



**TECHNICAL SUPPORT INSTRUMENT (TSI) PROGRAMME
Regulation (EU) 2021/240 (TSI Regulation)¹**

**REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT
(Article 9 of the TSI Regulation)**

DEADLINE: 31 October 2021

Member State:	Sweden
Title of the request:	Regional and local authorities – Enhancing cooperation & Quality of public administration <i>Supporting implementation capacity of sustainable green development in the European Arctic Northern Sparsely Populated Areas</i>
Order of priority of the request:	
Total number of requests:	
Date of submission:	dd/mm/yyyy

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¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument, OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 1–16.

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MULTI-COUNTRY REQUEST	
0.1	Is this a multi-country request? (a multi-country request is a request developed and/or submitted in collaboration with one or more authorities of another Member State)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
0.2	Please indicate the modality of this multi-country request
<input type="checkbox"/> This request is submitted on behalf of one or several other Member States <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One or several other Member States is/are submitting a similar/same request in parallel to this request	
0.3	Please indicate the name of the other Member State(s) concerned by this multi-country request
Finland.	

1	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM/NEED TO BE ADDRESSED
1.1	What is the problem/need to be addressed with the support requested?
	<p>The Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) of Sweden and Finland plus Norway form Europe's gateway to the Arctic and faces particular challenges because of its geography and location: remoteness, long distances, low population density, harsh climate, demographic imbalances, low productivity growth and an economy dependent on raw material. These conditions hinder the economic growth and cause challenges for the implementation of the green and digital transition, as well as for local governments and stakeholders to utilize the support measures offered by regional, national and EU level (e.g. EU's Cohesion, Just Transition and Recovery and Resilience resources).</p> <p>In 2017, the OECD Territorial Review of NSPA pointed out that low-density economies lack the agglomeration benefits generated by sharing facilities, inputs, and specialisation, larger labour markets, and knowledge spill-overs. The study has guided the NSPA to improve their industries' role in global value chains through smart specialisation, triple-helix collaboration, an innovation echo-system with resilient urban and rural linkages, a labour market with cross-border platforms for cooperation, and a competitive distance spanning e-society. However, the lack of own critical mass of people, competence, and capital delivers difficulties without additional external (technical and financial) support.</p> <p>Further, the NSPA-regions are targeted for large green investments utilizing the raw material resources and clean energy, making the regions key stakeholders in the EU green transition, however causing challenges for the societies and the local governments. The regional, national and EU support mechanisms can have a large enduring impact given better coordination and a place-based approach.</p> <p>Although Sweden and Finland have well-functioning administrations, which is also true for the local and regional levels, the capacity of NSPA is limited, with few officials responsible for vast geographies and complex cross-sectorial issues. The strategic management and implementation of policies on the local and regional level is also difficult because of the fragmented system of EU and national support. Thus, policies and investment instruments need to be better integrated, coordinated, streamlined, adapted, and utilized to execute a common multi-level reform agenda across the NSPA.</p> <p>A possible key enabler is the ability to bridge the gap between innovation performed at knowledge hubs and clusters in the urban areas with the competitive advantages of rural communities, thus building capacity to make better use of strategic support. Focus will be on the administrative capacity for development actions, however is closely linked to the implementation needs in the NSPA, to be raised in the process.</p>

→ 399 ord (Max 400 ord)

1.2	How broad is the problem/need? Does it affect a significant part/sector of the economy or extend across several policy areas ('spill-over')?
<p>The challenges faced in the NSPA are spawning across sectors and policy areas. The European Arctic is experiencing several large-scale investments for new green technology in energy and raw material-based industries. Many of which are global leaders for the green transition in their business sectors. At the same time, the underlying demographic challenges of outmigration, ageing and lack of skilled labour is increasing across the regions. The challenge for small and micro companies in rural areas to remain competitive without own innovation and research capacity persists and become more difficult over time.</p> <p>The lack of critical mass of people, competence, and capital, as well as the lack of administrative capacity and coordination of sectorial policies constitutes structural barriers for the realisation of EU ambitions of sustainable development, the European Green Deal and the EU Integrated Policy for the Arctic. The possibilities to connect stakeholders on cross-border platforms to work together on adapted interventions for green transition, digitalisation, and skills supply is also limited and consequently missed opportunities due to the same territorial difficulties.</p> <p>Addressing the common challenges and opportunities facing the NSPA will require an enhanced approach to integrated territorial and cross-border collaboration which is focused on key enabling factors for growth and productivity (e.g. skills, innovation, infrastructure, administrative capacities and multilevel governance). Better engaging the regional level in national sectoral policies would also aid in delivering the objectives of national strategies for regional growth.</p>	

→ 235 ord (Max 300 ord)

1.3	<p>How deep or severe is the problem/need? What would be the consequences of the problem? Were there any previous reform efforts? What was the impact of those efforts? What did not work and why?</p> <p>The pressure on small administrations to coordinate strategies while mainstreaming support to complement the market driven investments, is becoming more evident during the shift to green technologies and digitalization. Platforms, tools, guidelines, and action plans are needed to unlock potential for sustainable growth and to not lose the momentum of the green transition to a resilient European Arctic.</p> <p>The dependency on raw material markets generates a productivity paradox, as the technological advancements causes a stronger demand for advanced skills. In turn, the lack of human capital requires a wide range of public interventions addressing all sectors of the society to deliver sufficient service, education, health care and connectivity, while also make communities attractive with a diversity of opportunities to live and work.</p> <p>There are regional and municipal strategies with reform agendas. There have also been EU supported initiatives that have engaged parts of the NSPA, such as industrial transition pilots to support sustainable industrial regional development and an OECD Mining study for sustainable mining. To this come national reform actions, however not in a truly coordinated way.</p> <p>The OECD territorial review on NSPA and earlier studies made by Nordregio, are furthermore actions aimed to build common knowledge and tools for relevant analysis concerning the needs and directions for actions to address the, in those studies, identified challenges and potentials.</p> <p>However, the outcome have not built the capacity to on a more permanent basis implement the reforms, even if the NSPA regions, with use of EU and national support measures, have continued to refine their strategies and interventions based on these processes. There are also a gap between the findings and recommendations and the establishment of some more common toolbox of guidelines and roadmaps to build capacity for the needed long-term reform agenda.</p>
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→ 292 ord (Max 300 ord)

1.4	How urgent is the need to address the problem? Is there a specific deadline (at national, European or international level)?
<p>The economic and geopolitical importance of the NSPA to the EU and member countries has been increasing due to a changing climate, access to hydrocarbon and mineral and other natural resources. The EU's current Arctic policy is under revision. Consultations are confirming the relevance of the current priorities (fighting climate change and protecting the environment, promoting sustainable development and strengthening international cooperation) and that the EU has an important role to play in making the Arctic sustainable and prosperous.</p> <p>The need to coordinate the divergent process of the green transition are urgent as the threat of climate change urge private and public stakeholders to act and invest now. The industrial transformation takes all the focus and efforts, while the administrations are overwhelmed with work to prepare and coordinate the roll-out of policies and support from the EU and national level. The structural issues with regional imbalances and lack of critical mass are long-term challenges that are still to be addressed.</p> <p>At the same time, the implementation phase of the EU programmes is also the time to be future and foresight oriented, shaping policy frameworks and aligning funds to target the territorial challenges of the European Arctic.</p>	

→ 196 ord (Max 200 ord)

1.5	<p>Provide relevant socio-economic (and environmental) indicators, data or evidence linked to the problem/need to be addressed. Please make sure that the data provided is related to the problem to be addressed and the support requested.</p>
	<p>There are socio-economic indicators, data and analysis in the preparation of the regional cohesion programmes, the regional smart specialisation strategies, as well as the OECD and Nordregio studies.</p> <p>Some key findings in the NSPA territorial review highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NSPA generally has productivity levels that lag behind in a Nordic context. - A dependency on the public sector is a risk for future growth and prosperity. - There is a problem of an ageing and shrinking population in large parts. - In most Local Labour markets there are significant mismatches between available skills and employer's needs, leading to reduced production, unemployment and higher social welfare costs. - Need to focus scarce economic development resources in areas of absolute advantage, accounting the higher unit costs for delivering public services. - Addressing the common challenges and opportunities will require cross-border collaboration focused on enabling factors for growth and productivity. - Enhancing existing co-operation across the NSPA by facilitate knowledge sharing and implementation of EU and national policies in areas as education, skills supply, SME growth, connectivity, research and innovation built on a co-ordinated approach to smart specialisation. - Strengthen governance mechanisms for a partnership approach between the national governments and NSPA.

→ 199 ord (Max 200 ord)

1.6	Have other means / funding (at national, regional, EU, international level) been considered for addressing the problem identified? Which ones? If so, what is the complementarity of other funds with the technical support requested?
	<p>The local and regional levels of government in the NSPA are addressing the specific challenges by executing the means that are available through their own resources and through external support, such as EU regional and research funds and national support schemes and financial instruments. There are, however, no structured support mechanism designed to address the coordinated governance methods for long-term sustainable development in an EU-territory with the specific needs of the NSPA. The TSI technical support will complement the other investment tools by developing a holistic overview of the governance models used to tackle the challenges.</p>

→ 96 ord (Max 200 ord)

2	INDICATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE SUPPORT MEASURES REQUESTED AND THE ESTIMATED COST
2.1	Briefly indicate the support measures envisaged (key outputs/deliverables) (e.g. diagnostic report, comparative analysis, recommendations, feasibility study, technical specifications for an IT tool, guidelines, etc.). Describe how these measures will help to address the problem identified.
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Functional mapping:</p> <p>This action will help to develop more efficient methods to co-develop policies and implementation that respond to the need of the actors in the local and regional economies. It will map the actors involved in regional development in the multi-level and cross-border territory of NSPA. It will account for the competence of the public authorities to establish an understanding of the challenges in the current system and how to strengthen the turn-out of the current program period to address the smart specialisation strategies and their connections to the national and EU agendas and relevant support schemes available.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map competence responsibilities in the multi-level governance for regional development and the resources available out of the different country settings. - Identify capacity gaps and provide actionable recommendations to overcome these in the local authorities. - Evaluate the effectiveness of support mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination, including cross-border collaboration. <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A report describing; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + the actors and competence of the regional development management, + the EU and national support mechanisms and the turn-out of the current and previous program period, + recommendations for possible adaptations of support to strengthen the outcome concerning sustainable development in the NSPA. <p><i>→ 198 ord (Max 200 ord)</i></p>	

Process mapping:

A process mapping will investigate the current measures to coordinate the support implementation in and between the regions in the NSPA. It will estimate the missed opportunities in the current implementation system and the potential gain from better coordination and more strategic implementation of the support measures available and potential gains of a more strategic collaborative approach between the NSPA regions. This to build capacity for targeted place based policy and public service design and implementation.

Activities:

- Mapping current measures and challenges for coordination of the policies for regional development.
- Mapping the needs and obstacles to make use of the support that do exist and the challenges for green and digital transition, to identify regions or parts of regions that lag behind.
- Interviews and workshops that gathers relevant stakeholders and policy makers identified in the functional mapping.
- Interviews with stakeholders in the local and regional innovation eco-system.

Outputs:

- Analysis of the regional economies and the effect of the regional development support schemes and the challenges under the current policy.
- A toolkit for self-assessing coordination practices supported by good coordination practices.
- Roadmaps-for-action to improve and reinforce coordination of practices in all NSPA.

→ 198 ord (Max 200 ord)

☒ Strategic foresight analysis:

The OECD Territorial Review on NSPA can be capitalised for a developed analysis and foresight exercise. The EU Arctic stakeholder report on investment priorities can together with EU's agendas for a green and digital EU, be aligned to the needs of the NSPA to develop smart strategies and priorities to gain capacity. The aim is to build methods for each region and strategic collaboration in the NSPA for implementation of smart specialisation strategies based on foresight analysis, planning and adaption to the megatrends that affects the European Arctic. This can form recommendations that can account for the challenges connected to the specificities of the NSPA.

Activities:

- Gather information on the Smart Specialisation strategies in the NSPA.
- Workshops on foresight and planning with policy planners and regional decision makers.

Outputs:

- Strengthen policy and service design and implementation by building capacity in foresight and strategic planning for implementation towards a green and digital economy in the NSPA.
- A report concerning process mapping and foresight analysis with actionable recommendations to be used on regional level.
- A future overall more collaborative approach on common foresight exercises, as a ground for each regions deepened own place-based approaches.

→ 197 ord (Max 200 ord)

☒ Support to implementation and capacity building:

Attention will be given to establish processes and methodologies that support the ability to design and implement possible instruments for Community-led Local Development. This will promote greater absorption capacity of EU and national funds.

Specific focus is on decreasing the gaps between parts of the regions with short reach to research driven innovation and other parts, as a game-changer for long-term resilient sustainable development identified by the OECD.

Activities:

- Workshops to establish an understanding of solutions for a balanced regional development, targeted to key actors in the innovation system.
- Develop tools to generate administrative capacity to support sub-regional strategies addressing regional imbalances and the need of place-based and distance-spanning approaches.

Outputs:

- Long term structural reform capacity in all of the NSPA to participate in a collaborative and strategic implementation for green and digital smart growth and innovation.
- Guidelines with a road-map to strengthen the local and regional capacity of local led development and collaboration on sub-regional, regional and national level in NSPA.
- Place-based recommendations for a more integrated innovation echo-system in the NSPA, identifying road maps to leverage the green transition, green technology and use of digital means for attractive societies.

→ 196 ord (Max 200 ord)

2.2	Indicate the possible duration of the support measures requested (all measures together) and, if available, an indicative timeline of each individual measure.
<p>The support period can be estimated to 18 months.</p> <p>Even with an ambition for a rapid process, the many involved beneficiaries, with need of coordination and several both parallel and common actions for a thorough process to involve all relevant partners and engage stakeholders on national, regional and local levels over also national borders, do indicate the need of enough time to prepare, make and produce a deliverable outcome.</p>	

→ 69 ord (Inget Max angivet)

2.3	Indicate the estimated total cost of the support measures requested (in EUR).
	900000

→ *Anges att endast belopp utan mellanslag eller andra tecken skall fyllas i*

2.3.1	Additional information (if known, please provide further explanation and indicative cost estimation for each key output/deliverable, including the foreseen activities).
<p>The cost is estimated with the recognition of the complexity of the project. The actions includes 11 regions and a cross border component together with some unique condition in the NSPA innovation eco-system. It will need sufficient time and resources indicated above. The total sum consists of estimates on each action 1/4 each, even if the exact balance need to be elaborated. It builds on the experience from earlier actions and similar TSI studies conducted by the OECD.</p> <p>The possible participation of Norwegian NSPA regions will be at no costs for the project.</p>	

→ 93 ord (Max 100 ord)

2.4	Indicate the expected results (what is the ultimate objective that the technical support should achieve) and the expected use of these results (how will these be taken forward by the Member State).
<p>The aim for the TSI would be to create a toolbox of coordinated governance methods for long-term sustainable development in NSPA built on multi-level cooperation and tailored support across borders. The project will help to shape the future Arctic Policy on different levels and will assist a wide range actors and stakeholders to address key issues such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to ensure that regional policy contributes to Energy and Digital transitions and Recovery Plans; • how to ensure that macro-structural and regional policies are aligned and mutually reinforcing; • how to develop a new development agenda for more resilient NSPA territories; • how to improve and support NSPA regions capacity to programme, manage and implement national and EU programmes and projects. <p>In detail, the technical support will result in a toolbox including a common platform, concrete guidelines and actions plans that will allow for stakeholders in the EU sparsely populated areas to better utilize the support systems available. It will help all stakeholders in the multi-level governance system to move towards a strategic and coherent use of the available tools in a cross-border context under the provisions in the EU sparsely populated areas. This will be an important toolbox to achieve resilient administrative capacity across the NSPA to coordinate joint measures for the realisation of the European Green Deal and the EU Integrated Policy for the Arctic.</p>	

→ 223 ord (Max 250 ord)

2.5	In case your entity has already received technical support under the SRSP or the TSI in the past, in an area relevant to the reform/support requested, please indicate how your entity has used the results of this support.
Not applicable.	

→ (Max 250 ord)

2.6	<p>Provide information on the administrative capacity of the recipient national authority (i.e. staff availability in relation with the requested support measures and the follow-up on their results). Please describe the team that will be responsible for coordinating/following the reform and the work of DG REFORM and its providers. If possible provide a description of the steering committee that could be put in place to supervise the reform.</p>
	<p>The action for reform will profit from the established collaboration in the NSPA. A steering committee will be overseeing the project, while the regional contact persons will act as coordinators for the work on behalf of the regions involved. The committee will build on the appointed Steering Committee for the network of NSPA, consisting of ten representatives for the regions. The directors of the EU offices, one per country, will act as coordinators of the regional contacts per country and towards the by DG Reform appointed Team. It is the Directors for North Sweden European Office and East & North Finland EU Office that together for the beneficiaries will lead and coordinate the overall work for the requested action. This structure follows the process for the making of the earlier studies, including the OECD Territorial Review.</p> <p>The Swedish and Finnish beneficiaries for the TSI will be directly engaged in the work, while the Norwegian parts will be invited to follow and on own expense contribute to the work.</p>

→ 168 ord (Max 200 ord)

2.7	Indicate the names of stakeholders (e.g. other Ministries or beneficiaries) which may need to be involved in the design or implementation of the requested support measures.
<p>The Regions of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland in Sweden and the Regions of Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia, Central Ostrobothnia, Kainuu, North Karelia, Pohjois-Savo and South Savo in Finland are the beneficiaries for this support.</p> <p>To this will the two Regions of Nordland and Troms & Finnmark in Norway be able to follow the work and on their own expense interact for the process. It will by necessity also include national Agencies and Government level together with Municipalities and local and regional stakeholder, as partners and providers as well as final beneficiaries of the outcome.</p>	

→ 95 ord (Max 100 ord)

2.8	(If applicable,) indicate any envisaged provider of support (please do not provide names of private providers). Include explanations as to their know-how/capacity.
	<p>The Territorial Review on NSPA developed by OECD in 2017, is one basis for this Action. The OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) brings together the OECD's work on regional and rural development, it works to improve multi-level governance and capacity, and it supports a granular, place-based approach to regional development, which are high on NSPA, national and EU agenda. Further, CFE has already implemented (or is implementing) projects with DG Reform on relevant topics.</p> <p>For this reason, it could be highly beneficial to take advantages of OECD/CFE as the provider of this Action.</p>

→ 97 ord (Max 100 ord)

3	CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE REQUEST
The requested support is linked to:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Preparation of Recovery and resilience plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implementation (incl. amendment and revision) of Recovery and Resilience plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reforms in the context of economic governance process (e.g. CSR, Country reports, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Implementation of Economic adjustment programmes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implementation of Union priorities (e.g. CMU, Energy Union, Customs Union, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Implementation of Union law (e.g. infringements)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Implementation of Member States' own reform priorities to support recovery, sustainable economic growth, job creation and enhance resilience

3.1.	Additional information
	<p>NSPA is a collaborative network since 2004 to provide a platform for common interests and best practice in the European Arctic regions of northern Sweden, Finland and Norway.</p> <p>The requested action will support the regions to continue their transformation into modern, resource-efficient and competitive economies Activities will be developed at cross-border and regional scales to enhance co-operation and address shared challenges and opportunities and will aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support quality regional and local governments through more effective multi-level governance systems and reinforced planning, coordination and foresight practices, including for green and digital priorities; • support the management and implementation of EU Cohesion policy, Recovery plans, Just Transition and sustainable long-term territorial strategies by strengthening policy integration, capacities and participative processes, including for competitiveness, green and digital priorities; • develop implementation capacity for integrated territorial strategies and an innovation echo-system on sub-regional, regional and cross-border to deliver implementation of smart, green and digital transition. <p>This multi-country request is submitted from both Sweden and Finland, however the implementation will be done jointly. In addition to the Swedish regions of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland Härjedalen and Västernorrland, the joint request includes the Finnish regional councils of: Lapland, Oulu Region, Central Ostrobothnia, Kainuu, North Karelia, Pohjois-Savo and South Savo.</p> <p>The participation of the Norwegian NSPA regions Nordland and Troms & Finnmark to follow the work in the project and be able to make use of it, will be at no costs for TSI. There will be a collaborative approach with possibilities for the Norwegian regions to pay for their participation if wanting to be also more active in the work process.</p> <p>Attached to this Request via the DG Reform TSI Platform is also the full Template that in all corresponds to the attachment to the Finnish Request on the same Action. It delivers complementary information and details.</p>

→ 299 ord (Max 200 ord, dock angivet som indikativt så utrymme för fler, i annat fall kan andra stycket med punktsatserna strykas om det ändå skulle vara en max om 200 ord)

DISCLAIMERS:

Please note that the request for support is fully subject to the principles governing the TSI Regulation and Regulation No 2018/1046 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the General Budget of the Union. In compliance with the principle of prohibition of double funding, the recipient national authority shall immediately inform the European Commission of other related on-going actions financed by the EU budget. **In no circumstances, shall the European Commission finance the same costs twice.**

By submitting this request, the Member State accepts that, should the request for support be selected for funding under the TSI, **the Member State will confirm to the Commission that there is no overlap between the request selected under the TSI and concrete actions funded under other EU instruments and that double funding is not present for this selected request.**

Please note that the Commission shall establish a single online public repository through which it may, subject to applicable rules and on the basis of consultation with the Member States concerned, **make available final studies or reports produced as part of eligible actions set out in the TSI Regulation.** Where justified, the Member States concerned may request that the Commission not disclose such documents without their prior agreement.

Please note that the Commission promotes "zero tolerance to fraud and corruption". In this context, **the Commission implements controls to prevent, detect and address irregularities/fraud instances, whether these occur in connection with its activities and funds, and inside or outside its organisation.** In order to counter fraud affecting the financial interests of the Union (art. 325 TFEU), it is of paramount importance that our partners in the Member States and the providers of support strive to achieve an equivalent stand against fraud.

For the requests linked with the RRP: The provision of the technical support under the TSI is without prejudice to the responsibility of Member States in relation to the fulfilment of relevant milestones and targets of the RRP and is without prejudice to the assessment that the Commission carries out in relation to the Member State's relevant request for payment.