires were then further used to divide the projects into two groups relating to homogeneous and heterogeneous project teams, based on the diversity of partners with regard to professional and institutional background. In addition, all projects were then divided into two groups, communities of practice and communities of general issues, based on whether they were considered to be pragmatic and oriented towards problem solutions, or whether they put emphasis on research and the exchange of knowledge through interaction. The aim of this classification was to enable the selection of cases with different kinds of focuses and partner composition.

This classification of projects was then related to the typologies on the content of projects. In this way 16 case studies were identified reflecting the diversity of learning processes, project tasks and policy issues.

For the selected case studies further literature studies as well as telephone and face-to-face interviews in Finland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden were subsequently conducted. The aim of the case study work was to explore the process of 'project learning', in particular with regard to the results of the projects and how these can be of relevance for others, and also relating to how effective co-operation was managed and mistakes overcome or avoided. These case study reports thus provide the basis for

further discussion within the project and for the development of conclusions and lessons.

2.3 Reporting

The above research is brought together in the present report, providing an analysis and synthesis of the experiences and lessons of inter-regional co-operation projects. This includes recommendations oriented towards three groups of beneficiaries:

- national authorities and programme monitoring committees;
- programme executives;
- potential project applicants and project executives.

It is anticipated that the conclusions and recommendations of the research may be developed further following discussion at the next Nordic-Scottish Conference in Örnköldsvik.

PART B – CONTEXT

3 The Evolution of Nordic-Scottish Co-operation

The assessment of the ‘learning’ derived from Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects has to be seen in the broader context of formal and informal co-operation initiatives at the policy and project levels over the past decade. The following section provides a summary of the co-operation process, drawn largely from an evaluation of Nordic-Scottish co-operation carried out by EPRC in 1998 (Bachtler, Brown and Raines, 1999; Bachtler, 2000).

3.1 Background to the Co-operation

Cooperation between Scotland and Scandinavia builds on a long history of social and cultural ties, reflected in commonalities of language, traditions and outlook. Peripherality, the sparsity of population and fragile settlement structures present common challenges that are not always understood or appreciated in other parts of Europe. Scotland and the Nordic countries attach a high priority to economic development with a ‘thick’ institutional infrastructure of development organisations and instruments.

The impetus for the Nordic-Scottish Cooperation arose from the proposals for the ‘fourth enlargement’ of the European Community to include Finland, Norway and Sweden (as well as Austria). In the run-up to enlargement, there was considerable, spontaneous activity from the then applicant countries to explore Scotland’s experience of the Structural Funds. In turn, the Scottish Office identified a long-term strategic interest in establishing a broad relationship with the applicant countries. For example, it represented an opportunity to increase the profile given to peripheral, sparsely populated areas (the Highlands & Islands) within the EU. At that time, the EU tended to view the problems of northern Scotland in terms of their rural or upland character - indeed grouping the Highlands with parts of Greece, southern Italy and north-eastern Portugal - rather than recognising their distinctive character (CEC, 1991).

Preliminary exploratory contacts were initiated by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in early 1994, including several bilateral discussions and a meeting of officials in Nairn, leading to a meeting of senior officials at Ackergill in October 1994. The Scottish initiative met with a positive response from the Nordic side, especially from Norway and Finland.

3.2 Ackergill: the launch of Nordic-Scottish Cooperation

The first high-level meeting at Ackergill Tower, near Wick in Scotland, in October 1994 was attended by senior government officials from Scotland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland. Against a background of accession to the EU by some of the Nordic countries, the meeting confirmed that there were “great commonalities of interests between the Nordic Countries and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland”, notably with respect to severe physical and climatic conditions, high environmental quality, the sparsity of population and fragmented settlements, transport and

communication challenges, present and prospective reliance on the quality of training and of higher education, a preference for SMEs as generators of economic development, and culture and community structure.

The meeting recommended that:

- a network be created under the auspices of, or in association with, the Nordic Council of Ministers as a vehicle for liaison and cooperation in the field of regional development between Scotland and the Nordic countries;
- the participants should be representatives both of the relevant government departments and the economic development agencies of the respective countries; and
- although addressing specific technical difficulties such as the development of a methodology for the measurement of peripherality and economic fragility, the focus of the group should be primarily operational.

Initial areas of action included: cooperation in the development of SMEs, and between SMEs, within the context of peripheral economies; the practical application of information technology development, for the benefit of economic activity in peripheral areas; establishment and implementation of university networking focused on cooperation with business and rural development; and the development of a forestry network with particular reference to private forestry.

Subsequently a steering group meeting was held in Copenhagen in November 1994, involving officials of NÄRP, the Scottish Office and Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) to formalise the agreement to begin cooperation in the four thematic areas and to select leaders and partners for each theme. NÄRP agreed to make available Nordic funds DKr 3 million (c.f. £273,000) over the three-year period, complemented by Scottish funding of £207,000 (DKr 2.3 million).

From the spring of 1995, the four project areas began to be developed with exchange visits by the co-ordinators, the establishment of contacts with other potential partners, the organisation of introductory seminars and the elaboration of project ideas. Progress was reviewed at a seminar involving HIE, the Scottish Office and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) in December 1995 where several models for co-ordination were discussed. The meeting attempted to rationalise practical tasks, and the NCM Secretariat also undertook to take steps to involve Denmark and Iceland more actively. The possibility of using Article 10 to develop cooperation interests was raised for the first time.

3.3 Copenhagen-Kittilä-Copenhagen

With many senior officials being keen to repeat the success of the Ackergill seminar a second high-level meeting on regional development cooperation was convened at Kittilä (Finnish Lapland) by the Finnish Ministry of the Interior for senior officials from Scotland and the Nordic countries in April 1996. The conclusions of the meeting reaffirmed that project-based cooperation should continue and develop further, to involve not just government departments and economic development agencies but also local/regional authorities and other relevant organisations. The participants also decided to broaden the activities of the network beyond matters arising from EU membership with a potential exchange of information on a wider range of subjects. It

was agreed that the network would be limited to four areas of action for ‘working cooperation’ at any one time, with the objective of developing actions “to the stage where interaction between companies or other organisations can take place without the need for continued intervention by the network”. The four chosen sectors would continue with that objective, subject to review within 12 months and possible replacement from the following options:

- sustainable development of tourism in areas of economic fragility and environmental quality;
- involvement of universities and other educational institutions in the stimulation and development of SMEs;
- exchange of information on best practice of external services to SMEs and similar SME related issues; and
- exchange of information and experience regarding RITTS.

A follow-up Steering Group meeting in June confirmed these conclusions, noting that, while encouraging progress in discussions with the European Commission of the proposed Article 10 cooperation was being made, this mechanism should be utilised “in a way which did not detract from Nordic-Scottish cooperation by marginalizing Nordic countries which are not EU members or by imposing inequitable financial burdens on them.”

In February 1996, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the University of Strathclyde signed a Memorandum of Agreement (also involving HIE) establishing a Visiting Professorial Chair in Nordic Policy Studies at the European Policies Research Centre to enable senior policymakers and academics to study at the Centre, reinforcing the interchange of regional development expertise between the Nordic countries and Scotland.

The second annual review of the cooperation was held in Copenhagen in November 1996. The progress report submitted to the meeting summarised the situation as follows:

“There was a slow start caused by the difficulties...on the Nordic side, in identifying contacts, co-ordinators and financial support arrangements and more recently some budgetary difficulties have arisen at the Scottish end but these are being addressed and significant progress has been made in each field”.

Despite the funding difficulties, it was clear that progress was being made in each of the project areas with fully established networks, an increasingly active programme of meetings and other activities, as well as specific collaborative projects. Indeed, the meeting felt able to adopt the outline for an evaluation plan proposed by the NCM Secretariat to review the specific results achieved under the projects, to obtain advice about possible future project cooperation and to learn more generally about how this type of international cooperation should be organised and implemented in the future - especially given the ongoing discussions about preparing an Article 10 programme for submission to the EC.

3.4 Copenhagen to Oslo

The resolution of the funding difficulties improved the climate for practical cooperation considerably during the last year of the cooperation. Based on internal evaluations provided by the co-ordinators, there was evidence of a clear profile being developed and significant, positive progress in each of the cooperation project areas, all of which had ideas for continuing the cooperation, for example in the context of the Article 10 programme. The third annual review meeting in Oslo in November 1997 confirmed that:

“significant results had been achieved in all four sectors. Useful networks had been established [...] and a number of projects and seminars had been planned, which were well on the way to being implemented.”

The imminent reform of the Structural Funds had also provided a practical opportunity to exploit the network in the interests of securing a good deal for the sparsely populated areas of the Nordic countries and Scotland. At the initiative of HIE, a series of seminars was organised in Nairn and Brussels involving officials and researchers from Scotland, Finland and Sweden during the first half of 1997 to make a strong case for retention of EU support for the Highlands & Islands and the Objective 6 areas of Finland and Sweden. Supported by commissioned research (Aalbu and Bachtler, 1997; Copus, 1997), the outcome was a lobbying document submitted to the European Commission and other bodies prior to the publication of Agenda 2000 in July 1997.

As the final year of the three-year co-operation drew to a close, an external evaluation was commissioned. The overall assessment of this evaluation (Bachtler, Brown and Raines, 1999) was overwhelmingly positive. Virtually all partners in the process – government officials, co-ordinators, project participants – had a high regard for the co-operation and were keen for it to continue. Notwithstanding some organisational problems, the co-operation could point to important achievements: a completely new co-operation process had been established at the policy level; and in four sectors (IT, SMEs, university networking and forestry) project cooperation had made significant progress in all areas, with limited funding, within three years.

3.5 From Skibo 2000 to Örnköldsvik 2003: a new phase

During 1998-99, Nordic-Scottish co-operation was effectively put ‘on hold’. The international negotiations concerning Agenda 2000 and the future of the Structural Funds took priority for those involved in regional development in Scotland and the Nordic countries. Project-level co-operation was subsumed within the new generation of Interreg III programmes (Northern Periphery, North Sea). At the same time, there was a period of reflection among the Nordic countries concerning whether and how co-operation should be taken forward, especially in the context of the planning for the 2000-2005 programme of Nordic regional political cooperation. In Scotland, major constitutional change was also underway with the creation of a Scottish Parliament, the election of a Scottish government, and the Scottish Executive taking over most of the functions of the Scottish Office.

Therefore, it was not until late 1999 that the necessary collective impetus was forthcoming on both the Nordic and Scottish sides for a new phase of co-operation. In

Scotland, devolution gave the Scottish Executive more scope to engage in developing international links and, with a wide-ranging process of review and reform of economic development policies in Scotland in progress there was clear interest in exchanging ideas and 'best practice' with the Nordic countries. On the Nordic side, NÄRP agreed that future co-operation could usefully be focused on exchanging experiences regarding Structural Funds and research and education, while project-level activity should be organised through Interreg III.

Following a protracted period of bilateral discussion and planning during 2000, the third Nordic-Scottish Conference was held on 1-2 March 2001 at Skibo Castle near Dornoch in north-eastern Scotland. Like its predecessors, it involved senior officials from the Nordic countries and Scotland with the aim of discussing the development of joint approaches to shared challenges in the fields of regional policy and sustainable economic development in the Nordic and North Atlantic areas. For the first time, officials from the Faeroe Islands and Greenland, as well as the European Commission, participated, as did people from the private sector.

The Skibo Conference underlined the common interests between the Nordic countries and Scotland, such as the sparsity of population and fragmented settlement structures, the challenges of transport and communication, the key role of SMEs as generators of economic development, the role of competence and knowledge, the need to preserve environmental quality and resources, the need to promote social justice and equal opportunities and the importance of culture and community structures. The Conference also recognised the value of joint working to address these issues and acknowledged the importance of sustainable solutions, which are beneficial in economic, social and environmental terms. Specifically, it identified potential policy responses and possible areas of co-operation in the following fields:

- *Regional Policy and Sustainable Development*: changes in outlook and adaptation on the part of individuals, communities, enterprises and institutions; new forms of institutional planning, policy design and delivery; sustainable tourism; effective strategies for responding to potential catastrophes in the rural economy (oil spills, food safety).
- *Regional Policy in Rural and Peripheral Areas*: promoting active and successful communities; the optimal role of the public sector in the restructuring and diversification of rural economies; decentralisation of public sector jobs (government offices, higher education institutions, research facilities); the quality of employment in rural areas; involving the private sector more in economic development; service provision for rural areas (transport, utilities, public/private community services); raising awareness of the distinct circumstances of the Northern peripherality.
- *New Economy and the Information Society*: the exploitation of knowledge and new technology for and by SMEs and communities; effective networking between companies and individuals; connecting sources of knowledge (universities, research institutes) with users and businesses; developing common approaches to and resources for e-learning.

- *Business Growth*: promoting entrepreneurship in all areas, especially through the education of young people; developing networks between SMEs; developing joint opportunities and interconnections in relation to North Atlantic transport, especially in relation to oil and gas developments in Northern waters.
- *Skills and Learning*: benchmarking of skills shortages and mechanisms for re-skilling to get people back to work; comparison of best practice in responding to labour market demand at the regional or area level; developing the right type of skills for the information age.
- *Global Connections*: promoting broadband development in less populated areas by, at an early stage, the sharing of information about country and regional strategies, including the aggregation of local public sector demand, and progress to date; research into trends in the application of ICT infrastructure technology in such areas and planning regimes; promoting e-commerce and best practice in e-learning for SMEs.
- *Community Development*: developing networks to promote bottom-up community development including sharing 'best practices' and learning from mistakes; promoting the involvement of young people in communities in rural areas by asking young people what they want and promoting youth exchanges; developing business involvement in community development.

In order to take this commitment forward, the Conference set out the aims and objectives for future Nordic-Scottish co-operation in these potential areas of co-operation. Subsequently, EPRC and Nordregio prepared an Action Plan, indicating how the co-operation objectives could be implemented over the period 2001-2005. Approved by NÄRP and the Scottish Executive in Autumn 2001, it identified three types of co-operation action and, for each, set out the goals, specific activities, responsibilities and indicators of success:

- policy co-operation – joint studies and policy papers, contributions to EU policy debates; the exchange of experience regarding common challenges, programme management, competition rules, northern dimension etc; and networking and exchange agreements;
- practical co-operation in regional development: sustainable development; rural development and peripheral areas; the new economy and the information society; business growth; skills and learning; global connections; community development;
- support for institution-building and policy development in the Candidate Countries, notably through twinning covenants but also via bilateral initiatives.

On the basis of the Action Plan, a Nordic-Scottish Co-operation Liaison Group was established comprising representatives of the Nordic and Scottish government departments responsible for regional policy, as well as the Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordregio and EPRC. The Group has met seven times from November 2001 to June 2003, the chair of the Group being held in turn by a representative from

Scotland and one of the Nordic countries. A website has also been established with up-to-date information on the organisation and operation of Nordic-Scottish Co-operation, as well as links to related activities.

The latest milestone in Nordic-Scottish Co-operation is the fourth high-level conference, being held in Örnköldsvik, Sweden, on 6-9 September 2003. It will bring together Nordic and Scottish senior officials and private sector interests from central, regional and local levels in order to identify actions which address common challenges, in particular those of peripherality and sparse population in a European context. The objective of the conference is to review progress and further develop opportunities and arrangements for Nordic-Scottish Co-operation.

4 EU Programmes for Trans-National Co-operation

In order to provide a basis for the analysis of Nordic-Scottish co-operation under the framework of Interreg IIC North Sea Region and the Article 10 Programme Northern Periphery, this chapter will provide a brief overview of the background of these programmes. First, it will address the policy background of Interreg IIC, which is indeed also the background of the Article 10 programme. Thereafter, it will briefly introduce the two specific programmes covering Nordic-Scottish co-operation. The chapter concludes with some remarks on the typical achievements of Interreg IIC programmes.

4.1 Policy background – Interreg IIC

The Community Initiative Interreg IIC, as well as the Art. 10 Programme Northern Periphery were set up in the wake of the drafting of the *European Spatial Development Perspective* (ESDP). Indeed, during the course of the ESDP process (cf. Böhme, 2002; Faludi and Waterhout, 2002), strand C was added to the Community Initiative Interreg II, in 1996. This was done in order to promote trans-national co-operation in the field of spatial planning. For this, seven trans-national co-operation areas, each covering a wide range of countries and regions, were set up. When preparing the operational programmes for these areas, Member States and regional and local authorities presented a joint strategy related to the areas in question. Interreg IIC is the forerunner of Interreg IIIB for the programming period 2000-2006 (now covering 11 trans-national co-operation areas). In the large co-operation areas, trans-national co-operation in spatial development projects sharing common organisational, administrative and financial structures was attempted for the first time under Interreg IIC.

Until the implementation of Interreg IIC, the debate on European spatial planning centred around national and European actors, regardless of whether the focus was on planning for Europe or planning in Europe. While the national and European levels can formulate spatial policies, their implementation and application (as well as more concrete planning) require other actors to be taken on board. Obviously, the local and regional levels offer an important platform for turning policy concepts such as polycentric development, rural urban partnership, accessibility etc. into ‘physical’ reality. Regarding planning for Europe and the main policy document, the ESDP, it needs to be borne in mind that there are neither formal instruments nor funds attached to it. The only instrument directly related to the ESDP is the Community Initiative Interreg.

The aim of Interreg IIC was to:

- promote a harmonious and balanced development of the territory of the European Union;
- foster trans-national co-operation within a common framework in the field of spatial planning by the Member States, regions and other authorities and actors;
- contribute to improve the impact of Community policies on spatial development and

- help Member States and their regions co-operate on a pro-active approach to common problems, including those linked to water resource management caused by floods and drought.

The core focus of Interreg IIC and IIIB is on trans-national spatial development strategies, co-operation among cities and between rural and urban areas, development of efficient and sustainable transport and communications systems, promotion of the environment and good management of natural resources, particularly water resources, promotion and good management of cultural heritage, small-scale infrastructure (roads & motorways excluded), maritime and insular co-operation and linkages of outermost regions. As only small-scale infrastructure can be funded under Interreg IIIB (IIC did not allow infrastructure investments), the main emphasis is on conducting studies, exchanging experience, organising seminars etc. Thus Interreg offers a platform for discussing and developing innovative approaches to integrated spatial development at a trans-national level. Given the multitude of national and regional varieties and differences facing each other in trans-national planning, the most important task of Interreg IIC projects was probably the creation of a common language, development scenarios and perspectives regarding spatial planning and development. The focus changed for Interreg IIIB projects where practical and tangible outputs are positively promoted.

Content of the ESDP

“Considering the existing regional disparities of development and the – in some cases – still contradictory spatial effects of Community policies, all those responsible for spatial development should appreciate the policy guideline for spatial development. The European Spatial Development Perspective is based on the EU aim of achieving balanced and sustainable development, in particular by strengthening economic and social cohesion. In accordance with the definition laid down in the United Nations Brundtland Report, sustainable development covers not only environmentally sound economic development, which preserves present resources for use by future generations, but also includes balanced spatial development. This entails, in particular, reconciling the social and economic claims for spatial development with the area’s ecological and cultural functions and, hence, contributing to a sustainable, and at larger scale, balanced territorial development. The EU will therefore gradually develop, in line with safeguarding regional diversity, from an Economic Union into an Environmental Union and a Social Union.

This is reflected in the triangle of objectives linking the three following fundamental goals of European policy:

- economic and social cohesion;
- conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage; and
- more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

To achieve more spatially balanced development, these goals must be pursued simultaneously in all regions of the EU and their interaction taken into account.

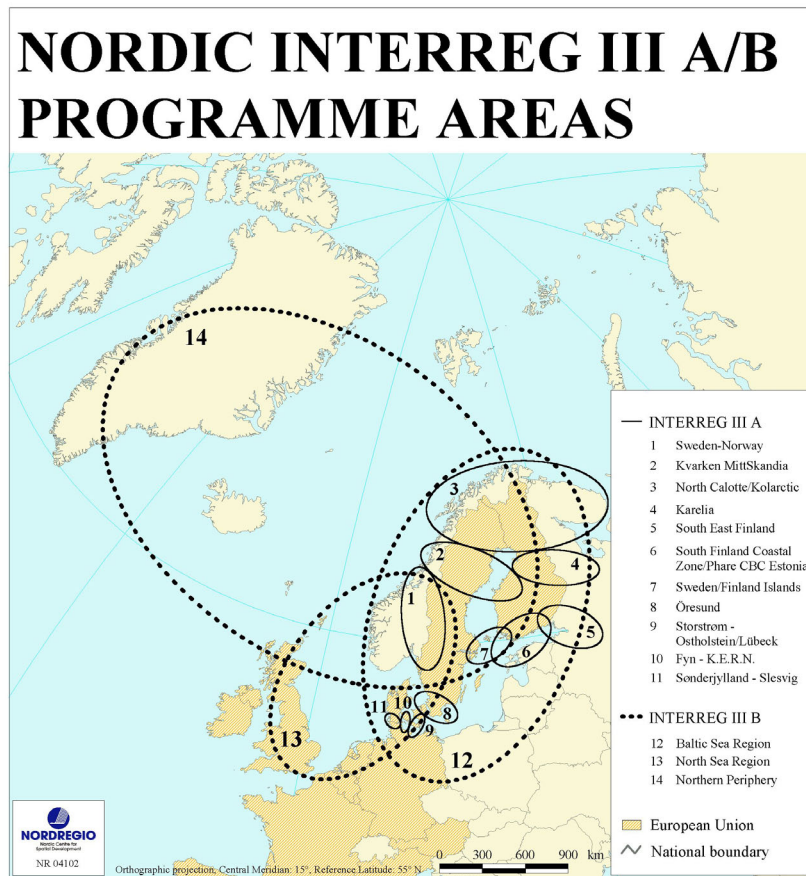
Spatial development policies promote sustainable development of the EU through a balanced spatial structure. As early as 1994, the Ministers responsible for spatial planning agreed on three policy guidelines for the spatial development of the EU:

- development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural relationship;
- securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge; and
- sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage. “

(CEC 1999:10-11)

Thus, one may argue that European spatial policies identified bottlenecks at the European level, i.e. in a top-down manner, and through Interreg raised awareness of these bottlenecks at the local and regional levels and encouraged these local and regional levels to approach the bottlenecks in a bottom-up manner. A gentler interpretation would be that, through Interreg, the local and regional levels have been invited to participate in the European spatial planning policy discourse, by applying and contesting the policy aims developed at the European level.

What has been achieved through Interreg is that the policy concepts and aims discussed in European spatial policies have now been disseminated throughout Europe. Considering that terms such as 'spatial planning' or 'polycentricity' were rarely spotted in the mid nineties and often considered as strange, underlines the persuasive power of an almost hegemonic European spatial planning discourse. Indeed, today every spatial planner or policy-maker who wants to be up-to-date uses these terms.



4.2 Programmes covering Nordic-Scottish co-operation

Within the overall framework of EU spatial policies, two programmes cover Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects. They started life as Article 10 and Interreg IIC programmes in 1998 and 1997 respectively, and both now continue as Interreg IIIB programmes in 2000-2006. Although the impact of the various objectives of the two programmes differ, the projects carried out under them are studied equally as practical examples for co-operation involving Nordic and Scottish partners.

The Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme

The Northern Periphery Article 10 programme was launched in 1998. Developing from an *ad hoc* Nordic-Scottish co-operation initiative covering projects in the SME, IT, forestry and higher education sectors, the overall objective of the programme was to contribute to the improvement of services and value creation in the northern areas of Finland, Scotland, Sweden and Norway.

The programme focused on the development of new knowledge about innovative and effective solutions for sustainable business activity, service provision and land use/spatial development planning. Organisations such as enterprises, public organisations, educational institutes and other relevant bodies were invited to apply for funding for pilot projects related to programme sub-actions.

The total number of projects was 36. Funding was applied for up until the end of 1999, with projects ending as late as September 2001. The total budget of the programme was 13.33 MEURO, of which half was national co-funding and the other half was ERDF and Norwegian funding. The Northern Periphery Programme was implemented through three sub-actions:

1. Provision of services
 - Maintenance of household oriented services
 - Information technology
 - Service for SMEs
2. Business development and sustainable resource management
 - Developing the sustainable management of natural resources
 - Developing the sustainable management of cultural resources
 - Co-operation among SMEs and between SMEs and commercial or development partners
3. Documentation and Exchange of good practice
 - Research projects focusing on: the concepts of peripherality and northern conditions, strategies for rural economic development; the situation concerning transportation and communication and welfare strategies; service provision in sparsely populated areas
 - Documentation of existing examples of good practice

Interreg IIC North Sea Programme

The Interreg IIC Community Initiative was launched in 1997 in recognition of the need for the Member States to get involved in a more operational way in co-operating on regional and spatial planning, inspired by the ESDP development process during the 1990s. The North Sea Programme was one of seven Interreg IIC regions and

covered 57 regions in parts of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Scotland and England).

The programme focused on planning activities through trans-national networking, the exchange of experience, feasibility studies, pilot projects and research (joint research, including feasibility studies designed to pave the way for common practical actions).

The programme had a funding budget of 14.3 MEURO and ran between 1997 and 1999, with the latest possible termination in 2001, implementing 45 projects in 53 regions within the above-mentioned countries.

Interreg IIC North Sea projects have related to at least one of the nine measures under the following three priority headings:

1. Urban and Regional Systems
 - Measure 1.1: The Development of the Relationship between Urban and Rural Areas
 - Measure 1.2: The Development of Towns and Cities
 - Measure 1.3: Urban Networks
2. Transport and Communication
 - Measure 2.1: Improvement of North Sea Links
 - Measure 2.2: Promotion of Multi-modal Transport Centres
 - Measure 2.3: Information and Communication Technologies to enhance more Regionally Balanced Development
3. Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage
 - Measure 3.1: Promotion of Integrated Coastal Zone Management
 - Measure 3.2: Protection of Valuable Natural Areas and Wise Management of Natural Resources
 - Measure 3.3: Promotion of Cultural Tourism

4.3 Typical achievements

Generally, the broad geographical scope, as well as the thematic focus, implies that there are a number of overall conclusions as regards the outcome of the programmes. Drawing on previous studies and ex-ante evaluations, we will briefly present the typical achievements of such programmes in order to provide a backdrop to the subsequent analysis of Nordic-Scottish co-operation under these programmes.

Project Outcomes

Outcomes constitute what is financed and accomplished (or concretised) with the money allocated to a project. In general, outputs may take the form of new facilities or infrastructure (e.g. rehabilitation of an urban wasteland, a purification plant, tourist accommodation). They may also take the form of non-material services (e.g. training, consultancy, information etc.).

The Interreg IIC regulations set clear limits on what is considered eligible and consequently on what type of outcome can be achieved. Generally, the concrete outcome of Interreg IIC projects consists of various kinds of reports and books, websites and a wide range of workshops and conferences.

As regards the various publications, a differentiation into analytical and strategic reports is possible, and it appears that the majority of the reports are of an explanatory, descriptive or analytical nature. Turning to events, such as workshops, seminars and conferences, it is documented that despite the trans-national character of the programmes, a large proportion of events tend to be carried out in projects targeted at domestic audiences and issues. In addition, events are either of an internal character (events which were open for project participants or hand-picked guests only) or public nature (events which were open to general public). Thus, the networking and dissemination effects usually vary accordingly.

Focusing on these types of outcomes, innovative approaches have been investigated and the spatial planning ideas advocated in the ESDP have been promoted and brought forward as regards discussions on their meaning and their application.

Project Results

The results are comprised of the advantages (or disadvantages) that the direct beneficiaries of the project obtain. The results can be observed when an operator completes an action and accounts for the way in which allocated funds were spent and managed. At this point s/he may show, for example, that accessibility has been improved due to the construction of a road, or that the firms receiving advice claimed to be satisfied.

In the case of Interreg IIC, the results are comprised mainly of aspects of the establishment of networks and the first steps towards developing elements of the ESDP. When it comes to networking and international contacts, these are obviously the main objectives of an Interreg IIC programme.

Nevertheless, it also appears that trans-national co-operation is a means of improving national co-operation networks. Generally, it can be assumed that the majority of project participants improve their networks in particular within the public administration sectors. As regards the development of elements of the ESDP, the main focus here is on reports and conferences. The utility of a report, however, does not only depend upon the quality of the content alone, but also on its diffusion. If no final conclusion can be drawn concerning this latter aspect, one can note generally that a majority of project participants will claim to have used the outcome of the project in their everyday working lives. In general terms, an increase in the level of understanding as regards spatial planning and development in a European context results from such initiatives, i.e. participants have a better understanding of such matters after project completion and/or of public administration in partner countries after having participated in a project. Improving knowledge on administrative structures in other countries is thus an important precondition for the emergence of a consensual approach towards European spatial development.

The experience from Interreg IIC and a more flexible framework suggest that more far-reaching results can be expected from the on-going co-operation project funded under Interreg IIIB.

Project Impacts

Impact is defined as “*a consequence affecting direct addressees following the end of their participation in an intervention or after the completion of public facilities, or as an indirect consequence affecting other addressees who may be winners or losers*” (EC, 1999 Means collection). Certain impacts can be observed among the direct addressees after a few months or in the longer term. Some impacts appear indirectly, whilst others can be observed at the macro-economic or macro-social level (e.g. improvement in the image of the assisted region); these are global impacts. At most, changes of perspective could induce shifts in spatial policy making and, in turn, in socio-economic spatial patterns.

As Interreg IIC programmes were very much in the mainstream of both general European policy developments in the fields of EU enlargement and spatial planning, it will also in future be hard to relate developments directly to such a programme. In any case, impacts are likely to occur on a long-term basis, as marginal elements within more general policy trends. They are therefore extremely hard to measure, especially at this early stage. Given the ‘soft’ aims and results of the programmes it is hardly possible to assess any direct impacts with current evaluation techniques.

In general terms it can be argued that European integration is a general process that concerns all countries participating in Interreg IIC programmes. In its wake, the aim is to establish closer relations at all levels, regional, national and European. Many projects contribute to the promotion of this aspect through comprehensive and geographically widespread activities. Such integration is not, however, to be interpreted as a first step in the formation of a single, trans-national, functional region encompassing a programming area. Finally, the main impact of Interreg IIC programmes should be seen in terms of greater knowledge and understanding of spatial planning in a European context. The Programmes have, together with numerous other developments, contributed to the opening of (mental) borders in trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation.

5 Learning in Trans-national Projects

The concept of learning is, in appearance, a common, everyday notion: learning is implied by every human activity, from the first perceptions of a baby facing itself and the world for the first time. Even leisure activities, such as travelling, going to the cinema, reading a newspaper can be considered as learning experiences. It can be argued that there is a learning element in every activity and in every moment of our lives, even though, in some cases, the learning involved in our (or other people's) actions can be unintentional, subconscious and even undesired (for example when we learn 'truths' that seem to defy all our beliefs and require us to face a different reality than the one we are used to).

At a superficial level, the concept of learning is so intuitional, immediate and of direct impact to everyone's life that every man or woman in the street should be able to give an answer to the question: what is learning? These responses, however, may be very different, depending on whom we ask. The concept of learning is much more complex than it may seem at first sight, as it connects to underlying notions of knowledge and truth. Learning is a concept that closely reflects the accepted paradigm on knowledge: these are reflected in the approach to what we can and should learn, to how we learn, and to the purpose of learning. For Socrates, for example, learning reflected the possibility of finding out an absolute truth innate in all human beings, the method for this is the so-called 'maieutic'. For his scholar Plato, learning becomes 'dialectic', i.e. the capacity of thinking in abstract concepts, the ideas; the perfect entities of the hyper-uranium (the ideal world inspiring the imperfect, empirical one we live in), as opposed to the imperfect opinions based on perceptions of the real world. The meaning attributed to learning is also linked to the prevailing concept of science and the role attributed to it (epistemology).

Of course, the understanding of the concept of learning (and of knowledge) has repercussions on how (and if) this concept is translated into policy. The scope of the study is related to Nordic-Scottish Co-operation projects or, more extensively, regional and economic development policies. In this area, learning has progressively become a key element of policies in the European Union. This has two elements:

- First as regards their content. Learning is increasingly considered to be a crucial element of the European policy agenda and of economic development strategies across the EU. As well as knowledge, learning has become one of the 'buzz-words' of the current policy lexicon. The Lisbon European Council (March 2000), for example, emphasised the importance of a knowledge-based economy as a policy aim through which it is possible to foster a competitive environment across the Union. The policy imperatives of the Lisbon agenda include, among others, the aims of improving access to communications infrastructure; supporting developments in research and innovation; promoting education and training for example by developing local learning centres and promoting new basic skills (also through the so-called life-long learning).
- Second, at a methodological level. Economic development policies are increasingly based on evidence and scrutinised as to their value for money and effectiveness. This is associated with a large amount of evaluation activity

carried out before, during and after the implementation of policies to target them to the desired outcomes and for lesson-drawing.

The trend identified above is clearly reflected in the mandate of the current research, whose main tasks have been described in the introduction.

5.1 Different dimensions of learning

Philosophical considerations aside, in approaching this study the research team faced a first challenge in defining a concept of learning that could be applied to Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects. This would have to reflect, on the one hand, the immanent character of learning and, on the other, the peculiar features of transnational co-operation activities.

Definitions of learning vary broadly in the literature. According to Karl W. Deutsch, for example, a political scientist who formulated an original model for explaining the operational mechanics of political systems (the so called cybernetic model), learning is seen as the ability of any political decision-system to invent and carry out new policies to meet new conditions related to its ability to combine items of information into new patterns (cf. Jachtenfuchs 1996, p. 34).

On the other hand, another definition is provided by Argyris and Schön who argue that: (organisational) learning involves the detection and correction of error. When the error detected and corrected permits the organisation to carry its present policies or achieve its present objectives, then the error-detection-correction process is single-loop learning (cf. Jachtenfuchs 1996, p. 34).

Neither of these definitions have however been adopted for this research project. They also emphasise different (but similar) aspects of learning: the first sees learning as the process through which a system reacts to changes occurring in the surrounding environment; while the second emphasises the corrective function of learning within an organisation that works to achieve set objectives. From both definitions, however, one crucial characteristic of learning emerges, i.e. the dynamism of the concept. Learning is considered to be a process, a dynamic process, through which changes are sought and then willingly introduced into a system to enable it to face some challenges (a mutated environment or its inability to meet targeted objectives).

This first consideration – i.e. seeing learning as a dynamic process - was the starting point for the research team to identify a definition of learning that would be applied to Nordic-Scottish Co-operation projects.

The literature review undertaken also showed that there are different types, or dimensions, of learning: on the one hand individual learning can be juxtaposed with collective learning (among which are organisational and institutional learning), on the other hand learning can be simple (or single-loop) or complex. The first differentiation (individual versus collective learning) is to some extent self-evident. It relates to the nature of the subject that is active in the learning process. This can be an individual (individual learning) or an organisation (e.g. a public body, a private firm, or indeed, a policy network). Collective learning is considered as the learning of an organisation considered being an entity, rather than the simple sum of the individual

learning of the people acting within the organisation. It relates to the interaction between the individuals acting in the organisation; it can be reflected, for example, in the change of the rules through which the organisation operates.

The distinction between simple and complex learning, instead, refers to the object of the learning process. Simple learning (or single-loop learning, as described above) relates to a simple process of the correction of behaviour in response to the inability to achieve set objectives. It has been described as a cycle of error detection and correction activities. In the policy-making arena, this applies for instance to evaluation activity carried out on implemented policies to re-target them or to design new ones. The case of Structural Fund interim evaluation is an example of this simple learning concept; this concept is also described in the evaluation literature as the formative dimension of evaluation. Evaluations undertaken on policies implemented elsewhere can of course also be considered as good examples of simple learning. In this case, learning would take the form of ‘lesson-drawing’ across space and/or time. Complex learning (or double-loop learning), on the other hand, has been described as the learning that occurs when beliefs systems, paradigms, or, the way in which we understand the world and the goals of actors change, as a result of the learning process (Jachtenfuchs, 1996, op. cit.). Complex learning changes the way actors think, perceive problems and act to solve them. It affects problem-setting and goal-identification as well as goal-achievement.

5.2 Trans-nationality and lesson-drawing

The issues outlined above are useful for understanding the complexity of learning as a policy-concept, but what does learning entail as regards trans-national co-operation projects? What are the distinctive features of learning in this sphere?

Trans-national co-operation projects such as those under examination in the current study (Interreg II C North Sea and art. 10 Northern Periphery Programme), are characterised by a number of distinctive features.

- First, they are regional development initiatives. They have macro-aims dictated by their nature, i.e. the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of areas that are disadvantaged or lagging-behind due to their geographical, economic and social characteristics.
- Second, they involve, by definition, actors from different countries and with different cultures (for instance, different institutional culture, e.g. as regards the role of the public sector in the field of economic development).
- Third, the projects target the identification and/or application of solutions to a common problem.
- Fourth, they tend to be cross-sectoral and to involve actors coming from different professional backgrounds (e.g. public and private sector, economist, planners, IT specialists etc.), these will have different frames of reference, paradigms for interpreting the world and would see problems and possible solutions from different perspectives.

- Lastly, they tend to involve actors coming from regions that, still reflecting some common characteristics (such as, in our case, peripherality or harsh climate conditions), have different socio-economic and territorial peculiarities, problems and potentials. This can be reflected in the different approaches that various partners may have in dealing with the common problems that are faced by the co-operation project.

From the points above, it emerges that the main feature of trans-national co-operation projects, as opposed to other initiatives in the field of regional development, is that they tend to involve a range of diversified actors, actors that have different ‘frameworks’ for understanding the world, different ways of thinking, due to their different socio-cultural and professional backgrounds. Given this consideration, an interesting definition of learning appears i.e. that developed by Jachtenfuchs, according to which learning occurs when a new approach is developed and/or adopted to problem setting and solving (Jachtenfuchs, 1996, op. cit.).

Applying this definition to the Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects analysed in this research, it can be affirmed that learning occurs in trans-national co-operation projects when, through these projects, new approaches to problem setting and solving are identified and/or implemented.

Thus, trans-national co-operation projects (and Nordic-Scottish Co-operation projects among them) can contribute, through the exchange of visions and practices among the ‘differently minded’ actors involved, to the generation of diverse and new ways of thinking, conceptualising problems and identifying solutions.

5.3 Learning in Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects

Having established a definition of learning that can be applied to Nordic-Scottish co-operation (above), to understand fully what learning consists of in practice in this context, it is necessary to carry out a more analytical, detailed work on the projects themselves, so as to better identify the following.

- *Who learns in the context of these projects?:* Trans-national co-operation projects (and Nordic Scottish co-operation projects in particular) involve a broad range of actors from the EU level (EU policy-makers and administrators), to the national level (national policy-makers and civil servants), to the programme level (programme administrators, such as for example, the Interreg Secretariats), down to the project level (the international project team). Also the beneficiaries of the projects may be envisaged as potential learning actors.
- *What is learned?* The projects implemented cover a wide range of sectors and themes; at the same time learning can relate to the *modus operandi* of trans-national co-operation and to broader procedural issues.
- *At what stages of the co-operation project does learning occur?* Nordic-Scottish Co-operation projects have a life cycle that encompasses different stages: project design, appraisal, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation. Learning can in theory occur distinctively in each of these phases and at the same time across all phases as a whole.

- *In what ways does learning occur?* Learning can occur in different ways, with different mechanics, e.g. depending on how information flows are managed and on the mechanisms in place for transferring knowledge (existing or gained) across partners. Understanding such mechanics is crucial to enhance the awareness of, and the potential for future exploitation of, what was learned.
- *What are the outcomes of the learning process?* In other words, the tangible outputs (such as publications, seminar, conferences, websites etc.) and/or non-material outcomes (such as the 'exposure' to new ideas and opportunities, that can be encapsulated in the change of working routines, for instance) than can be associated to the project.

The final point, moreover, is crucially linked to the question of the efficiency of co-operation projects; in other words, whether, in consideration of the trade-off between costs and benefits of such projects, the learning associated is such as to justify their existence and whether these projects involve efficient, effective and relevant learning.

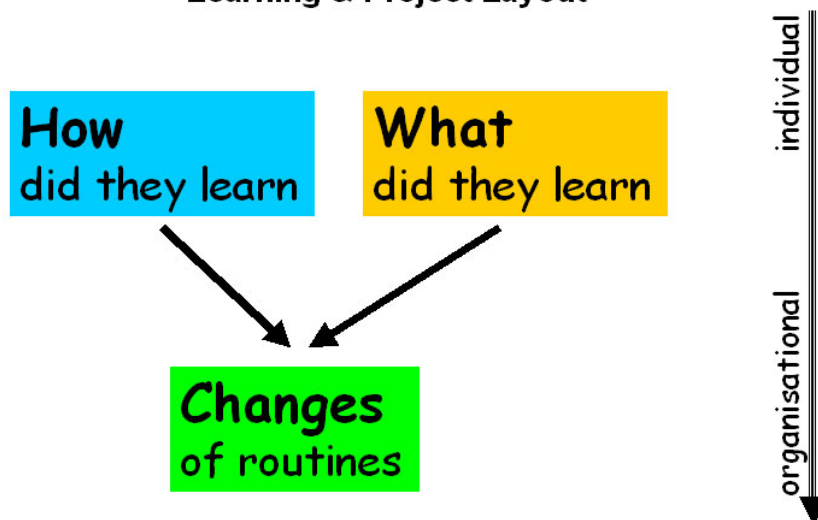
PART C – Trans-National Nordic-Scottish Co-operation

The focus of this project is on analysing co-operation projects carried out under the framework of Interreg IIC North Sea Region and the Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme as regards lessons for policy and practice. Whereas programme evaluations assess whether the projects have contributed to achieving the aims set out in the programme documents, this study stresses the question of what has been learned in the projects and what lessons can be drawn from that.

As the programmes were not exclusively designed for Nordic-Scottish co-operation, the study decided to develop its own focus based on the aims of Nordic-Scottish co-operation presented above. Which lessons can be learned as regards the topics put forward in the Skibo document? Given the special nature of the programmes under which these co-operation projects were funded, we found that lessons can be drawn on different types of learning that took place in the co-operation projects studied.

Accordingly, the project focused on three different moments of trans-national learning. First, we discuss the content of the project to see which particular issues have been at stake, including also the outputs and project characteristics (WHAT). Second, we look at the project teams in order to draw conclusions with regard to how learning, and what kind of knowledge transfers and creation were facilitated in the various project (HOW). Third, we assess the change of routines as an indication of whether such new knowledge has been implemented (CHANGES).

Learning & Project Layout

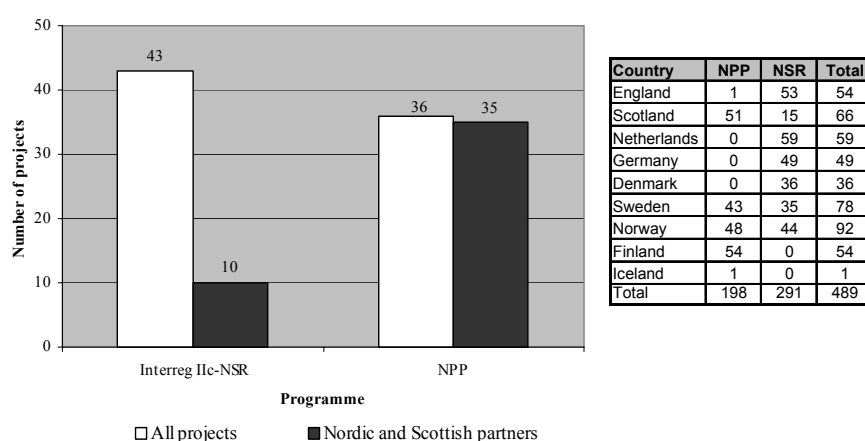


To a large extent this section will apply the information provided above, on the background of the EU programmes, to the specific Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects.

Altogether there have been 79 projects funded under the Interreg IIC Programme North Sea Region (NSR) and Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) most of them running between 1998 and 2000. All in all, close to 300 partners have been involved in Interreg IIC North Sea projects. For the Northern Periphery Programme we counted approximately 200 partners. On average, six partners were involved in each co-operation project, but with a range that stretches from 2 to 19 involved partners per project.

Out of 79 projects, 45 involved both Nordic and Scottish partners and are thus considered Nordic-Scottish projects. These are mainly projects under the Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme. The figure below gives an overview of the geographical distribution of project partners.

Projects with Nordic and Scottish partners in Interreg II C NSR and NPP (Article 10)



(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

The strong Finnish position in the Northern Periphery Programme illustrated in the table becomes even more evident when looking at the number of lead partners. 50% of the lead partners are Finnish and about 33% Scottish. As regards the Interreg IIC programme, the Netherlands accounts for 25% of the lead partners whereas the rest are fairly equal distributed among the UK, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

6 Overview of the Project themes (WHAT)

Turning to the thematic *foci* of the project, a first assessment is based on the results of the screening phase and the returned questionnaires. The project information gathered has been systematised in terms of thematic and content focus, where one obvious point of departure is the seven topics identified in the Skibo meeting as being of specific importance for future Nordic-Scottish co-operation:

- *Regional Policy and Sustainable Development:* changes in outlook and adaptation on the part of individuals, communities, enterprises and institutions; new forms of institutional planning, policy design

and delivery; sustainable tourism; effective strategies for responding to potential catastrophes for the rural economy (oil spills, food safety).

- *Regional Policy in Rural and Peripheral Areas:*
promoting active and successful communities; the optimal role of the public sector in the restructuring and diversification of rural economies; decentralisation of public sector jobs (government offices, higher education institutions, research facilities); the quality of employment in rural areas; involving the private sector more in economic development; service provision for rural areas (transport, utilities, public/private community services); raising awareness of the distinct circumstances of Northern peripherality.
- *New Economy and the Information Society:*
the exploitation of knowledge and new technology for and by SMEs and communities; effective networking between companies and individuals; connecting sources of knowledge (universities, research institutes) with users and businesses; developing common approaches to and resources for e-learning.
- *Business Growth:*
promoting entrepreneurship in all areas, especially through the education of young people; developing networks between SMEs; developing joint opportunities and interconnections in relation to North Atlantic transport, especially in relation to oil and gas developments in Northern waters.
- *Skills and Learning:*
benchmarking of skills shortages and mechanisms for re-skilling to get people back to work; comparison of best practice in responding to labour market demand at the regional or area level; developing the right type of skills for the information age.
- *Global Connections:*
promoting broadband development in less populated areas by sharing, at an early stage, information about country and regional strategies, including information on the aggregation of local public sector demand, and progress to date; research into trends in the application of ICT infrastructure technology in such areas and planning regimes; promoting e-commerce and best practice in e-learning for SMEs.
- *Community Development:*
developing networks to promote bottom-up community development including sharing experiences of 'best practice' and learning from mistakes; promoting the involvement of young people in communities in rural areas by asking them what they want, and promoting youth exchanges; developing business involvement in community development.

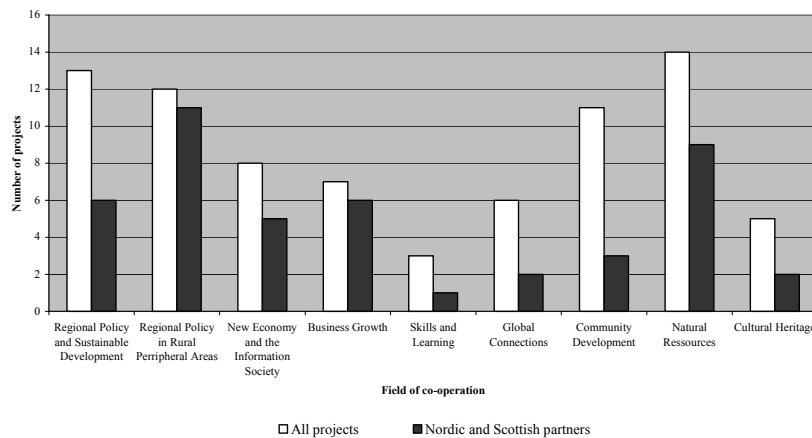
During this work, it became evident that some of the projects have *foci* other than these. The work carried out has shown that we needed to reconsider and define the seven topics mentioned above, as they do not necessarily fit the scope of the projects. Therefore, the issues of *natural resources* and *cultural heritage* have been added to the list. Furthermore, an alternative set of more result-oriented co-operation topics has been developed and will be discussed later on in this document.

The figures illustrate the distribution of projects over the various issues as regards the number of projects and as regards financial expenditure. The light (blue) columns reflect the Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects and the dark (red) columns reflect all projects participating in the programmes.

The major priority lies in the fields of ‘regional policy in rural and peripheral areas’ and ‘natural heritage’. Topics such as ‘regional policy and sustainable development’, ‘new economy and the information society’ and ‘business growth’ seem to be of average interest. The remaining topics are considered to be of minor interest in the framework of the assessed co-operation programmes. The low score as regards ‘community development’ is probably a result of diverging interpretations of this concept.

What

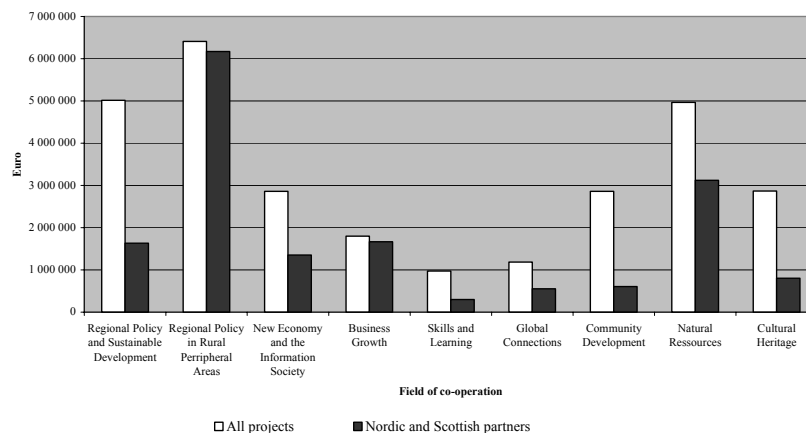
**Comparison of Thematic Focus:
Number of Projects**



(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

What

**Comparison of Thematic Focus:
Financial Expenditure**



(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

After this rather general overview of co-operation issues, we will now turn to a more thorough discussion of the outputs and questions dealt with in the various projects. We will concentrate on new insights and knowledge created by the projects and on the potential use of this new knowledge. Here, we have identified four main fields:

- New or improved methods and techniques in the field of private business development
- New or improved methods and techniques improving public service and infrastructure management
- Sustaining and utilising natural, cultural and social resources
- Analysing spatial characteristics, development and transfer of new knowledge

A majority of projects – especially as regards the Northern Periphery Programme – focused on improved techniques and methodologies. Indeed, 21 Northern Periphery Projects can be grouped together under this topic. By comparing the projects it is apparent that there are considerable variations with regard to what topics the projects are dealing with and what kind of measures have been implemented. In some, a new technique was used or tested to reach a certain aim e.g. to improve IT accessibility in peripheral areas, while others had the objective of developing new or improved methods for future activities. Projects dealing with new technologies and methods can be divided into two sub-groups based on the purpose of the projects, that is, whether their objective was to stimulate or assist private business development in the area or whether the aim was to improve public service and infrastructure management.

Other dominant features of these projects were “sustaining and utilising natural, cultural and social resources” and “analysing spatial characteristics – development and the transfer of new knowledge”. The latter being of special importance as regards Interreg IIC co-operation.

Cross-tabulating these four result-related categories with the objectives of Nordic-Scottish co-operation identified at the Skibo meeting gives us a first impression of the focus and the type of result prevailing in the various fields of co-operation. It shows that results in terms of new techniques supporting private sector activities mainly relate to the fields of ‘natural resources’ and ‘business growth’, whereas results in terms of new techniques supporting public sector activities are mainly to be found in the field of ‘global connections’. Projects focusing on local opportunities in terms of cultural identity and natural resources relate mainly to the fields of ‘regional policies and sustainable development’, ‘community development’ and ‘cultural heritage’. Projects focusing on the analysis of spatial characteristics are mainly concerned with ‘regional policy in rural and peripheral areas’ and ‘regional policy and sustainable development’. This analysis is based on all projects participating in the programmes. Focusing on projects involving Nordic-Scottish co-operation would give a different picture. The following section gives an overview of how the various projects are related to those four issues.

What

Project-based and policy based

Towards a cross-analysis

	Methods and techniques in the field of private business development	Methods and techniques improving public service	Natural, cultural and social resources	Analysing spatial characteristics
Regional policy			●	●
Rural peripheral areas				●
New economy				●
Business growth	●			
Skills and learning		●		
Global connections		●		
Community development			●	
Natural resources	●	●	●	
Cultural heritage			●	



The next four sections will provide a more detailed overview for each of the four project-based categories providing examples of the results of a number of projects. Project names in *italic* is an indication that both Nordic and Scottish partners were involved in the project.

6.1 New or improved methods and techniques – private business development

There are 15 projects that have used, tested or developed new or improved methods and/techniques to assist or stimulate private business development in the partner countries. The way in which the projects approach this varies considerably as some projects focus on product development, others on improving or developing services for local businesses, one on creating links between SME's and a few on resource management. In some of the projects, private businesses are directly involved, while in others, the participants are mainly various public actors and institutions. Although a number of projects are predominantly public sector based, they all have in common, at least partly, the goal of improving the conditions or the creation of new opportunities for private businesses in the partner countries.

Product development

In six projects the focus is on developing new ways of treating certain materials or products (berries, timber, peat) with the aim of generating new exploitation opportunities and/or increasing economic efficiency. Four of the projects concentrate on how local materials are used, one consists of a pilot study for the introduction and use of Internet-based trade between SMEs and one project, *Alternatives to Road Haulage*,

- *Roundpole in building*
- *Adding value to low-grade timber*
- *Cultivation of Northern Rubus species (berries)*
- *Ecological utilisation of peat*
- *Alternatives to road haulage*
- *Knowledge flow network for IT-related business.*

NORTHINNO – NEW BUSINESS SERVICES IN NORTHERN RURAL AREAS

This project aimed to develop the use of Information Technologies (IT) in sparsely populated areas through new innovative actions linking together regional planners, entrepreneurs and business support services. The project corresponds to the two Skibo themes 'New Economy and the Information Society' and 'Business Growth'. The method used consisted in pooling together existing resources in different areas and test potential models for action. The project activities consisted in a combination of fieldwork research and consultancy at a theoretical level to broaden the views of the participants and at a practical level to identify concrete solutions for the development of viable info-cottages.

Concretely, the project contributed to upgrading existing 'info-cottages' in Finland and developing their activities through different types of activities such as the setting-up of a dedicated website and the provision of training courses for local inhabitants. The Siikalatva Development Agency also focused on IT-support activities for companies based in the region. An IT company tested on their behalf different types of apparatus and software for distributive help-desk services and remote-control help-desk activities. In Scotland, the project assisted local business support services in providing better quality, more client-oriented services. In addition, the activities undertaken by the Omnitech company concentrated on three main themes: the analysis of the needs of new and expanding *e-commerce* businesses, the design of the required support infrastructure, and an exploration of the technical issues involved. In Norway, the project integrated *e-commerce* solutions as part of the actual day-to-day activities of three companies: a tire supplier, a concrete manufacturer and a brewery.

The main benefit derived from the project was the opportunity to assess problems met by enterprises in remote and rural areas and analyse how the use of *e-commerce* could support these businesses, in a context where traditional incubation strategies are not appropriate. The project also explored how new companies could be created thanks to the use of *e-commerce*. According to the partners surveyed, these activities would probably not have taken place without the project considering the difficulty in addressing these issues in isolation.

The project also demonstrated that although the new ICTs can trigger new development opportunities for businesses facing the challenge of isolation, there are often no mechanisms in place to allow this to happen and there is thus a clear need for such support infrastructure. In this context, new ideas were generated but more importantly, problems were also analysed and solutions identified.

In Scotland, the main dissemination efforts consisted in the creation of a demonstrative website devoted to *e-commerce*. This site remained active for about one year after completion of the project. It was used by the development agency in the area, Highlands and Islands Enterprise to disseminate information on *e-business* opportunities to local companies. In Finland, the national sub-projects, particularly the one on *tele-cottages*, attracted a significant level of interest and received coverage in the local press.

The results of this project have not yet been translated into practice, as the project essentially aimed at identifying problems and solutions, forming a basis for future cooperation. Therefore the partners decided to set up a follow-up project, which is now on-going. It involves virtually all the same partners and again funding from the Northern Periphery Programme. This new project started in February 2003 and will run for about 24 months. Its objective is the creation of a 'pool of ideas' on the provision of infrastructure for *e-commerce*.

is looking at how the material is transported. Measures implemented include the design of potential products, market studies, training market skills, developing methods to increase output (berries), dissemination of knowledge and experience, etc.

New business services

While the above four projects concentrate on the products themselves, two other projects are dealing with ways of increasing and improving services to rural businesses by using and developing IT technology. Measures undertaken include an analysis of service needs, designing the required support infrastructure, developing technical solutions, training in telematic and the creation of an education package, as well as pilot cases for e-commerce, etc.

- *Northinno - New business services in Northern rural areas*
- *Virtual distance consulting network*

Networking

Three projects aimed at bringing businesses together to discuss business issues, create contacts and share experience with the help of business forums and collaboration pilots. Two projects focused on the creation of networks between SMEs in the partner countries. The third project aimed primarily at documenting the present situation in the shellfish production industry and at promoting the exchange of experiences through the support of networking and dissemination involving representatives of industry (farmers and suppliers etc.)

- *Scottish/Nordic Business Forum*
- *It-Scand*
- *North Atlantic shellfish management.*

Resource Management

Finally, there are four projects dealing with resource management where the objective was, among other things, to raise the economic output or create new innovation possibilities by developing improved management practices (and methods). To a certain degree the projects aimed at linking business activity and sustainable environmental development through enhanced co-operation on spatial planning between the project partners. Measures implemented were, for example, current situation studies and comparisons, the development of new monitoring methods, the creation of spatial data and spatial modelling, land transformation experiments, etc.

- *Integrated coastal management and local business development - The case of Salmon (Salmon rivers)*
- *Deer management*
- *Re-use of peat production areas*
- *Cross-national waste management*

6.2 New or improved methods and techniques – Improving public service and infrastructure management

Twenty projects have been grouped together here as they all use or develop new methods and/or techniques in relation to the provision of public services and management. What form this takes varies between the different projects as they cover a wide spectrum of topics, from waste management to the implementation of telemedicine or the provision of educational opportunities. Significant emphasis is placed on infrastructure management. This is particularly so in the case of Interreg IIC projects, where transportation infrastructure has been an important issue. In some projects, new techniques are used or tested to directly improve the provision of public services in the partner regions while in others the focus is on developing new methods or best practice guidelines for future activities within a certain sector.

RE-USE OF PEAT PRODUCTION AREAS

This project aimed to gather and exchange knowledge on the re-use of peat mining sites after production had ended. The project corresponds clearly to the Skibo theme of 'Regional Policy and Sustainable Development' since the principal themes covered were the achievement of sustainable development in land use, the identification of survival strategies for rural areas and the promotion of equality. The issue tackled is particularly topical as peat production will come to an end in many Nordic and Scottish areas in the coming years. The research undertaken contributed to the promotion of after-uses that are environmentally and socially acceptable.

The appreciation of the extent to which the project produced new and useful results varied depending on the experience of each partner. However, all stressed that the exchange of experience was particularly useful when based on measures experimented (and mistakes made) in other countries. This was reinforced by the fact that countries were not only at different stages in developing planning provisions for the re-use of peat areas, but had also worked in different directions. Consequently, there was significant room for partners to learn from each other's existing plans and experience. For instance, while the Swedish partners shared their extensive experience in terms of reforestation and the creation of artificial lakes through the involvement of sponsors, which attracted particular interest from the Finnish partners. In the same way, the Nordic partners showed a strong interest in innovative ideas experimented in Scotland with a view to using former peat areas for growing berries, thus providing new economic activities for local communities.

In addition, those partners for whom the project involved practical experiments stressed that they obtained tangible and directly usable results. For instance, the main result of the sub-project undertaken by the Finnish partners was a plan and map for the future use of a pilot site. While this sub-project may have been carried out in some form in any case, the trans-national cooperation process meant that it could be undertaken on a greater scale and it brought a higher profile to the experiment.

However, for the majority of partners the project's main benefit was the provision of new international contacts (between Sweden and Scotland) or the increased intensity of co-operation in pre-existing partnerships (between Finland and Sweden).

The knowledge generated by this project was transferred between partners through national seminars, to which local authorities representatives were invited. Efforts were also made to inform local inhabitants located close to pilot sites. There were also clear implications for the partner organisations themselves. For instance, there is evidence in Finland that making provision for the after use of peat areas is more common than it was prior to the project. Interestingly, some partners stressed that the project was an opportunity to bring together stakeholders who would not normally communicate. This was the case in Scotland where representatives from the whiskey industry took part in discussions. Also, the involvement of a number of participants from each organisation helped to ensure the diffusion of the new knowledge. For instance, the fact that half the staff of the Finnish partner company took part in the project helped change approaches within the company. However, it is often difficult to measure actual change and some partners stressed that the new knowledge generated by the project has not yet been fully exploited.

In conclusion, it may be difficult to point to any concrete practical results from this project as it had long-term objectives. Nevertheless, new knowledge was generated through pilot studies and experience transferred between different regions and countries. Also, the contacts established between partners were seen as sustainable since relationships established during the project are still active to some extent.

New Techniques to improve Public Services

In four of these projects, the main focus is on the use of new techniques (tech. devices) to compensate for the remoteness of peripheral areas. The concept of telemedicine is included in four projects, with one focusing entirely on this particular topic, while the other two also include measures to improve/enhance the general use of IT e.g. by establishing telecottages where local people can access computers and other equipment. Telemedicine aims at improving health service provision in peripheral areas, decreasing the need for admission to hospital and reducing travel for both local people and service personnel. Measures implemented in the four projects included the testing of new technology, e.g. mobile communicators in homecare and videoconferencing equipment, the training of personnel and local inhabitants in using the new techniques, the evaluation of effectiveness, and lectures and conferences. One of the projects shows a lesser orientation towards telemedicine, but instead focused on mechanisms ensuring the vitality and self-sufficiency of rural service centres, i.e. the development of trans-national and local networks to facilitate the exchange of experience

- *Teleremcare - Implementation and evaluation of telemedicine in remote health*
- *Telematic services for elderly*
- *Communities on-line*
- *Sustaining the vitality and self-sufficiency of rural service centres in the North Sea region*

Infrastructure Management

In 12 projects further the focus is slightly different to that seen in the four projects described above. Instead of setting up and testing new devices for improving the provision of services, these projects aimed at developing new methods to improve the future management of certain public service activities. These projects though, by no means deal with similar public service or management activities. A majority of the projects – mainly those carried out under Interreg IIC – focus on the development of common approaches to the management of infrastructure networks among project partners. In addition to projects on transportation infrastructure, there are two projects dealing with waste management, one with water management, and one with comparison of the use of advanced technology in rural development. Thus, the measures implemented are quite different from one project to the other, although basic studies on the current situation are an important part of all projects.

- *COWASTE - Development of recycling and utilization of construction waste*
- *SEWPER - Selection criteria and model evaluation for waste disposal in sparsely populated cool temperate regions*
- *ProAqua – A new method for water resource management*
- *ROADDEX - Technical exchange co-operation across northern periphery road district*
- *Pilot development of rail ferry links and terminals for seaports.*
- *RADWAT - Rural area development with advanced technology*
- *Nordic transport political network.*
- *Identifying regional logistics parameters.*
- *Transport study NSR: Strategic study and action programmes*
- *TARGET - Travel awareness regional groups for environmental transport.*
- *Network of Short Sea Shipping Promotion Centres.*
- *Spatial integration through inland waterways.*

Education

Finally, there are projects addressing the provision of learning opportunities in sparsely populated areas in the Northern periphery. Generally, the main objective of the trans-national co-operation was to

- *Entree-entrepreneurship education in the Northern Periphery*
- *Community learning networks in Northern Periphery areas*
- *I-Sea-U.*
- *NordNet.*

NORTH SEA CYCLE CIRCUIT

This project aimed to establish a continuous cycle route around the North Sea as well as to establish and co-ordinate a promotion strategy targeting potential end users. 400 municipalities in 70 regions and 7 countries were involved to some extent. A related objective was to integrate the new cycle paths in the local authorities' spatial planning strategies. This project corresponds to the two themes of 'Natural Resources' and 'Cultural Heritage', with strong connections to two other themes of 'Regional Policy and Sustainable Development' and 'Regional Policy in Rural and Peripheral Areas'.

The main outcome was the opening of a continuous cycle route around the North Sea on schedule, within the lifetime of the project and years before it was initially due to open. In the view of all partners, this achievement would clearly not have materialised without the project. The ambitious character of the project was clearly rewarded but partners recognised that this success was made possible by the fact that policy-makers in all countries involved were simultaneously championing cycling – either because of old traditions such as in Scandinavia, or in the case of the UK because the Millennium Commission had selected cycling as one of its funding priorities and awarded significant grants to that end.

Apart from the establishment of the new cycle route and the exchange of associated technical expertise, a second outcome of the project was the creation of networks at all levels, between the partners *stricto sensu* and, beyond the core project group, between a wide range of stakeholders. Several partners stated that these relationships had been maintained and were still active, at least for part of them. The clearest demonstration of this success is the follow-up project that partners have initiated with the threefold aim of improving the quality of some parts of the route, increase the amount of information available to users on the Internet, and add new countries to the route. Another important objective of this new project is to set up a permanent management structure for the route to prepare for the end of Interreg funding. Finally, partners were pleased to note that the concept behind continuous cycle routes has also been transferred to other areas in Europe and a similar project has been started in the Baltic Sea.

The very large number of local authorities and other stakeholders involved in the project, as mentioned above, added to the profile of this project and ensured a wide dissemination of the new knowledge it created. In particular, local politicians were often involved in the project. Besides, a large quantity of information material was made, although this varied depending on countries and regions, and how much attention was devoted to the project by local municipalities. It must also be mentioned that a dedicated, trans-national web site was set up to present the project and provide practical information to potential cyclists.

Particular efforts were also made by some of the partners to present to international audiences the cycle route and the knowledge acquired by project partners. For instance, the Scottish partners seized the opportunity provided by the organisation of the international 'Velocity' conference in Edinburgh towards the end of the project, to present a paper relating specifically to this project. This allowed them to reach a large and truly international audience, as many senior ministers from a large number of countries were present.

Lastly, partners placed great emphasis on ensuring the long-term future existence of their achievement. To this end, a follow-up project was successfully submitted under the new Interreg III programme with the aim of strengthening the long-term future of the cycle route. This involved setting up mechanisms to provide a continuous marketing of the route and attempts at involving tourist organisations to a greater extent.

prepare a set of best practice guidelines e.g. for learning centres and educational projects, based on studies in each respective partner country.

The project activities and results have both had relatively narrow local and a wider regional/national impacts. Locally, where the project activities have been carried out, local inhabitants, health personnel, public officials etc. have been trained in using new technology and provided with access to computers and other devices. Some of the project activities can also be described as experiments in using new technology, which provides useful information and knowledge transportable to other regions in the northern periphery, e.g. one of the projects has contributed to the development of a strategic plan for implementing telemedicine screening for diabetic eye diseases to other regions of Norway. At least one project addresses directly the use of information and communication technology to facilitate remote education in sparsely populated areas. Another project aimed at establishing three innovative masters' degree programmes devoted to the North Sea Region resources, its assets and culture. The purpose here was to bring knowledge and information together and equip students with a specific set of skills and competences.

6.3 Sustaining and utilising natural, cultural and social resources

Twenty-four of the projects focussed in different ways, on issues linked to sustaining and utilising natural, cultural and social resources. They did this from somewhat different perspectives. The four main areas of focus were on promoting tourism development, sustainable community and economic development, cultural heritage and language identity, and female entrepreneurship. This was done by emphasising and making use of the local resources, in the form of natural environment, cultural heritage, social diversity and culture.

Promoting tourism development

In this theme, there are ten projects, all of which have their main focus on tourism development in one way or another. All of the projects have activities aimed at promoting the travel industry, mostly in the form of rural tourism enterprises. The main focus here is above all on the development, improvement and marketing of tourism products, often with a focus on high quality. In one of the projects the proponents were especially interested in making use of different forms of IT technology in the promotion of tourism development and in the marketing of tourist products. In another, the focus was mainly on marketing cultural activities of high quality, including activities such as building a cooperative network of spatial planning authorities, private tourist industry and local cultural authorities, in order to develop tourist attractions related to Viking archaeological sites. Two projects specifically focused on the development of sustainable rural tourism based on the natural environment and cultural resources of the region. In one of these projects there was continuous improvement of the environmental performance of tourism enterprise, including the setting up of an environmental code of practice, environmental management systems, eco-labelling and quality certification systems. Another project aimed at providing farmers and

- *Development of the ICT/multimedia industry and the adventure, green and heritage tourist industry in remote areas by making use of new technology*
- *Festivals on the top of Europe*
- Natural and cultural values in sustainable rural tourism
- *Winter highlights*
- *North Sea cycle circuit*
- String of pearls
- North Sea Viking legacy
- Documentation and development of seaside tourism in the North Sea region
- *Nortrail – North Sea coastal path*
- North Sea traditional fish

SAFEINHERIT

The Safeinherit network was established in 1999 to stimulate community development and environmental protection in northern parts of Europe. As such, this project falls under the Skibo theme of 'Regional Policy and Sustainable Development'. The overall objective was to create a forum for the investigation and sharing of information of the ways in which social, economic, cultural and environmental issues can be more closely integrated, in order to achieve sustainable development within remote rural areas of high environmental and cultural heritage, yet fragile economies. The project also aimed to involve local communities in the implementation of practical examples to promote sustainable development within remote rural areas of high environmental and cultural heritage. A final goal for the project was to disseminate the methods employed and sustainable development strategies identified as widely as possible throughout the Northern Periphery.

SafeinHerit included joint sub-projects where all partners were actively involved and individual projects that were mostly taken care of by each partner without much input from the others. Despite difficulties associated with the trans-national cooperation process, the partners found that they had much in common with other regions involved in the project, and face the same challenges and problems.

Most of the concrete outcomes of this project would not have been produced without it in Scotland, according to the Scottish lead partner. This involved management plans designed to ensure local participation in protected areas, materials describing the local environment and culture aimed at tourists, and the setting-up of holiday activities enhancing the profile of the regions (eco-tourism, etc.).

The same remark can apply to some extent to the Norwegian partners. While they recognised that some of the activities supported by the project would probably have taken place without it, the project played a key role in increasing their profile, their dimension and their quality. One concrete realisation in Norway was the writing of a report on the establishment of national parks through the involvement of regional and local actors in the decision-making process. This report was itself based on extensive interaction with various local and regional actors and interest parties and it has proven to be very useful at the regional and local levels for politicians as well as inhabitants.

The overall objective of the project was to demonstrate that a sustainable use of resources is not only essential but also achievable. Partners can demonstrate a certain degree of success in this respect, as demonstrated by the number of sub-projects carried out. A related objective was to bring together communities and raise public awareness around the issues tackled. Here partners recognised that only partial success had been achieved. The local community was brought together around the project on Fair Isle in Scotland but this was not as clearly the case with other partners.

As far as the wider policy-making sphere is concerned, the Scottish partner tried to introduce the concept of the wise management of marine resource but there has not been significant political progress in this field. However, the very fact that this project was undertaken at all demonstrates that there is a strong local interest in this issue.

In Norway, the partners indicated that there was evidence of some degree of transfer of the knowledge acquired during the project to regional and local politicians. This was facilitated by the fact that these actors were actively involved in the project itself and had actually provided some input into the definition of the Norwegian sub-project. Some efforts were also made to involve local communities by disseminating information about the project, especially in relation to plans for a new national park. On the other hand, the partners recognised that information about this project had not reached the national level.

rural inhabitants with new work opportunities by making the most of the existing qualities of the area. Each 'pearl' of this project was effectively the coming together of farmers and inhabitants to improve the local environment and to provide tourists with better facilities. The measures implemented thus far are for example the production and dissemination of advertising material, the granting of scholarships promoting the transfer of knowledge, the documentation of case studies of good practice, study tours, conferences, workshops, seminars, and market research studies.

Promoting sustainable economic and community development

There are nine projects focusing on sustainable development either in terms of community development or sustainable economic development. One project directly addresses sustainable community development and shows a somewhat similar focus to two projects from the group focusing on tourism; it also has a focus on development based on the sustainable use of local resources. In this case, the main interest is on sustainable community development, where social, economic,

- *SafeinHerit - Safeguarding our heritage*
- Restoration of trans-national ecological networks
- Pipelines
- North Sea bio-energy network
- Water city international
- Sustainability centres in the North Sea region
- Forum Skagerrak
- Wetlands in spatial planning
- Implementation of citizens environment information system

cultural and environmental issues are being more closely integrated. Most effort is placed on involving the local community. Measures implemented thus far for example centre on the setting up of workshops on themes relating to natural and cultural resources, rural land management, and green tourism; exchange visits between schoolchildren; and the production of booklets to enhance the appreciation of traditional food and crafts. The remaining nine projects are rather categorised as sustainable economic development. These nine projects all focused on the development of joint strategies to ensure the sustainable economic development of their regions. Their objective was to address common problems in a trans-national context. The key to this objective was the exchange of experience the projects were meant to facilitate. For instance, the goal of the second project on the list was to address environmental issues raised by the oil and gas industry in the partner regions. In the fourth project, partners co-operated to design urban water plans and develop planning guidelines for their respective cities. In the same way, the last project on the list aimed at encouraging the preparation of common guidelines for the integration of natural resources in land use planning.

Promoting identity and cultural heritage

Within this theme, there were three projects focusing on cultural heritage and identity issues. One project in particular focused on supporting and sustaining lesser-used languages, in this case the Sami and Gaelic languages. Importance was above all placed

- *Sustaining and supporting the lesser used languages*
- Kings of the North Sea.
- Landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea region.

on improving the implementation of bilingual policy in primary schools and day-care centres. They transferred information on the different models used in the different regions for bilingual education. The integration of culture and matters of identity in

NORTHNET – WOMEN IN THE PERIPHERY

This project aimed at developing the role of women in the rural economy, particularly in tourism, by supporting business development through networking and the development of local networks and trans-national networks. As such, this project falls under the Skibo themes of 'Regional Policy in Rural and Peripheral Areas' and 'Business Growth'. The project provided women entrepreneurs with resources and support to develop their skills and establish new projects in the tourism sector. It also helped demonstrate that networking can promote co-operation, increase business skills and competences, and encourage the design of innovative new products.

The project also showed that grassroots development in co-operation with other countries can influence and mould current rural development structures. The basic idea was to help the participants recognise their own competences and to use the common 'know-how' of the group to strengthen them.

It remains difficult to pin down with certainty the extent to which the women involved in the project acquired new knowledge, as this probably varies significantly between individuals. In the same way, measuring the extent to which the new knowledge gained has been put into practice is particularly uneasy. Nevertheless, there is concrete evidence that a significant number of participants were prompted by this project to take on learning new linguistic and computer skills. More generally, the opportunity to co-operate with one another, both at the local and transnational level, was in itself a learning opportunity.

Besides, the subject matter and objective of the project was itself innovative. The project demonstrated that women entrepreneurs can take an active part in the development of tourism activities in their region. The importance of women's involvement in regional development was clearly highlighted by the project activities, and this sometimes went against tradition.

The concrete outputs of this project were not numerous but again this was not the primary objective. The key aim here was to help partners develop their skills as well as their businesses and activities, and through this to help them build up their confidence to adopt new approaches. However, one question raised by the project leaders was whether these results, no matter how positive, were not disproportionately small in relation to the time and resources invested in the management of the project.

The project probably delivered more results and had a greater impact in Sweden and Norway because of the sub-regional projects that were carried out in these two countries, while the participants in Finland and the Shetlands only took part in the joint trans-national part.

The very nature of the project's objective, enhancing the knowledge of the participants, makes it difficult to evaluate as to whether this new knowledge has in fact been translated into practice. One partner reckoned that the participants' new knowledge and skills had been built up incrementally throughout the project period. These results were then implemented by the participants on a continuous basis as the project progressed. Again, the real objective of the project was to change the participants' attitudes, more than anything else.

language education were seen as interesting issues to work with. Measures implemented within this project included the collection of good practice, study visits, and seminars. In addition, there were two projects dealing with cultural heritage in a wider sense. For instance, one project focused on integrating the results from archaeological research into international policymaking and setting up guidelines on the fields of cultural history and spatial planning. In the same manner, the other project aimed at developing common guidelines and criteria for the sustainable management of the local heritage.

Promoting female entrepreneurship

Two of the projects focused on developing and promoting the role of women within the local economy in peripheral areas. The main

- *Northnet - Women in the Periphery*
- *Northern women – New images*

foci were however a little different, with one mainly focused on supporting business development within the tourism-sector while the other had a central focus on supporting young women who wished to embark upon a business enterprise. In the last project they worked with the focus by means of documenting and recording examples of women who might act as entrepreneurial role models for the young women. In general, measures implemented in the two projects include documentation of case studies, the creation and piloting of new products (guided coach tours, sales places for handicrafts, a tourist café, mountain hiking tours and fishing weekends for women), starting new companies (guesthouse, consultancy company, home-bakery), collecting local cultural history (used in creating the new products, e.g. information about old cookery traditions was made into a publication and a calendar with historical pictures of women was produced), study visits, seminars, the publication of good practices and the launching of networks between women on local and the trans-national level.

6.4 Analysing spatial characteristics – the development and transfer of new knowledge

There were 20 projects in total that in some way concentrated on developing new knowledge by analysing spatial characteristics, and then transferring this new knowledge. This new knowledge was then disseminated to other key stakeholders in their respective regions. The projects varied in their breadth and scale of analysis, as described below. The majority of the projects focused on developing new approaches, methods and tools to be used within spatial/rural development, while one project only dealt with the production of new knowledge by means of identifying socio-cultural characteristics.

Identifying socio-cultural characteristics

One project mainly focused on enhancing the understanding of economic development in the NPP regions by identifying socio-cultural characteristics, i.e. developing new

- *MILIEUX - The role of regional milieux in regional economic development*

knowledge. The socio-cultural characteristics are intended to help explain the relative vitality of some areas, and the fragility of others. Measures implemented within this project were for example interviews, the development of maps and the production of different reports.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND THEIR SPATIAL IMPLICATIONS

This project sought to improve the quality and the co-ordination of spatial planning policies, economic development strategies and businesses support services, through a series of conferences and study visits. As such, the project falls under the two Skibo themes of 'Regional Policy and Sustainable Development' and 'Business Growth'. Five issues were identified at the outset: strengthening the economic structures in the partner regions; improving the understanding of the spatial implications of regional economic development strategies; improving support services offered to businesses in urban centres and their rural hinterlands; improving co-operation between local authorities in the North Sea Region; and establishing trading links and joint business ventures between small and medium sized enterprises in the North Sea Region.

The project was not primarily concerned with discovering new findings or producing publications. The main objective was to establish a network of practitioners dealing with similar issues. Partners essentially saw the project as a training opportunity for their organisations. They stressed that it had increased their awareness and made them more ambitious. In this respect, the process of peer-review allowed by the project was considered to be at least as helpful as the generation of new ideas. Another element of added value was the opportunity to learn to work together as a group of professionals. In other words the concrete benefits of this project were very implicit and difficult to pin down but they were none the less real and tangible for the partners involved.

Interestingly, the partners decided to establish an on-going formative evaluation process throughout the project, which helped produce noticeable improvement in the quality of proceedings. Quantitative and qualitative comments collected by the evaluator indicated that participants had been confronted with new approaches associated with particular planning processes.

The fact that the project dealt with fairly broad issues was an advantage in that it provided a wealth of information for project partners and helped raise their awareness of how apparently unrelated problems are in fact connected. In addition, a consultant firm was hired to carry out a comparative analysis of regional planning systems in the five regions and publish their results in a report. So new ideas were indeed generated but for partners the key question was how personal approaches were changed.

Through their involvement in the project, participants gained a greater degree of confidence in dealing with the issues tackled. This is obviously very difficult to measure but partners could point to instances of their having contacted fellow participants to discuss a particular problem not directly associated with the project. Some partners also seized the opportunity to broaden their contact base beyond the core project team. For instance, Telemark County Council's interest in water management issues led them to start co-operating with British Waterways.

There is also evidence of a number of partners' who have achieved a significant career progression since their involvement in the project. For several interviewees, their change of attitude and increased confidence can be related to the fact that they have been exposed to more and new ideas. In short, through their engagement around contextual issues in this project, the partners felt more empowered and confident of taking action. Their mindsets were developed in such a way that they are now prepared to look for alternatives to their routines and to their usual ways of tackling problems. In the evaluator's opinion, the outcome was particularly positive because partners truly engaged in the project and so were prepared to draw lessons from it. As a result, the intangible benefits of trans-national cooperation were particularly strong in this project.

Development of common spatial visions

Five projects adopted a comprehensive approach to spatial planning. Their aim was to explore the desirability and feasibility of elaborating common spatial visions and integrated development strategies for the North Sea Region as a whole, or for areas facing similar development issues. For instance, the first and third project on the list both aimed at producing and influencing the overall spatial 'vision', as it were, of partners. The second project explored a series of issues taken successively (links between urban and rural areas, interactions between local/regional/national spatial planning and economic development strategies, the internationalisation and globalisation of the economy and the effects on local and regional development opportunities). Finally, the final two projects on the list aimed at developing a common methodology designed to address the similar issues faced by all partners.

- *Norvision - A spatial vision for the North Sea region*
- Integrated development.
- North European trade axis.
- Revitalisation of harbour towns and cities in the North Sea region.
- City centre managers network.

Development of new approaches, methods and tools

About eleven projects have similar *foci*. They all, in one way or another, worked on developing new approaches, methods and tools to be used within spatial/rural development. Three of the projects also put significant emphasis on gathering and exchanging knowledge on good practice. That is to say, these projects, in addition to developing new knowledge, also stress the transfer of this knowledge. While three of the projects had a wider scope, focusing on the regional scale, one of the projects concentrated on the sub-regional scale, i.e. working with the development of a toolkit of methods to secure the sustainable regeneration of networks of towns/small communities. Other projects

- *New research-based knowledge about peripherality and planning in depopulated build-up areas in the northern periphery (NRBK)*
- *Rural transfer network*
- *Integrated participatory planning as a tool for rural development*
- *Inner Moray Firth town strategy*
- *Norcoast.*
- *Noord XXI.*
- *Regional development strategies and their spatial implications.*
- *Green port.*
- *Development of tools for sustainable planning.*
- *Sustainable development in coastal tourist areas of the North Sea region*
- *Common Potentials in the Northernmost Europe*

e.g. aimed at investigating and promoting good practice in coastal zone planning around the North Sea. In the same way, another project encouraged regional co-operation on spatial harbour planning and a management system for the collection and disposal of ships' waste generated in the North Sea Region. Finally, one project studied and analysed co-operation projects within the NPP Programme in order to develop options for policy makers concerning a new programme covering an enlarged geographic area. In general, measures implemented were for example case studies, survey questionnaires, interviews, workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Development of new techniques and technologies

These last three projects dealt more specifically with developing new techniques and technologies to facilitate the work of planners. One project aimed for instance at improving the use of GIS as a tool for coastal zone planning by investigating how GIS can be utilised for the collection, analysis and distribution of coastal zone data. Similarly, the second and third projects on the list aimed to promote better electronic access and the sharing of planning data existing in the regions to facilitate cross-sectoral and cross-regional planning.

- *SEAGIS*.
- Uniform archiving and harmonisation of electronic data.
- Datashare - Integrated city and area planning

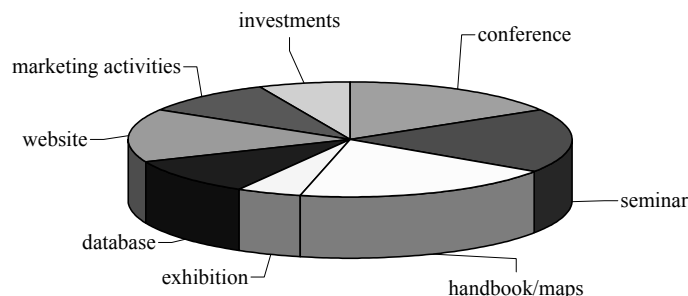
6.5 Project outputs

The outputs of the Nordic-Scottish co-operation project largely reflect the nature of the programmes, i.e. they correspond to what has been discussed above in the section on the policy background and Interreg IIC.

The survey carried out in the framework of this study shows that events in the form of seminars and conferences are the main outputs (approx. 20%) followed by reports and studies in the form of handbooks and reports. Among the other outputs are websites, marketing activities and databases. It has also been stated that investments take a noticeable share in the outcomes. This is interesting as Interreg programme merely allowed for laying the ground for investment, and in the Northern Periphery programme only a minor allowance was made for small-scale investments. One possible explanation of this might be that the funded projects were highly interrelated/integrated with other activities including investments. Moreover, it was also the case that basic business infrastructure was acquired through the project, e.g. in the *Women in the Periphery (Northnet)* project some partners used the opportunity to purchase their first computer and familiarise themselves with information and communications technology.

What

Intermediate Classification of Outputs



(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

Nevertheless, the majority of outputs were of a 'one-off character', i.e. not of a lasting nature. This is certainly true for the event-oriented outputs (seminars, conferences, exhibitions) as well as for the marketing section. Unfortunately, this seems by and large to also be valid for the reports, websites and databases. The use of reports, studies and databases produced during the projects often remains uncertain. As regards websites, it has to be said that most actually disappeared within one year of the finalisation of the project.

A closer look into the Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects illustrates that in a number of them the focus was not on the production of tangible outputs but on the establishment of networks. For instance, the *Regional Development Strategies and Their Spatial Implications* project aimed at establishing a network of practitioners dealing with similar problems. Likewise, in the *Scottish-Nordic Business Forum* the main objective was not to produce any tangible results in the form of reports etc.

On the other hand a number of projects produced outputs targeting internal organizational issues e.g. one partner in the *NorCoast* project established a database on the staff members within the organization taking part in international projects and thus potentially interested in new trans-national projects. However, it has to be said that this output is not the main result of the project.

Other projects focused clearly on visible outputs as e.g. the *Noord XXI* project produced altogether 68 publications, 20 of which are major reports in English. Another tangible output here is the cycle route established under the *North Sea Cycle Circuit* project.

This description then gives us a first overview of the various types of outcomes produced in the trans-national co-operation project. The content of these outcomes and results are discussed in the section on the experience of the thematic focus on trans-national projects. The concrete use of the outcomes will be discussed later on in the section on benefits.

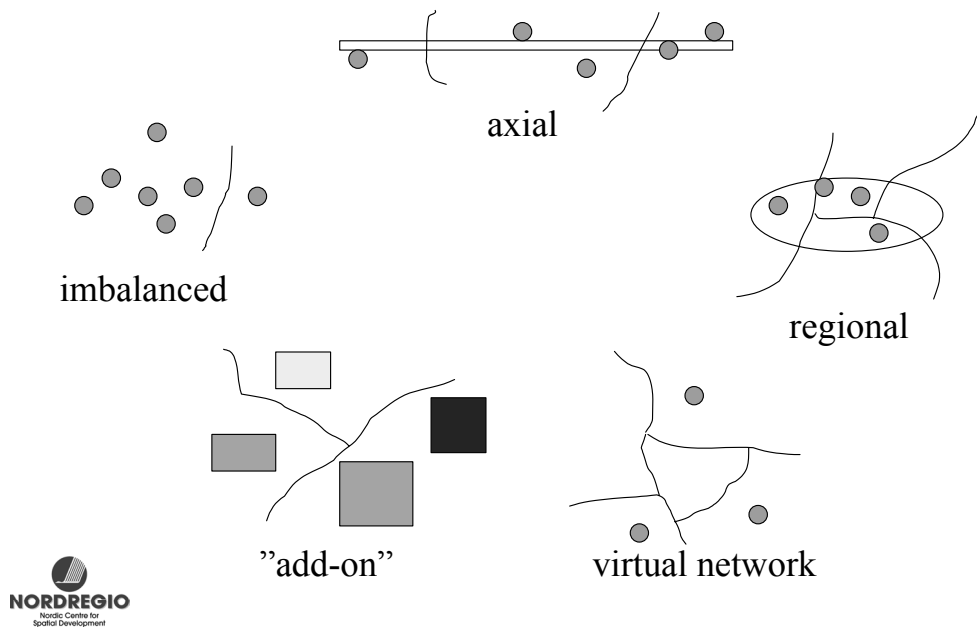
However, as the non-tangible outcomes and networking activities were among the major issues addressed by the projects, it has to be borne in mind that networking and learning as regards trans-national co-operation are the aspects predominantly highlighted.

6.6 Modes and geographies of co-operation

A high degree of participation does not necessarily guarantee good-quality partnerships between Member and non-Member States. It does however indicate a broad level of involvement and a potential for the extensive exchange of experience. Indeed, most interviewees expressed the opinion that co-operation across the EU border has been fruitful and instructive for both sides. This varies, however, from project to project.

One can categorise the types of trans-national contacts established according to the shape and nature of the network involved. From other Interreg IIC programmes, it is known that there are at least five characteristic models in this respect. Each project can correspond to more than one of these modes of co-operation, depending on the shape and nature of the network involved.

Modes of Trans-national Co-operation



Imbalance co-operation

The 'imbalanced type' describes any project in which the great majority of partners belong to the same country. Caution must be used when assessing levels of imbalance: one must take into account national administrative structures which may, for example, lead numerous regional authorities from one country to cooperate with one representative from the central government of another.

In the Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects studied, there are hardly any projects that fit clearly this 'imbalanced type'. To a certain degree *Selection Criteria and Model Evaluation for Waste Disposal in Sparsely Populated Cool Temperate Regions (SEWPER)* might be considered as such a project, as it focuses mainly on the desire of the inhabitants in a small community (Jokikylä) to improve the level of domestic waste service available. The project was an opportunity for them to compare and contrast different environmental and social conditions in which new waste systems were to be introduced. It also proved that the multi-national exchange of information and experience can allow for quick acquisition of special knowledge in one particular field. However, their international partners seemed to adopt more of a supporting nature rather than taking on the role of joint project owners.

Axial or regional co-operation

The 'axial co-operation type' often corresponds to a project based on an existing or planned transport axis or waterway. Numerous possible aims can be envisaged: infrastructure development, tourism development, flood protection, water quality preservation etc.

The ‘regional co-operation type’ describes projects based on an existing or emerging functional region, or on a localised trans-national cluster of enterprises. They are usually characterised by the relative spatial proximity of the partners.

As regards, the ‘regional’ or ‘axial co-operation type’, a number of such projects can be found within the Interreg IIC projects North Sea Region, e.g. the *NORVISION* project, working on a joint spatial development perspective for the North Sea Region, or the *North Sea Cycle Circuit*, establishing a continuous cycle route around the North Sea. In both projects, the area covered and partners involved exceed the scope of Nordic-Scottish co-operation.

Another view of regions can be found in the project on *Regional Development Strategies and their Spatial Implication*, where the project region had been defined by the strong links between the regions participating in the project. In Telemark for example, it has been a policy to select partner regions according to logistical criteria, i.e. along transportation routes such as air connections, roads, ferry lines etc. The underlying strategy was to strengthen co-operation between regions that are linked by good transportation, i.e. creating stable networks. In consequence, in Telemark attempts have been made to work with partners from the same regions as much as possible instead of looking for new ones.

Virtual networking and add-on projects

The ‘virtual network’ type often refers to projects aiming at the sharing of experience. The hope here is to gather together partners undergoing similar problems (e.g. other metropolitan areas), or working with the same issues.

The ‘add-on type’ can be encountered when well-established national co-operation structures co-operate with one another on trans-national projects. This implies the need to adapt national forms of interaction to a new structure.

Most of the explicit Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects are considered as either a ‘virtual network’ focusing on the exchange of experience, or so-called ‘add-on projects’ consisting of independent sub-projects. Most projects aimed at sharing experience around related spatial development or policy issues. The project design differs considerably regarding the formation of a trans-national project.

Generally, one can consider the ‘virtual networking’ and the ‘add-on projects’ as two ends of a scale indicating the degree of trans-nationality shaping the project and its results.

At one end of the scale, we find projects where the trans-national project forms a loose umbrella for a series of national/regional sub-projects that are not related, and in some cases the exchange between the various sub-projects is kept to a minimum. A typical project for this form of “add-on model” is that of *Teleremcare*, which did not have to put much emphasise on the trans-national level. The reasons for this are related to the fact that the project mainly focused on the implementation of local sub-projects designed according to the needs of a particular region rather than on any joint approach. The project did produce locally useful results, but the project partners faced difficulties when it comes to learning from each other more than that it was interesting to hear about the other sub-projects. It has proven difficult to transfer knowledge

between the regions because of structural differences in the health-care systems in each of the participating countries. Overall, there were a number of projects such as *Teleremcare*, as well as the *Safeinherit* project where the individual sub-projects were (mostly) taken care of by each partner without much involvement of the other partners. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the *New Business Services in Northern Rural Areas (NorthInno)* project where an important part of the success of the project was the initial decision to focus on national sub-projects rather than on a joint trans-national project. As such, the trans-national co-operation consisted in exchanging information about each other's sub-project.

The difficulty in transferring and applying knowledge in trans-national contexts is a rather common occurrence experienced by the projects studied. It seems that it often was considered easier to exchange experience when there was more of a joint approach in the various projects. Thus, the shift from sub-projects forming a trans-national project by adding them together, to one joint trans-national project broken down into various sub-projects makes a difference. There are even projects where virtual networking pointed towards joint action, an example of this being the *Nordic-Scottish Business Forum*. Here one partner pointed out that an important piece of knowledge gained during the project was that local and regional actors realised that decision-making at the national and European levels is more influential than at the local and regional level. Essentially they came to understand that it is the national government and /or the European Union that decides about the future of wild salmon and the importance for local and regional actors to direct their attention to these 'real decision makers' instead of spending energy on local or regional quarrels. This learning experience points towards possibilities for virtual networking on joint action, e.g. lobbying at European level.

At the other end of the scale from that of the 'add-on' to virtual networking projects, we find projects where the exchange of experience is clearly shaped by a trans-national dimension. In this respect, *Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery Areas* is a typical project. This project had been designed as a trans-national project – from the very beginning – and thus was not only based on separate sub-projects. Nevertheless, the partners admit that it was difficult to make direct trans-national comparisons because of the different national backgrounds as regards the structures of the education systems etc.

The modes and geography of co-operation illustrate that the exchange of experience has been the main feature of Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects. Thus commonalities between the partner regions were mainly used for common rather than joint action (cf. the low score for the regional and axial models). The importance of the trans-national dimension in relation to the regional dimension varies considerably, which is not least illustrated by the differences between the imbalanced or 'add-on' project type as compared to the virtual networking projects.

6.7 Between joint and common challenges and action

Reviewing the topical orientation of projects illustrates that the objectives of Nordic-Scottish co-operation and the objectives of EU funding programmes allowing for Nordic-Scottish projects are not necessary congruent. This is illustrated by the thematic orientation of the projects. However, as has been shown here, the projects

have still been able to contribute to the further development of the topics for Nordic-Scottish co-operation identified at the Skibo meeting. This applies in particular to issues of 'regional policy and sustainable development', 'regional policy in rural and peripheral areas' and 'new economy and the information society'.

The programmes, as well as the Nordic-Scottish co-operation initiative, take their point of departure in the similarities between the areas covered. Facing common or joint challenges is understood as the basis for co-operation. Joint challenges and solutions are only, to a minor extent, addressed by the projects. Most projects focus on common issues, i.e. on similarities between project regions. This is illustrated both in the themes addressed by the projects and in the modes and geographies of co-operation.

Consequently, the exchange of experience and good practice has a higher priority than finding joint solutions. In both cases, difficulties regarding comparability over national (system) borders have been experienced as hampering elements. Generally, we may conclude that projects dealing with concrete, practical questions often had less trouble in keeping the trans-national project focussed. Projects showing a more general or theoretical focus more often fell into sub-projects which were, in general terms, only insufficiently connected.

Related to the mode of co-operation, the outputs are either a trans-national or comparative character or focus very much on the single sub-projects and regions. Regardless of the geographical orientation, the outputs mostly focus on networking and reporting oriented towards the project partners. Dissemination to a wider audience, or direct application and implementation-oriented outputs are rarely spotted. This underlines the focus on in-tangible results and learning.

7 Co-operation and Learning in Nordic-Scottish Projects (HOW)

The projects analysed in this study focus mainly on the creation of new knowledge and the sharing of experiences, i.e. how learning has occurred in trans-national co-operation. Thus, the programme framework under which these projects are carried out suggests that learning (from each other and together) is a major element of such co-operation. Furthermore, co-operating in trans-national and interdisciplinary projects often involves a high degree of learning, as it requires the establishment of a common language facilitating professional discussions.

In the following we will firstly discuss the different types of, and forums for, learning that occur in the studied projects, stressing the trans-nationality of co-operation. Secondly, we address the importance of the composition of the project team for the learning processes identified, emphasising the interdisciplinary aspects of co-operation. Lastly, we conclude the debate on co-operation and learning in trans-national projects by highlighting the role of partnerships and personal contacts for trans-national learning in highly diversified teams.

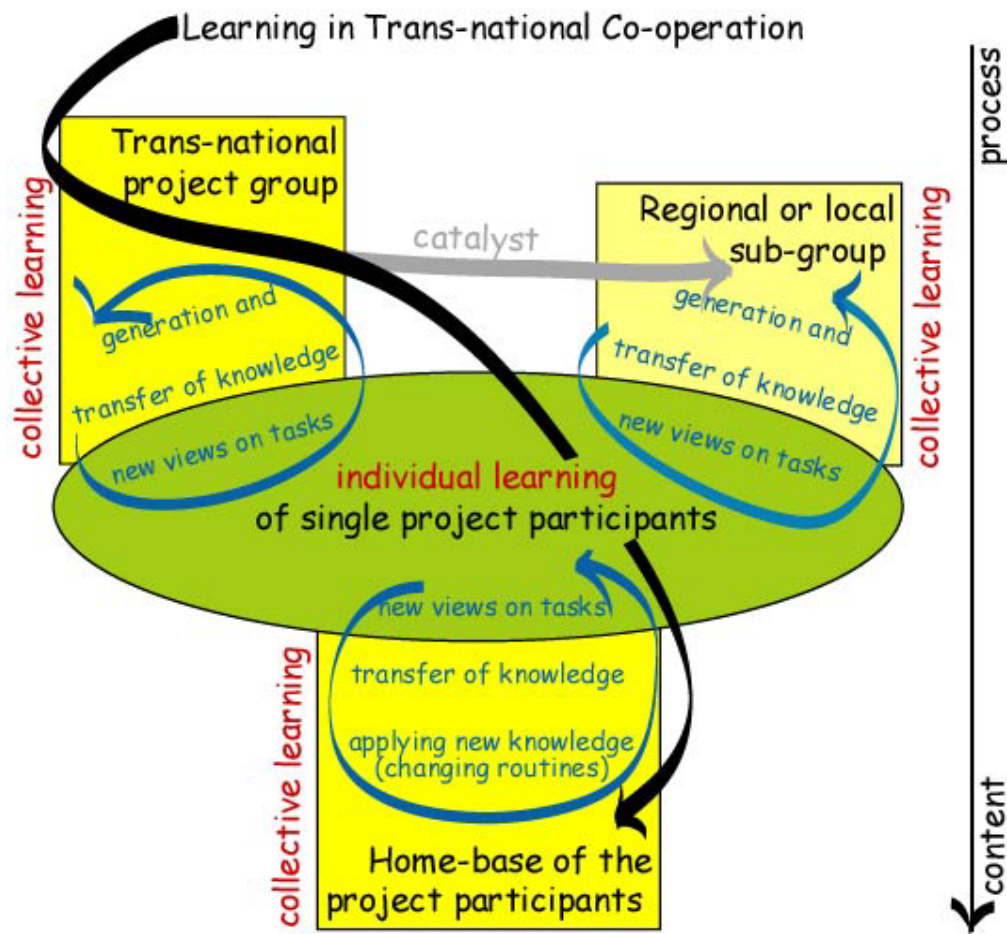
7.1 Learning in trans-national co-operation

When discussing learning in co-operation projects, the distinction between individual learning and collective/organisational learning needs to be taken into account. We identified three moments of learning. Firstly, there is learning about co-operation and on the content in the trans-national project group. Secondly, there is learning in national, regional or local sub-groups of the trans-national project group. In both cases the individual participating can learn something in this new co-operation context. Thirdly, the major question is, how this is learning transported from the individual participant in the project to his/her home base i.e. sharing of the new knowledge with colleagues. This last step is important as regards the use and implementation of knowledge gained in trans-national co-operation.

Trans-national learning

The obvious task of a trans-national co-operation project can be expected to be found in trans-national learning. This can either take the form of learning on a joint genuine trans-national issue or learning from each other on by e.g. the exchange of experience. Both forms contain a number of challenging moments.

Working on a joint task and thus creating trans-national knowledge has only been envisaged by a very few projects in the programmes analysed. The most prominent example is probably that of the *NORVISION* project, elaborating a spatial development perspective for the North Sea Region. To a certain extent the *NorCoast* project can however also be considered as an attempt to create trans-national knowledge. Confronted with the EU discussions and guidelines on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), the initial objective of the project was to propose binding guidelines for ICZM. However, as the project moved on the partners realised the difficulty of such a task. As a result, it was agreed to limit the main outcome to recommendations on methods and instrument to be suited to improve ICZM. The recommendations are rather general and subject to local interpretation. The reason for the change of the objective and the general nature of the outcome lies in the fact that



The question of project beneficiaries and what they learned is not addressed in the figure.

This involves at one point also the question of whether this form of learning is costly.

Furthermore, the question of the content of learning needs to be considered. Trans-national co-operation involves learning on the content of co-operation and learning on the process of co-operation. The actual "meaning" of learning depends to a significant degree on the profile of the trans-national project group:

- In the case of a rather homogenous group with a high degree of communality, learning at the trans-national level can focus on the content/task of the project.
- In the case of a group characterised by a high degree of diversity, learning on the mode of co-operation, finding a common language, and mutual understanding will demand time and resources.

the partnership came to the conclusion that planning systems and the definition of coastal zones vary broadly between the different countries and that it is crucial to tailor solutions to the local context. Significant differences between national planning systems, administrative systems and the solutions adopted have also been experienced by the *North Sea Cycle Circuit* project.

Indeed, the broad variety of national differences of all kinds has been experienced by almost every project, not least by those aiming at sharing experience and/or comparing national/regional sub-projects and activities. At least at one time during the course of the almost every project it has been considered impossible to transfer knowledge and experience between different countries, because of cultural, administrative and/or legal differences. In the *Noord XXI* project it was stated that the partners did not share the same set of concepts, hence they could not handle their cultural differences. The same term (or Euro-English translations) used in different languages refers to different conceptual backgrounds. Until partners understand the difference and domesticate it, as it were, the exchange of ideas is received as rather unproductive. This can e.g. concern the system of local administration including the division of responsibility between various administrative tiers, how each level is elected, which is indeed something that shapes the way in which local policies can be driven. Thus in a number of projects, these differences implied that the sharing of experience was considered as interesting as regards personal learning, but of little use as regards applying more generally what had been learned.

Generally it seems that projects with rather concrete, practical tasks and hands-on approaches faced less difficulties as compared to more policy-oriented projects. Thus, the project on the *Re-Use of Peat Production Areas* found that involving partners from other countries proved very valuable in bringing together new ideas and experiences as to what possibilities were available for the re-use of peat areas. Indeed, one of the Scottish partners involved in the project went on to work as a consultant for a Finnish municipality to further develop work on peat areas. Another such practical example can be found in the *ROADDEX* project where partners learned from each other how a steel net could be used under the road surface to reinforce the work's structure. This project also allowed the partners to question their routes and consider changing their established practices when better standards existed in other countries.

Softer forms of trans-national learning can be spotted in the *Regional Development Strategies and Their Spatial Implications* project, where discussions, presentations and field visits allowed the partners to benchmark their economic development strategies and business support services. In the *Scottish-Nordic Business Forum*, the partners stated that the forums were probably most useful for the companies that presented themselves and were analysed by the expert panel as they then received detailed comments and recommendations regarding possible improvements.

Summing up, learning in a trans-national context faces various difficulties because of the existence of significant national differences, which make it difficult for participants to understand each other and to readily apply experience gained from other countries. Working on a joint trans-national task or on very concrete and practical issues facilitates trans-national learning. This comprises mainly of the learning of an individual in a trans-national context.

Regional (and national) learning

Elsewhere in this study, we noted that most projects were divided into regional or national sub-projects brought together under a trans-national umbrella. As learning at the trans-national level has widely been experienced as challenging or even impossible, the focus for the creation of knowledge has often been on the regional sub-projects. This was done partly on purpose from the beginning of a project and partly as a result of the trans-national difficulties. The *New Business Services in Northern Rural Areas (NorthInno)* project considered it an important factor for the success of the project that they focused from the start on national sub-projects rather than on a joint trans-national project. The trans-national co-operation basically consisted of the exchange of information about each other's project.

The common dominator for projects with strong regional sub-projects is that they often have their origin in needs or bottlenecks experienced at the local or regional level, as e.g. *SEAGIS*. Inspired by the funding opportunity the local/regional need is translated into a trans-national project. Thus co-operation with partners from other countries contributed to addressing regional challenges.

The crucial question is thus, whether the trans-national sharing dimension, i.e. the sharing of experience, actually contributes to the learning process taking place in the project, i.e. adds something to the regional learning process. If this is the case we consider the project as having both a trans-national and a regional learning dimension, as e.g. in the project on *Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery Areas*. In this project a series of independent national studies was carried out. The strong common design of the studies guaranteed that all were carried out in the same way, and this made it possible to bring them together in a trans-national study that was then able to draw joint conclusions.

If the trans-national dimension does only slightly contribute to the learning process, we consider the project to be mainly of a regional character, as e.g. *Teleremcare* or *Selection Criteria and Model Evaluation for Waste Disposal in Sparsely Populated Cool Temperate Regions (SEWPER)*.

Teleremcare specifically emphasised the distinctively regional nature of its sub-projects from the very beginning. Indeed, the knowledge created during this project was mostly on the local level. What was learned at the local level was mainly in the form of increased experience in relation to the development of telemedicine. This type of learning can probably in some instances be transferred from the local level to the regional and national levels, as the health care system is usually nationally harmonised. Whether the knowledge gained in the sub-project was new or not it is difficult to state, but at least all partners consider the results produced in the sub-projects as useful.

The *Selection Criteria and Model Evaluation for Waste Disposal in Sparsely Populated Cool Temperate Regions (SEWPER)* project contributed to raising awareness at both the local and regional levels of the fact that waste management problems in small peripheral communities require particular attention and investment.

Similar to regional learning also national learning can take place in trans-national co-operation projects. As a number of trans-national co-operation projects address

features that relate to responsibilities of national actors, the participation of these actors in the learning process can be crucial for the application of new knowledge gained in a project. One example where the project partnership involved national key actors and thus the project informed national administration and policy-making is *SEAGIS*. The work on GIS development for coastline mapping carried out under this project was useful for the participating regions, but even more, in Norway it contributed to the national development within this field.

Summing up, learning in a national or regional context is basically considered, in the majority of projects, to be the most important learning process in a trans-national project. To a certain extent, even actors from the same region that had not been in contact previously found benefits in working together through these projects. The importance of the regional sub-projects is often explained by the fact the projects have their origin in local problems. The crucial question – asked for each project – is however, to what degree did the trans-national co-operation facilitate or contribute to regional or national learning. Generally, it seems that the trans-national element shows unused potentials capable of being exploited further.

Organisational learning

Organisational learning addresses the question of how learning that has taken place at the trans-national and national/regional levels is translated from the persons participating in the project to their home-organisations. This involves the sharing of the new knowledge with colleagues etc. but more importantly it involves the use of the knowledge e.g. through the changing of routines etc. In this respect, the results of the questionnaire suggest that about 30% of the project participants consider the project to have led to changes in their work routines, while 20% assume that the project contributed to changes in the work routines of others. This gives a first indication of the fact that the results of the projects are used, and that in some cases they may make a significant difference. However, the case study work illustrates that the transfer of knowledge within a single organisation is challenging. A deeper analysis of the projects moreover suggests that within the partner organisations themselves, the partners recognised the difficulty in spreading knowledge and experience to individuals who did not take an active part in the project.

In the following we highlight some examples where the transfer from individual learning to collective/organisational learning has been explicit, or where the experience of trans-national co-operation led to changes in single partner organisations.

In the project on *Regional Development Strategies and Their Spatial Implications*, the knowledge gained from the project was transferred from individual participants to their organisations partly through reporting exercises and partly by increasing the number of participants when meetings were held locally. However, it was recognised that international networks and experience stemming from working in these networks are based mainly on personal contacts, which are often difficult to transfer. Similar experiences have been made in *Roadex*. The partners were aware of the importance of sharing contacts and information within their organisation, but also experienced the reality that this does not always happen as it should.

Despite this self-critical attitude, *Roadex* can be seen as one of the projects that actually show signs of organisational learning and the change of routines. Comparisons of national quality standards for winter maintenance allowed the partners to re-consider their established practices where better standards exist in other countries.

A similar project involving the introduction of new knowledge into a home organisation, is that of the project on *Selection Criteria and Model Evaluation for Waste Disposal in Sparsely Populated Cool Temperate Regions (SEWPER)*. For the lead partner, new ideas were generated in relation to the preparation of waste management that are both economically and socially acceptable. The project helped to highlight the importance of logistics in waste management systems. This particular aspect had not received much attention in the initial stages of the project, but the partners subsequently raised its importance. This dimension is now an integral component of the follow-up project that has since been developed. Despite rather concrete results, the project has not yet had any direct implications other than that of successfully generating a follow-up project. This is rather typical for most projects.

Even in cases where it has been possible to pass on knowledge gained in the co-operation project to other colleagues at the home organisation and thus contribute to organisational learning, the knowledge has often not led to any specific application or changes. There are in fact very few projects in which the case study work allowed participants to identify contributions to the change of routines. One of these projects is *SEAGIS*. For the Norwegian partners this project has apparently provided useful results that, to some extent, have been translated into practice. This is perhaps not that surprising, as the project was more or less designed by one of them, and was based on problems faced in relation to GIS development in coastal planning. Generally, both the metadata and the flowchart are still used by some of the partners, and in Norway it is even stated that the results have contributed to national developments within the field

Although it was difficult to pass on knowledge of the project content, experiences of trans-national co-operation have often been easier to transfer. In the project on *Regional Development Strategies and Their Spatial Implications and (NoordXXI)* it was stated that the project was seen by several partners as an opportunity for their organisations to learn how to co-operate in an international partnership.

Summing up the experience of organisational learning, it needs to be said that most project participants faced difficulties in transferring the experiences gained in the project to colleagues not participating in the project. The interviews showed that often change of routines does not take place, although it has been indicated that it does in the questionnaires. Consequently, the knowledge accumulated in the project remained for the most part with the participating individuals – and this is certainly documented in various kinds of reports.

Conclusion on Types of Learning - Individual learning

The crucial link between trans-national, regional and organisation learning is individual learning. The discussion has shown that it is first and foremost the individual project participants taking part in the activities at the various forums, who learn, and who are responsible for passing on knowledge from one forum to another.

Thus individual learning is the main aspect. Furthermore the study has shown that the transfer of knowledge between the forums (organisational or regional to trans-national / trans-national or regional to organisational etc.) is often considered as challenging or impossible. There are at least two factors putting the main emphasis on individual learning and hindering the transfer to organisational learning. First, a lot of issues handled in these projects require a 'hands-on' approach and knowledge can only rarely be acquired through reading or lecturing. Secondly, the projects are often not considered to be part of the individual in questions ordinary workload, but rather are conceived of as additional tasks. Moreover, there is often insufficient integration into the work of an organisation as regards the project work or the tasks and results coming out of it.

As regards the transfer from individual learning to organisational learning, projects such as the *Inner Moray Firth Towns Strategy* suggest that intensive reporting and the dissemination of interesting issues certainly plays its role, but it cannot replace the hands-on experience provided by trans-national co-operation projects. Contrary to academic research, local government practitioners are also concerned with the delivery of services to their constituency. Moreover, in other projects, there are clear indications that this learning and gathering of experience taking place in trans-national projects can only be achieved through hands on approaches – i.e. not by reading and lecturing. This is partly the point of Interreg as a means of disseminating EU policy aims. Only when a person has tried to apply polycentric development etc. in his/her context can the idea of polycentricity be said to have been understood and successfully transferred from the European policy arena to the local and regional arena. The same can be said of sustainable development and other complex policy aims.

An additional challenge is the fact that the work carried out in the projects is considered to be additional to the ordinary work of the host organisation etc. For example, in the *SEAGIS* project it was regarded as problematic that all partners had other day-to-day activities which were prioritised and often more urgent than the trans-national co-operation project. Indeed, the insufficient integration of the project task into the ordinary work routines of those charged with implementing it may challenge the project as such but it also hampers the transfer of the project results into new organisational knowledge and routines. This certainly also depends on the position the respective project partner has within the partner organisation.

In conclusion, knowledge gained within the projects seems to be more individual than institutional, although it filters down in small doses to other colleagues through discussions (*Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery Areas*). Other projects support the thesis that the development of personal skills are an important spin-off of a trans-national project, as e.g. *NorCoast* and *Women in the Periphery (Northnet)* where the project was considered to be an opportunity for some partners to develop their personal skills and competence.

Given the complicated nature of learning through joint tasks and the sharing of experience, individual learning has a crucial role to play in the transformation of knowledge from one forum to another. Although it has been said that some knowledge gained in these projects can only be acquired in learning by doing, the

dissemination, application and implementation of knowledge and experience coming from these projects needs to be strengthened.

7.2 Learning in interdisciplinary co-operation

The composition of project teams determines the kind of learning taking place in a project. As elaborated previously, trans-national co-operation involves working within the constraints of one or more foreign languages and the cultural diversity of the team, which are additional challenges to project co-operation. Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of most project co-operation adds additional challenges of communicating across traditional sector borders. Therefore, it is important to assess how the teams have been composed, i.e. whether they mainly build on existing co-operation and the degree of diversity in the team.

As the challenges of trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation are especially distinct in a newly established co-operation team, we assessed whether the project teams were based on previously existing co-operation or came together for the first time. The survey shows that in only a few cases was the team based on already existing partnerships. Examples of this are the *Scottish-Nordic Business Forum*, which was based on already ongoing SME co-operation between Scotland and the Nordic countries, and *NorCoast*, where the initial partners came together within the North Sea Commission Environmental Group. The majority of project participants knew only a few partners beforehand. A typical example is *Teleremcare*. The lead partner knew one of the project partners beforehand and as regards the rest of the team it took time and effort to search for and identify the right partners, as there were a number of possible options. Moreover, in other Interreg programmes it has been shown that searching for suitable partners requires both time and effort. Thus it is rather normal that the partners did not know each other personally beforehand, but that some of them had some knowledge of the institutions they represented, although there had not been any previous co-operation.

Having said this, we turn now to the question of the interdisciplinary diversity of those mainly new teams and the advantages and challenges the degree of diversity had for their co-operation.

As regards the professional and institutional backgrounds, some projects show a huge diversity of backgrounds and some seem to be rather homogenous. The analysis of the questionnaire shows that focussing on homogenous professional groups 'improved information backgrounds' and 'knowledge transfer' are the most oft mentioned and important points as regards being engaged in such a co-operative venture. Even issues such as the 'establishment of common trust' or 'confidence building' that were thought to be more important in heterogeneous professional groups were regarded merely as important, rather than unimportant in homogenous teams.

Rather homogenous project teams share a common understanding and professional language and therefore they are able to work directly on the content of the project and gain new knowledge in this field. Rather heterogeneous groups (networks) will often need more time to establish a common understanding, in this case the work on the actual content of the project can facilitate learning from each other about different aspects and especially on establishing trans-national interdisciplinary co-operation.

The project team of the *SEAGIS* project consisted in a rather homogenous group as regards professional background and involvement in the public sector. The partner considered this a great strength as it facilitated communication and thus co-operation. In the *Scottish-Nordic Business Forum* it was stated that the homogenous composition of the team made it possible to start right away focusing on the important issues instead of using time for establishing a common language. Moreover, the *Women in the Periphery (Northnet)* perceived the homogeneity of their project team as being a positive asset, as they faced similar challenges and as their working cultures were broadly similar. However, they also recognised that this could be a weakness if it meant that partners were less challenged in their thinking and the project was not raised to another level as result.

This duality of homogenous groups, on the one hand facilitating easy understanding and on the other not challenging the group discussions sufficiently has been pointed out by a number of projects, as e.g. in *Roadex* and *NorCoast*. In the *NorCoast* project homogeneity was at times perceived as a weakness. Since all partners had relatively senior positions within their organisation, discussions were perhaps not as focused on end-users as they could have been. In the *Roadex* project the main strength was that all partners dealt with the issues at stake on a daily basis. Consequently, all partners were on the same wavelength and communication was very straightforward. However, discussions were sometimes very technical and it proved difficult for other stakeholders outside the partnership to understand the content of the debates and feel involved. Furthermore, the homogeneity resulted perhaps in a lack of alternative opinions and challenging viewpoints.

On the other hand, the experience of projects characterised by a rather heterogeneous composition of the project team was that progress was sometimes constrained by the fact that partners did not share the same concepts and often needed a long time to establish a common language. Those negative aspects of co-operation in heterogeneous teams has already been discussed in detail in the section on difficulties of learning in trans-national co-operation. Therefore, we focus now on the positive aspects of these challenges.

A sufficient degree of commonality or a shared strong interest has been identified in almost all projects that considered the heterogeneous composition of the team as regards professions and backgrounds as an asset. Thus, working on the *Inner Moray Firth Towns Strategy*, the diversity of perspectives was considered an asset and did not cause difficulties as participants had a relatively similar level of seniority. The projects on *New Business Services in Northern Rural Areas (NorthInno)* and on *Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery* clearly understood their heterogeneity to be a strength as the diversity of experience, knowledge and background involved a higher potential for exchange. However, it has to be admitted that in a number of projects having partners with rather diverse backgrounds led to some problems concerning the methodological context of the project during the first phase. Once these had been overcome, the opinion was that the interdisciplinary nature of a partnership enriched the project by broadening the range of issues that were flagged up by partners because they needed to be considered from their point of view.

Summing up the discussion on the composition of project teams and the influence it has on the forms of learning, one may say that co-operation is easier for rather homogenous groups that share a common language and understanding. However, the above debate has shown that rather heterogeneous groups can turn diversity into an additional asset if they manage to establish a common platform and understanding, which mostly requires a sufficient degree of commonality and strong interest in the joint exercise. Although some of the heterogeneous projects had a hard time during their first co-operation project, experience from other projects suggests that, for them, it would be easier next time.

Last but not least, we should not forget that the basic strength of each project team is a high level of expertise.

7.3 Importance of partnerships in learning processes

The importance of individual learning as well as the overall challenges of overcoming the difficulties inherent in trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation suggest that the individual person and the relation between the various project partners are crucial to the success of such co-operation. *New Business Services in Northern Rural Areas (NorthInno)* came to the conclusion that the difficulties of communication were the main obstacle to trans-national co-operation. Such difficulties were successfully overcome thanks to the creation of a real partnership and thanks to good relationships at the personal level. Similarly, the project on *Regional Development Strategies and Their Spatial Implications* discovered that the development of personal friendships played a key role in facilitating the resolution of issues that could otherwise have become difficult.

Thus, the experience recorded in the project on *Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery Areas*, that personal chemistry was an important factor in how well the partnership functioned during the whole project period, is valid for a wide range of projects.

Importantly, an interviewee in the project on the *Re-Use of Peat Production Areas* pointed out that project co-operation needs to provide scope for creating personal contacts. A key factor for creating an open-minded co-operative spirit throughout the project was the fact that partners were allowed enough time to build personal contacts. That this has not always been the case is underlined in other answers to the questionnaire, where it is clearly stated that professional relationships and private contact are to be kept apart as co-operation is otherwise considered problematic.

Generally, we can conclude that the establishment of personal contact and networks between the project partners has been considered as facilitating the resolution of the challenges of trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation. Thus, it may not be a surprise that the main results of the project were often considered to be a better understanding between the partners, a well-functioning network and also experience associated with participation in an international project.

8 Benefits and Lessons to be Learned (CHANGES)

In this final part of the report we sum up the discussion by first looking into the benefits and impacts of Nordic-Scottish co-operation, which are themselves often regarded as rather subtle. Second, we will provide an indication of some clear messages to be learned from the experiences of Nordic-Scottish co-operation projects under Interreg IIC North Sea Region and Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme.

8.1 Subtle impacts and benefits of Nordic-Scottish co-operation

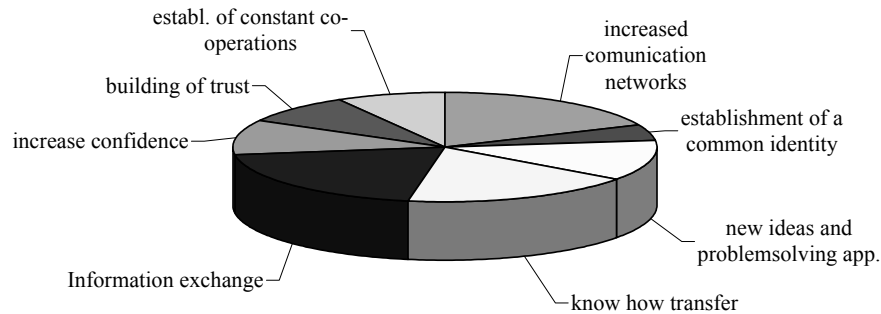
Projects funded under the Interreg IIC North Sea and the Article 10 Northern Periphery programmes have made a substantive and meaningful contribution to the topics for Nordic Scottish co-operation despite a lack of congruence as regards the policy aims for Nordic-Scottish co-operation and trans-national EU programmes. This was possible because both allow for projects dealing with issues related to spatial commonalities, in particular joint or common challenges in the field of regional development and peripherality.

The commonalities in the spatial conditions in the Nordic countries and in Scotland have been one of the cornerstones of the projects assessed. Facing similar challenges and similar problems has often been a starting point for co-operation. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that many projects centred on the Skibo issues of ‘regional policy and sustainable development’, ‘regional policy in rural and peripheral areas’ and ‘new economy and the information society’, the latter having a special focus with regard to overcoming remoteness. However, despite geographical commonalities, the differences in the administrative and legal systems, as well as in culture, hampered the transfer of experience between countries. Thus, the production of joint results has often been experienced as challenging, and the exchange of experience and good practice usually dominated over the finding of joint solutions and the creation of common knowledge. Regardless of the geographical orientation, trans-national outputs lie mostly in the field of networking and reporting among the project partners. Dissemination to a wider audience and the application and implementation of results was however rare. As a consequence, concrete project outputs often focused on single sub-projects and regions.

First impressions on how the results of the projects were used have been provided by the returned questionnaires. The project participants see the main benefits in the fields of information exchange, ‘know-how’ transfer, and extended communication networks. Thus, more the 50% lie in the field of general networking. New ideas and new approaches to solve problems rank fourth as regards the benefits of trans-national co-operation. The case studies underline the fact that the main results are to be seen in the field of networking and individual learning. This is related to the challenges of trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation. The peculiarities of these forms of co-operation, as well as a number of tasks dealt with in the co-operation projects, are considered as issues that can only be learned via a hands-on approach. As the dissemination of the required knowledge seems to be difficult, projects bringing together new trans-national and interdisciplinary teams on spatial policy issues will often need a long period of establishing a common language and understanding. Thus, the first joint project may focus on the creation of the team and platform. Taking this into account one may expect that the Interreg IIIB project will produce more tangible results than the projects reviewed in this study.

Changes

Intermediate Classification of Benefits



(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

As regards the impact on daily work, the majority consider co-operation to have had an impact on their personal work. Roughly one third of respondents assume that there are also impacts on the daily work of others, and only a minority replied that the project had no impact on daily work. Discussing the kind of impact considered it becomes clear that changes of routines rank rather low, whereas knowledge gained was considered to be of premier importance, followed by increased contact networks. Indeed, the case study-work presented a similar picture, which allowed nuances to be examined between the individual and collective dimension. Generally, the individual aspects have been considered as being of greater importance both as regards learning on the content of the project and on the networking side. Indeed, it was generally felt to be difficult to pass on the gained knowledge or networks to colleagues.

Changes

Impacts on Daily Work

	Own work	Others' work	No impact
Benefit and use of contacts	19	11	5
Benefit of gained knowledge/achieved results	21	14	1
Change of working routines	9	7	13

(source: Own investigation, Nordregio 2003)

As outlined in the discussion on learning, the changing of routines is considered to be a major indication of the use and implementation of results. Once a single project member has learned something in a co-operation process, this knowledge can either remain as personal information or be used for changing personal routines or it can be transferred into the home organisation of the project member where it then contributes to institutional learning, i.e. changing routines in the organisation. In this respect, the case studies illustrated that it has proven difficult to transfer experience and knowledge from the co-operation projects to colleagues who did not participate in the project. As the knowledge to a significant degree stayed with the project participants, individual learning dominates over organisational learning and thus the translation of learning into changes of routines. This leaves us with the impact of such co-operation often being limited to the personal level, i.e. to the actual participants.

We may conclude that the establishment of personal contacts and networks among project partners has been considered to facilitate the resolution of the challenges of trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation. Thus, it may not be a surprise that the main results of the projects were often considered to be:

- better understanding between partners across national and sectoral borders,
- well functioning networks,
- experience associated with participation in an international project, and
- the personal knowledge gained on the project issue.

The challenges of both trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation have each been a major concern of many projects, as they are seen to hamper the translation of common challenges into joint or common action. The projects studied managed to overcome these challenges and most of them turned the diversity into an asset.

Thus the Interreg IIC and Article 10 projects studied in this report illustrate that this form of trans-national co-operation gives value added the implementation of both the European and the Nordic-Scottish policy aims. The view beyond the fulfilling of formal aims, illustrates that there are a wide range of achievements not at least in the field of learning.

Changes made when designing the current Interreg IIIB programmes suggest that the concrete value and outcome of the single projects will be more outspoken than what could be reviewed in this report.

The study has, however, also shown that Interreg is a form of risk-taking both for the partners getting involved in the projects and for the various financiers. The provided framework and the combination of trans-national and interdisciplinary partnerships are a platform that offers good chances for valuable results, but there is no guarantee.

Those projects that find a continuation or follow-up under the respective Interreg IIIB programme, will show to what degree the lessons learned in the previous period allow more far reaching results. Among these projects are:

Interreg IIIB Northern Periphery

- Community Learning Networks in the Northern Periphery Areas – Phase II
- Remote Telematic Solutions for Patient Diagnosis and Training of Health Care Professionals in Sparsely Populated Areas.

- Interactive and Innovative Road Management of Low Traffic Volume Roads through an Technical Information Exchange – ROADEX II
- Ecological Waste Treatment in Sparsely Populated Areas
- Small Town Networks
- Domestication of Northern Berries

Interreg IIIB - North Sea Region

- Nordic Transport Political Network – NTN II,
- The North Sea Cycling Route 2 - Cycling On,
- Trans-national Ecological Network III
- Travel Awareness Regional Groups for Environmental Transport – TARGET2
- Water City International II
- Cross-National Waste Management Network
- Forum Skagerak II
- The Liveable City ‘ City Centre Spatial Management - Beyond the City Centre Management Network’

8.2 Lessons to be learned

From the projects reviews, a number of lessons can be learned:

- **Commonalities** have been of importance for all projects.
 - **Geographical or spatial commonalities**, i.e. common or joint challenges, etc. were among the most important aspects for the design of the projects. Indeed, the Nordic-Scottish sphere offers a wide range of such commonalities.
- **Difficulties of trans-national co-operation** have been experienced in most co-operation projects.
 - **Joint or common efforts**, i.e. working on one single project outcome or working on various sub-project results within a similar scope is a major focus of trans-national co-operation. As an indicator of the difficulties of trans-national co-operation the majority of projects focus on common efforts and sub-projects.
 - **Regional sub-projects stand for content** in trans-national projects. As the focus is often on common efforts, regional projects play an important role in the learning and knowledge creation process. This needs, however, to be sufficiently integrated into a trans-national learning process.
 - **The risk of independent sub-projects** within an insufficiently developed trans-national umbrella is often a consequence of the trans-national co-operation difficulties. Thus the trans-national project is reduced to a funding mechanism for regional projects that do not have any trans-national dimension or influences.
 - **Similar problems but different national systems** can impede the exchange of experience as the participants consider it difficult to transfer experience and knowledge from one national system to another. Although the gained knowledge could not be easily transferred or applied it has generally been considered as interesting and valuable.

- **Difficulties of interdisciplinary co-operation** are another issue that a number of projects experienced.
 - **Team commonalities** have proven to be of importance, for achieving a good understanding. Generally it can be concluded that the diverse composition of the team is considered to contribute to broader and more challenging discussions. However, a sufficient degree of commonalities as regards professional backgrounds and work tasks is needed.
 - **Concrete, practical tasks** (project themes) often facilitate the overcoming of initial co-operation difficulties.

- **Individual learning dominates over organisational learning** in most projects as it is considered to be difficult to transfer knowledge.
 - **Indirect organisational benefits** are often a consequence of the fact that the projects result mostly in personal learning and networking. Thus, the use of co-operation on a personal level can be considered as being of limited benefit for organisations.
 - **Personal confidence building and an increase in skills** have often been mentioned as important results of the projects.
 - **The wide range of experience** recorded in projects ranging from learning on the project issue, via learning on trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation and the building of networks results in a series of rather subtle benefits.
 - **The personal level of co-operation**, i.e. emerging friendships etc. was considered to be important with regard to networking and also as a significant influence on the success of co-operation more generally.

- **Integration of the project into ordinary tasks** often seems to be a crucial issue.
 - **Projects as additional tasks on top of the ordinary work** often face the problem of low priority and insufficient integration into the organisation. Thus, projects that are sufficiently integrated into the day-to-day business show a far greater potential for organisational learning.
 - **International links and specialisation** are considered as aspects that trans-national projects can add to the daily working routine.

8.3 Policy Recommendations

The lessons of trans-national co-operation presented above can be translated into recommendations for actors at the project level, programme management and the wider policy arena.

Project Level

The report discusses challenges and opportunities of trans-national and interdisciplinary co-operation. Based on this a number of recommendations can be provided for projects participants and in particular for project initiators and lead partner.

Project Participants

For project participants, i.e. partners in trans-national projects, the main recommendation is to consider carefully the content of the project. In most cases, a project is only as relevant as the questions it deals with. Therefore, topics addressed by the project need to be of strategic interest for the daily work of all project partners. For the utilisation of the project results, the project needs to be fully integrated into ordinary working tasks.

This also implies that rather concrete and action-oriented topics are more appropriate for utilisation than commissioned (co-funded) research studies. Experience has shown that for the issues at stake in these kinds of trans-national projects, learning takes place in the form of learning-by-doing, and only rarely through research and dissemination activities.

In practical terms, there needs to be a commitment from senior levels within the participating organisation that sufficient time and resources will be devoted to the project co-operation process, supported by regular and active steps to involve the wider organisation in the process and to ensure that it is not restricted to individual participation.

Project Initiators / Lead Partners

For project initiators, who are often also the lead partners, some additional recommendations can be made. Certainly, the main aspect is that the task dealt with by the project is of strategic importance for the project initiator.

The question dealt with can either be a *joint challenge*, which needs to be solved by the concerted action of all of the project partners, or it can be a *common challenge*, where all partners have similar problems and the project helps each of them to solve their specific challenges.

In both cases, commonalities experienced are the major factor in bringing various partners together in one project. Such commonalities concern the issue of the project, but for smooth project organisation, other commonalities need to be considered as well. In particular, in projects dealing with common challenges, differences in national systems, institutional backgrounds, professional backgrounds and terminology, as well as the seniority of the partners need to be mentioned. Taking this into account, a project group can either be rather homogenous or diversified. A good

balance is however recommended, as experience has shown that very heterogeneous project groups need a long time and a lot of effort to establish a common language and a common level of understanding. On the other hand, a number of homogenous groups stated that a more diverse set of project participants would probably have enriched their discussions.

A key task for project leaders is to consider the practical steps required to deal with differences in national, institutional, professional and cultural backgrounds within the project team. For example, it may be advisable to establish an inception phase of acclimatisation among project partners that is devoted purely to developing good personal and professional understanding within the project team, before embarking on the project co-operation itself. There is a role for programme managers in supporting this process.

In any case, building on existing project groups and co-operations, with positive experience, will always facilitate the project work. The study has shown that personal relations and chemistry are often the backbone of fruitful co-operation experience in an interdisciplinary and trans-national project environment.

The Nordic-Scottish Policy Arena

The projects reviewed in this study are an important element of the practical Nordic-Scottish co-operation. Although the programmes under which the project have been funded were not necessarily designed for strengthening Nordic-Scottish co-operation, they did provide a suitable framework for it.

Some lessons can be learned for strengthening future practical Nordic-Scottish co-operation. Recommendations regard among others the programme management on which the Nordic and Scottish actors have a certain influence through their seats in monitoring and steering committees. It has, however, to be kept in mind that the recommendations given are based on studies of projects funded under the former funding period. For the current funding period a number of changes have been made in the programme management. Thus in some cases aspects we address in the recommendations have already been subject to changes. Furthermore, some recommendations can be given regarding the debate on the future of trans-national co-operation programmes. The lessons learned may contribute to strengthening Nordic-Scottish interests in this debate.

Programme Management

A clear and obvious lesson from this research is that the success of trans-national co-operation depends on the ability of the team to communicate and work effectively together. The programme management could support the process of overcoming national, institutional, professional and cultural differences by providing ‘inception courses’ (for both project leaders and partners) that deal not just with the mechanics of co-operation projects but facilitate understanding about the institutional and cultural contexts of partner countries/regions. It could also usefully address some of the dimensions and dynamics of learning discussed in this paper. This could be strengthened by the provision of other resources, such as web-based information (much of which could be of a standard informational and statistical nature) and toolkits, highlighting examples of good practice.

Furthermore, ideas concerning continuing project evaluation and project mentoring were put forward in the discussions. Continuing project evaluation, as part of the project activities, would allow the project participants to learn from that evaluation during the project. Project mentoring implies that successful projects and in particular their lead partner could act as mentor for new project helping them bridging the troubled waters of trans-national and interdisciplinary project co-operation and maybe even in the field of project administration.

Project selection is an important task of the programme management. Looking at the content of projects, it is advisable to concentrate on projects that deal with rather concrete issues being of direct strategic interest to the ordinary work of the participating partners.

More generally, it may be recommendable to encourage projects that evolve from the specifics of the programming area, i.e. that deal with challenges characteristic to the region and that are not inter-changeable with projects in other programming areas. A thematic focus for a project can be developed in whatever field. With regard to the Skibo topics, we have however seen a certain gathering around issues related to regional development in peripheral areas and regional policy and sustainable development.

Given any thematic orientation of a project, we can distinguish between projects focusing on joint challenges and those on common challenges. Within a trans-national programme, special attention should be paid to the trans-national dimension of the projects, especially those dealing with common challenges. The study has shown that regional sub-projects often achieve good and valuable results but with limited consideration to the trans-nationality of the project. Developing this aspect further gives value-added to the overall knowledge generated during the project period. In cases where there are equally good projects available an assessment of the integration of the trans-national component into the project task is thus recommended.

The European Policy Arena

In the wider trans-national or European policy arena, the question thus emerges as to how different agendas play together, and how the thematic focus of single programmes is influenced by the delimitation of the programming areas.

As regards the thematic focus, this study has illustrated a certain lack of congruence between the aims of Nordic-Scottish co-operation and the aims of programmes funded by the European Union. In particular, with respect to the Northern Periphery Programme, which provides the best opportunities for Nordic-Scottish co-operation, the issue of policy congruence might be considered in the case of possible Interreg IV discussions. Interreg IVB might be organised according to physical handicaps, and here spatial characteristics such as mountainous, sparsely populated or (ultra) peripheral issues might be at stake for programmes covering Nordic-Scottish co-operation. In cases where the definition of physical handicaps relates to whether there is a national policy for this thematic issue, mountain areas will not be an option. Given a focus on regional policy in relation to sparsely populated and peripheral areas it is possible to cover both options when considering the existence of national policies and the actual spatial situation. This approach could possibly also allow for a higher

congruence of aims to be addressed by Interreg programmes and the topics for Nordic-Scottish co-operation.

In addition to this discussion on the scope of Interreg, the programme geography influences the issues targeted by the projects. In this context, the implications of the enlargement of the European Union certainly need to be considered. As regards the Northern Periphery Programme, the question emerges as to whether it would be more suitable to integrate larger parts or even the entirety of Norway into the programme. Furthermore, spatial similarities can also be found with the more sparsely populated regions of Ireland. Moreover within the Barents co-operation initiative geographical similarities can be found which raise the question as to whether parts of North-West Russia might be integrated into a future programme, at least as regards specific/concrete questions.

PART D – BACKGROUND MATERIALS

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- Per Frøyland Pallesen, Rogaland County Council, Norway
- Stuart Knowles, Fife County Council, Scotland

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- Programme and evaluation report of the seminar held in Viborg, Denmark from 7 to 10 October 1999 on the theme: "Promotion of employment opportunities in rural areas".

- Programme and evaluation report of the seminar held in Telemark, Norway from 23 to 26 March 2000 on the theme: "A comparison of economic activities between urban and rural areas".
- Programme and evaluation report of the seminar held in Wilhelmshaven, Germany from 7 to 10 September 2000 on the theme: "Different models of economic and social development".
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- Christian Byrith, Viborg County Council, Denmark
- Nick Burfield, formerly Suffolk County Council, England
- Peter Funnell, Suffolk College, England
- Philippa Simms, Fife International Trade, Scotland
- Thrond Kjellefold, Telemark County Council, Norway

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- Eileen Breibner, Department of General Practice and Primary Care, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland
- Tove Sörensen, Department of Telemedicine, University Hospital Tromsø, Tromsø, Norway
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- Stig Kerttu, Torneodalsrådet, Sweden

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Interview

- Mike Greaves, The Highland Council, Scotland

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- Helka Urponen, The University of Lapland, Finland
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- Rone Karlsson, Norrbottens Kooperativa Utvecklingscentrum (NKU), Sweden
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- Esa Kynkäänniemi, Haukipudas municipality, Finland

11 Interreg IIC NSR and Article 10 Northern Periphery Programme projects

Project	Programme	Nordic and Scottish partners	Case studies
Adding value to low-grade timber	Northern Periphery	✓	
Alternatives to road haulage	Northern Periphery	✓	
City centre managers network	Interreg IIC NSR		
Common potential in the northernmost part of Europe	Northern Periphery	✓	
Communities on line	Northern Periphery	✓	
Community learning networks in Northern Periphery areas	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
COWASTE - Development of recycling and utilization of construction waste	Northern Periphery	✓	
Cross-national waste management	Interreg IIC		
Cultivation of Northern Rubus species	Northern Periphery	✓	
Datashare - Integrated city and area planning	Interreg IIC NSR		
Deer management	Northern Periphery	✓	
Development of the ICT / Multimedia industry and the adventure, green and heritage tourist industry in remote areas by making use of new technology	Northern Periphery	✓	
Development of tools for sustainable planning	Interreg IIC NSR		
Documentation and development of seaside tourism in the North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		
Ecological utilisation of peat	Northern Periphery	✓	
Entree-entrepreneurship education in the Northern Periphery	Northern Periphery	✓	
Festival on the top of Europe	Northern Periphery	✓	
Forum Skagerrak	Interreg IIC NSR		
Green port	Interreg IIC NSR		
Identifying regional logistics parametres	Interreg IIC NSR		
Implementation of citizens environment information systems	Interreg IIC NSR		
Inner Moray Firth town strategy	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Integrated coastal management and local business development, the case of Salmon (Salmon rivers)	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Integrated development	Interreg IIC NSR		
Integrated participatory planning as a tool for rural development	Northern Periphery	✓	
I-Sea-U	Interreg IIC NSR		
IT-SCAND	Northern Periphery	✓	
Kings of the North Sea	Interreg IIC NSR		
Knowledge flow network for IT-related business	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	
Landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		
MILLEUX - The role of regional milleux in regional economic development	Northern Periphery	✓	

Project	Programme	Nordic and Scottish partners	Case studies
Natural and cultural values in sustainable rural tourism	Northern Periphery		
Network of short sea shipping promotion centres	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	
New research-based knowledge about peripherality and planning in depopulated build-up areas in the northern periphery (NRBK)	Northern Periphery	✓	
Noord XXI	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	✓
Norcoast	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	✓
Nordic transport political network	Interreg IIC NSR		
NordNet	Interreg IIC NSR		
North Atlantic shellfish management	Interreg IIC NSR		
North European trade axis	Interreg IIC NSR		
North Sea bio-energy network	Interreg IIC NSR		
North Sea cycle circuit	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	✓
North Sea traditional fish	Interreg IIC NSR		
North Sea Viking legacy	Interreg IIC NSR		
Northern women - New images	Northern Periphery	✓	
Northinno - New business services in northern rural areas	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Northnet - Women in the Periphery	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Nortrail - North Sea coastal path	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	
Norvision - A spatial vision for the North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	
Pilot development of rail ferry links and terminals for seaports	Interreg IIC NSR		
Pipelines	Interreg IIC NSR		
ProAqua - A new method for water resource management	Northern Periphery	✓	
RADWAT-Rural area development with advanced technology	Northern Periphery	✓	
Regional development strategies and their spatial implications	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	✓
Restoration of transnational ecological networks	Interreg IIC NSR		
Re-use of peat production areas	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Revitalisation of harbour towns and cities in the North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		
ROADDEX -Technical exchange co-operation across the Northern Periphery road district	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Roundpole in building	Northern Periphery	✓	
Rural transfer network	Northern Periphery	✓	
SafeinHerit - Safeguarding our heritage	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Scottish/Nordic business forum	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
SEAGIS	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	✓
SEWPER-Selection criteria and model evaluation for waste disposal in sparsely populated cool temperate regions	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Spatial integration through inland waterways	Interreg IIC NSR		
String of pearls	Interreg IIC NSR		
Sustainability centres in the North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		

Project	Programme	Nordic and Scottish partners	Case studies
Sustainable development in coastal tourist areas of North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		
Sustaining and supporting the lesser used languages	Northern Periphery	✓	
Sustaining the vitality and self-sufficiency of rural service centres in the North Sea region	Interreg IIC NSR		
TARGET - Travel awareness regional groups for environmental transport	Interreg IIC NSR		
Telematic services for the elderly	Northern Periphery	✓	
Teleremcare - Implementation and evaluation of telemedicine in remote health	Northern Periphery	✓	✓
Transport study NSR: Strategic study and action programmes	Interreg IIC NSR	✓	
Uniform archiving and harmonisation of electronic data	Interreg IIC NSR		
Water city international	Interreg IIC NSR		
Wetlands in spatial planning	Interreg IIC NSR		
Winter highlights	Northern Periphery	✓	
Virtual distance consulting network	Northern Periphery	✓	

Nordregio

The Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

An Independent Centre for Research, Documentation and Information Dissemination

Established in July 1997 by the Nordic Council of Ministers on behalf of the governments of the five Nordic countries, Nordregio serves as an independent research centre on questions concerning spatial planning and regional development. Our staff come from all the Nordic countries, as well as from other European countries. Located in Stockholm, Sweden, the Centre applies a Nordic and comparative European perspective in its investigations, which include:

- ◆ initiating and carrying out research projects and analyses where the comparative perspective is central;
- ◆ offering internationally attractive educational programmes, where the sharing of experience provides new angles of approach to national issues and activities;
- ◆ disseminating experience and contributing to the professional discussion on spatial analyses, planning and policies.

A Young Institution with 30 Years of History

Nordregio grew out of the consolidation of three former Nordic institutions: *NordREFO* (The Nordic Institute for Regional Policy Research, established 1967), *Nordplan* (The Nordic Institute for Studies in Urban and Regional Planning, established 1968) and *NOGRAN* (The Nordic Group for Regional Analysis, established 1979).

The legacy of these institutions includes a widespread network of researchers and civil servants in all the Nordic countries as well as in Europe, a network which has been incorporated in Nordregio and upon whose experience Nordregio will continue to build.

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NORDREGIO PUBLICATIONS

REPORTS

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