

Application for support

1.1 General

Project name: Biodiversity created by art, culture and cross-sectoral collaboration

Application id: 826937

Case id: 20379666

Application call: 2.2 Nature protection and biodiversity

Responsible organisation: Interreg Aurora

1.2 Lead partner EU

Name: Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua
Valtuustontie 8
62100 Lapua
Finland

Org. No: 0209113-7

Employees: 0

Workplace

Name: Cultural services, City of Lapua
Postal address:
Vanhan Paukun tie 1
62100 Lapua

Workplace No.: 100

Visitors address:

Vanhan Paukun tie 1

62100 Lapua

Region: Lappo

Name of legal representative

Heli Talvitie, culture manager

VAT-number (Optional)

FI02091137

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Lead partner motivation and contribution

Lapua is the Lead Partner for this project. We have experience of many years in managing EU-funded projects (ESF, ERDF, EAFRD).

Initiated by Lapua, this project builds on prior success in using artistic expertise to tackle sustainability issues, as well as the city's own active development of green area services to enhance biodiversity. The goal is to unify the Culture, Technical, and Education departments to enhance biodiversity, remove invasive species, and boost public engagement in biodiversity and climate actions.

The lead partner is motivated by a drive to expand the role of arts in nature conservation and address local ecological decline. These actions align with Lapua's strategic goals and its culture and well-being programme, fostering stronger cross-sectoral synergy within the city and test cooperation with stakeholders.

1.3 Project partner EU

Name: Ab Yrkeshögskolan vid Åbo Akademi

Org. No: 2059910-2

Employees: 0

Postal address:
Wolffskavägen 31
65200 VASA
Finland

Workplace

Name: Forskning och utveckling Jakobstad

Workplace no: 1

Postal address:
Köpmansgatan 10
FI-68600 Jakobstad

Visitors address:
Köpmansgatan 10
FI-68600 Jakobstad
Region: Jakobstad

Name of legal representative

Eva Sandberg-Kilpi

VAT-number (Optional)

2059910-2

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Partly

Partner motivation and contribution

Novia UAS has strong links to working life and regional development, promoting sustainability, inclusion and cross-sector collaboration across its operations. The RDI activities of the Faculty of Arts and Culture focus on art, culture and creative methodologies as drivers of societal development and resilience. Novia is an experienced project organisation with solid expertise in externally funded cooperation projects (ESF, ERDF, EAFRD, Interreg, and Erasmus+).

Novia contributes knowledge in art-based methods, participatory processes and culture-driven development. Novia brings experience from cross-border initiatives where collaboration across sectors and regions has been central to building sustainable working models.

Novia supports the development of the cross-sectoral model by contributing competence in artistic engagement, pedagogical development and structured documentation which supports the transferability of the jointly developed solutions across the Aurora region.

Name: BODENS KOMMUN

Org. No: 212000-2767

Employees: 3999

Postal address:

961 86 BODEN
Sverige

Workplace

Name: KOMMUNLEDNING

Workplace no: 19225663

Postal address:

961 86 BODEN

Visitors address:
KYRKGATAN 24
961 34 BODEN
Region: Boden

Name of legal representative

Magnus Åkerlund

VAT-number (Optional)

SE212000276701

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Partner motivation and contribution

Boden strengthens the integration of biodiversity, social sustainability and cultural perspectives in local development. The municipality's project model Bodenxt demonstrates extensive experience in externally funded projects and ensures broad internal collaboration across departments and companies.

The project aligns with Bodens vision "The Good Life" as well as the politically decided local environmental objectives. The project supports key commitments in Bodens Climate City Contract, e.g. social sustainability and just transition, increased citizen engagement and effective communication for climate action.

Boden contributes with expertise from several areas. Boden participates in the project through cross-sectoral collaboration involving spatial planning (area development, urban planning and environmental strategic work), the department of culture, leisure and youth, the social services department, schools and business development with a focus on cultural and creative industries.

Name: Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB

Org. No: 559026-1714

Employees: 19

Postal address:

NORDANÅ 12

931 32 SKELLEFTEÅ

Sverige

Workplace

Name:

Workplace no: 56556269

Postal address:

NORDANÅ 12

931 32 SKELLEFTEÅ

Visitors address:

NORDANÅ 12

931 32 SKELLEFTEÅ

Region: Skellefteå

Name of legal representative

Staffan Åkerlund

VAT-number (Optional)

SE559026171401

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Partner motivation and contribution

Exploratoriet Science Center, one of 20 science centers in Sweden, is a regional platform for science communication and lifelong learning, with extensive experience in EU-funded co-operation projects (Interreg, Erasmus+) focusing on sustainability, innovation and public engagement. We are motivated to strengthen the link between scientific knowledge, artistic approaches and civic action in biodiversity work.

We contribute expertise in interactive learning, co-creation processes and public outreach. Through exhibitions, workshops and educational programmes, Exploratoriet translates research and artistic methods into accessible, hands-on experiences for schools, families and citizens. The centre supports testing and refining the cross-sectoral model by engaging diverse target groups and documenting learning outcomes. This strengthens public understanding of biodiversity challenges and enhances the long-term impact and transferability of the project results across the Aurora area.

Name: SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN

Org. No: 212000-2643

Employees: 9999

Postal address:

931 85 SKELLEFTEÅ
Sverige

Workplace

Name: TGN Samhällsutveckling

Workplace no: 53674016

Postal address:

931 85 SKELLEFTEÅ

Visitors address:

STORGATAN 53
931 30 SKELLEFTEÅ
Region: Skellefteå

Name of legal representative

Lorents Burman/Evelina Fahlesson, Kristina Sundin Jonsson

VAT-number (Optional)

SE212000264301

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Partner motivation and contribution

Skellefteå kommun is a partner in the project. Skellefteå has a long experience from working with EU-funded projects for development purposes (ESF, ERDF, Horizon 2030, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+ etc).

This project aligns with Skellefteås overall development strategy, Skellefteå 2030, based on the vision of "A sustainable place for a better everyday life". The ideas have a direct link to the strategy area "A place to be happy" where living environments are mentioned and the connection between arts and culture with biodiversity can be found. The project also builds on the experiences from the Varcities Horizon 2030 project, where Skellefteå had a successful pilot on the topic of enhancing health and well being while supporting biodiversity in a park, Klockardalsparken. This project allows us to make use of those experiences in another area and combine them with a stronger connection to arts and culture.

Name: Skellefteå Museum AB

Org. No: 556139-0344

Employees: 49

Postal address:

BOX 146

931 22 SKELLEFTEÅ

Sverige

Workplace

Name:

Workplace no: 20826830

Postal address:

BOX 146

931 22 SKELLEFTEÅ

Visitors address:

NORDANÅ 2

931 33 SKELLEFTEÅ

Region: Skellefteå

Name of legal representative

Mikke Ejrevi

VAT-number (Optional)

SE556139034401

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Partner motivation and contribution

Skellefteå Museum is a regional cultural heritage institution with extensive experience in knowledge dissemination, community engagement and cross-sector collaboration. We are motivated to strengthen the connection between cultural heritage, contemporary artistic practices and SDG, highlighting how historical perspectives can inform present and future biodiversity work.

We contribute expertise in cultural heritage interpretation, participatory methods and place-based storytelling. Through e.g. exhibitions and collaborations with artists and researchers, the museum contextualises biodiversity within local history, landscapes and community identities. By integrating cultural and ecological perspectives, we support the development of the cross-sectoral model and ensure that results are embedded in regional narratives. Our strong networks within the museum sector, enables effective dissemination of outcomes nationally and internationally, enhancing long-term impact and knowledge transfer.

Name: Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry

Org. No: 1082564-7

Employees: 0

Postal address:

Puistotie 51

61800 Kauhajoki

Finland

Workplace

Name: Leader Suupohja

Workplace no: 100

Postal address:

Visitors address:

Puistotie 51
61800 Kauhajoki

Puistotie 51
61800 Kauhajoki
Region: Kauhajoki

Name of legal representative

Hanna-Leena Pihlajaniemi

VAT-number (Optional)

1082564-7

Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?

Yes

Partner motivation and contribution

Leader Suupohja is a rural development organization in South Ostrobothnia implementing the EU-co-funded strategy Virtaa viisikkoon and supporting municipalities, organizations and businesses in sustainable development. It promotes regional vitality, strengthens rural expertise and encourages municipalities to protect biodiversity and adopt naturepositive practices in longterm planning.

A local partner, Geopark, faces increasing tourism related pressures in biodiversity sensitive areas, including NATURA sites and national parks. Traditional tools are no longer sufficient to address erosion, habitat disturbance and other ecological impacts. The project responds to this by creating new methods that guide visitors and residents to more sustainable behaviour. Through Geoparks operational capacity, solutions will be piloted in real environments and integrated into longterm site management, ensuring regional relevance and scalability across similar rural destinations.

1.4 Lead partner Norway

Project partner Norway

1.5 Payment information

Type of payment method: BIC/IBAN

Account number: DABAFIHH FI80 8000 1500 6814 74

1.6 Project information

Project title

Biodiversity created by art, culture and cross-sectoral collaboration

Project type

Regular project

Projektets startdatum

2026-09-01

Projektets slutdatum

2029-02-28

Programme sub-area

Aurora

What are the common territorial challenge(s) that will be tackled by the project?

Biodiversity has declined in South Ostrobothnia and Ostrobothnia. Over 50% of the natural habitat types are threatened and invasive species are a significant threat to biodiversity (Kontula et al., 2025). People do not recognize biodiversity management possibilities, such as wetlands, which is why awareness must be increased. Skellefteå and Boden Municipalities are facing the same threat, invasive alien species are increasing and there are findings of many which are under the The Invasive Alien Species Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1143/2012). Many of the species are increasing partially due to inhabitants dumping garden waste in local nature areas which also indicates a lack of knowledge.

Simultaneously, popular nature destinations like the Lauhanvuori Geopark face pressures from environmental overuse. Since nature tourism is a vital leisure activity, there is an urgent need to balance regional vitality with safeguarding of unique natural characteristics. Effective visitor management is essential to promote conservation-oriented behavior.

The project addresses these territorial challenges by utilizing multidisciplinary expertise and engaging citizens through innovative, art-based methods. By involving local residents, schools, and hikers in both the planning and implementation of biodiversity actions, the project aims to shift public values toward nature conservation. In areas where invasive species are still limited, community-led eradication efforts remain a viable solution.

This approach offers a novel way to tackle a global challenge. Sharing expertise across borders strengthens regional biodiversity strategies and introduces new participatory solutions. By fostering awareness and agency among users, it reinforces collaborative action for nature. Ultimately, these participatory arts-based methods not only strengthen species protection but also enhance the resilience of urban green infrastructure and support the long-term sustainability of the Aurora area.

Why is cross-border cooperation needed to achieve project objectives and results?

Biodiversity loss is a common challenge in the Nordic, making it crucial to share developed models across comparable regions. Project partners share similar climatic conditions, landscape structures, and municipal responsibilities; therefore, addressing these challenges only at a national level would limit territorial impact and reduce opportunities for joint learning within the programme area. The aim is to jointly develop and pilot a cross-sectoral model that combines art-based tools, citizen participation, and practical biodiversity work. For such a model to be durable and transferable, it must be tested in comparable contexts. By working across borders, the project validates and refines approaches in two governance systems, strengthening the impact for the wider Aurora area.

By pooling resources and expertise from municipalities, educational, and cultural actors, the project accelerates learning. Municipal green space and environmental administrations in the Aurora area are currently experimenting how to enhance biodiversity, and joint development reduces duplication while strengthening competence. As biodiversity challenges do not follow national borders, regional cooperation is essential. E.g. combining Skellefteå's and Boden's expertise in sustainable urban development, Lapua's award-winning green area management, Novia UAS's art-based RDI competence, Suupohja Leader's knowledge in nature tourism and rural development, and Exploratoriet's pedagogical expertise, the project creates a unique transnational approach to a global problem.

Cross-border cooperation is vital as art and culture transcend boundaries to create shared spaces for dialogue. This cultural ecosystem allows artistic and educational practices to circulate

freely, strengthening biodiversity through participatory methods. Such collaboration reinforces the cultural dimension of sustainable development and supports innovative, community-led solutions to shared challenges.

Select the project's main target group

Public sector

Specification of the target group and their involvement in project planning

The project has two main target groups: 1) Citizens and visitors, and 2) Institutional actors (municipal/public departments and cross-sectoral experts).

1. Citizens and Visitors (End-users). The primary citizen target groups include children, senior citizens, other local residents, and nature tourists. Their core need is concrete, accessible ways to participate in biodiversity work to counteract eco-anxiety and increase well-being. During the project development, partners discussed with local educators. The dialogue revealed a clear need for practical, art-based pedagogical materials, as current curriculums emphasize growing into sustainable citizens. Similarly, dialogues with care homes confirmed a strong need for new Green Care activities. Through inclusive art-based tools, seniors and children will directly benefit by gaining well-being, a sense of agency, and an improved living environment. For visitors, dialogues with regional developers highlighted the need to prevent biodiversity loss caused by the overconsumption of natural sites. Visitors will benefit from regenerative tourism practices that transform their behavior from consuming to supporting biodiversity.

2. Institutional Actors. For the participating cities the main target groups are the culture, green services, urban planning and education departments. Based on the partners' practical experience, there is a critical need to break down administrative silos. By piloting a collaborative model where these sectors co-create green spaces, the professionals benefit by growing their expertise, creating cost-effective green infrastructure, and finding shared cross-border solutions for the Aurora region.

Which synergies with past or current EU and other projects, initiatives, strategies and/or policies will the project make use of?

The project is leveraging prior results to drive new solutions through cross-sectoral collaboration and creative methods. The project has synergies with these projects/strategies, to combine artistic, pedagogical, and nature-based approaches into new solutions:

Nahistuneet naatit: Small-scale artistic expertise model to solve complex sustainable development challenges.

Saarenpääkoti: Integrates biodiversity management into Green Care well-being activities for the elderly.

VARCITIES: Experience with nature-based solutions, like wetlands, to enhance ecological values and climate resilience.

Exploratoriet Science Center: Practical ecosystem activities for youth and cultural social anchoring to encourage resident participation in regional development.

Synergy Across Sectors (SXS): connects museums, creatives, and businesses to co-create, building a cross-sector collaboration ecosystem through labs, digital tools, and pilots.

Kultur och hållbarhet: Position art and culture as drivers of behavioural change and sustainable development within ecological dimension.

FRÖ för förändring och samhörighet: Participatory, low-threshold engagement methods are adapted to foster community ownership and collective responsibility for local environments.

ACCENT & ANSEL: These Nordic collaborations provide a framework for developing sustainable tourism and digital artistic accessibility through cross-border networks.

Lapua Green Area Services: Urban meadow project offers practical expertise in transforming traditional lawns into biodiverse areas.

South Ostrobothnia Cultural Strategy: "Culture calls for nature" theme by bringing art directly into residents' everyday natural environments.

Ympäristöviisaat yhteisöt: The eco-social well-being approach provides a methodological foundation for integrating ecological sustainability with community cohesion.

Geopark Network: Integrates biodiversity principles into sustainable tourism management.

Project overall objective

The project's overall objective is to strengthen biodiversity by engaging residents, educational institutions, seniors, and visitors. To reach this goal, the project develops:

1) a cross-sectoral collaboration model to solve complex biodiversity issues, as multidisciplinary cooperation is essential for addressing challenges influenced by numerous factors. Model utilizes art and culture as tools for biodiversity/environmental conservation and citizen participation. By breaking down administrative silos, the project creates innovative, cost-effective solutions for green infrastructure.

2) pedagogical materials for addressing biodiversity in early childhood and elementary education.

By fostering a deeper connection between people and nature the project influences public values and behaviors. Through participatory planning and "working together with nature," the initiative enhances the collective well-being of both the environment and the people across Aurora region.

Ecological sustainable development

The project aims to influence ecological sustainable development, specifically regarding three of the Agenda 2030 goals. Several objectives are cross-cutting and affecting more than one specific goal.

Goal 13: The project raises awareness across different age groups about the impacts of biodiversity loss and climate change on nature and the local species, and encourages people to take action concerning their local environment. The project strengthens biodiversity and carbon neutrality, and increases canopy coverage.

Goal 15: The project develops and pilots a new approach, utilizing art, to restore biodiversity in various nature/urban areas and engages local residents to actions.

Goal 17: The project develops new partnerships and cooperation models for promoting sustainable development between Finland and Sweden. The goal is to pilot models in different environments after co-development, learn more from each other, and share information more widely in both countries.

Social sustainable development

The project promotes social sustainability via three Agenda 2030 goals through inclusive biodiversity actions.

Goal 3: By involving residents into artistic and nature-based activities, the project enhances quality of life and fosters long-term ownership of shared spaces. The prerequisites for a good life are strengthened for residents of all ages. Intergenerational cooperation is central to promoting well-being, reducing loneliness, and building a sense of belonging. Active participation increases environmental agency and helps mitigate eco-anxiety.

Goals 10 & 11: The planning of green areas takes into account a safe and functional environment for everyone. Planning and actions participate different age groups, from early childhood education to the elderly. Different age groups work together to develop areas that promote a good life for everyone. Art-based methods support equal involvement, regardless of background or ability, and help people express ideas.

Economical sustainable development

The model developed by the project for utilising art in sustainable development challenges ensures resource-efficient strengthening of biodiversity for various actors.

During the project, project takes Agenda goal 12 into consideration: The project prioritises the utilisation of already existing materials and aims to minimise the use of virgin raw materials. The project aims for raw material savings and supporting the circular economy by that.

By promoting awareness of the link between decline of biodiversity and over-consumption of raw materials, the project indirectly encourages local residents to consume more responsibly.

Goal 9: The project promotes sustainable green infrastructure, accounting for both the economy and public well-being by investing in equitable access for everyone.

Exit strategy

The projects exit strategy is based on durability through institutional integration, mainstreaming of results, and sustained cross-border cooperation.

During the project period, the partners jointly develop and pilot cross-sectoral solutions that strengthen biodiversity through art-based engagement, participatory planning, and practical habitat measures. Before project closure, these jointly developed solutions will be consolidated into a structured and transferable working model. The model will describe how art-based methods, citizen involvement, and biodiversity measures can be systematically integrated into different community contexts.

The methodology guide will clarify how artistic processes can support behavioural change, intergenerational collaboration, and local ownership of biodiversity actions. By embedding these approaches within existing administrative and educational structures of the participating communities, art-based engagement becomes part of regular municipal practice rather than a time-limited project activity. It is possible that activities (e.g. sowing a meadow into a shape that reflects cultural heritage) will be integrated into a public art program or serve as a catalyst for establishing one.

The developed pedagogical tools and collaboration practices will be implemented in regular use in schools, early childhood education, and science centres, strengthening the long-term capacity for environmental education and biodiversity protection in line with SO 2.2 objectives.

Partners (including higher education, regional developers, and municipalities) will maintain cross-border knowledge exchange network after project completion, supporting continued cooperation and the further refinement of biodiversity practices in the Aurora region. Through institutional integration, documented methods, and sustained cooperation, the project contributes to long-term biodiversity protection and improved capacity for nature conservation in the programme area.

Project summary

The project aims to create and pilot models to support biodiversity through art-based methods, fostering engagement and well-being for both people and nature. By utilizing art, the project involves different groups from participatory planning to concrete actions, such as sowing meadows or managing invasive species. This increases the effectiveness of the actions but also adds personal value and motivation for biodiversity work. Arts-based activities enable inclusion as a driver of wellbeing, social growth, and learning, providing a fresh perspective on things (THL, 2023), which is needed for engaging people in biodiversity work and to foster interaction between nature and people.

To solve complex environmental challenges, the project establishes a cross-sectoral collaboration model where experts from different fields share their expertise. This approach, combined with art-based tools, enables the creation of innovative, cost-effective solutions for green infrastructure. By breaking down administrative silos, the project ensures that these new methods become integrated practices that enhance regional vitality and biodiversity.

Enhancing the ecological objectives of Agenda 2030, especially strengthening the biodiversity of natural environments and increasing knowledge of it has an important role in the project, but so do other SDG. Especially from the social perspective, the project aims to strengthen well-being, residents' opportunities for influence, and cooperation between different age groups. When people can participate and act to enhance the diversity and overall utility of areas, inclusion and well-being is promoted.

The project utilizes Urban Cultural Planning to strategically integrate art and heritage into green space development, enhancing local identity and regional vitality. This participatory approach empowers residents to shape their environment, transforming biodiversity hotspots into meaningful, innovative, and living parts of the urban landscape.

How will the project partnership be structured?

Each partner has defined responsibilities but contributes to all WPs. The partnership relies on cross-sectoral collaboration, shared implementation, and open communication. A shared cloud platform supports daily work and document management. The project is managed through three structures:

1. Steering Group: Representatives from all partners meet 2-3 times/year to provide strategic guidance
2. Project Team: Meets monthly to coordinate actions, monitor progress, and solve practical issues (2-3x in person)
3. WP Leads: Meet every 6-8 weeks to align cross-border activities. Local teams in Finland and Sweden support on-site implementation

At the start, partners review objectives, schedules, and roles. Progress is tracked via quarterly meetings. Lead Partner holds final responsibility for coordination, reporting, and financial management. Decision-making is consensus-driven.

The partnership utilizes complementary expertise to solve biodiversity challenges:

Lapua: Leads coordination and provides cultural and educational perspectives and urban meadow experiences.

Novia UAS: Develops cross-sectoral and art-based methodologies.

Skellefteå: Brings expertise in municipal green area management.

Exploratoriet: Strengthens pedagogical and science communication approaches.

Leader Suupohja/Geopark: Contributes knowledge on sustainable tourism and visitor behaviour in sensitive nature areas.

Boden: Contributes with expertise from environmental strategic work, spatial planning and community development.

Skellefteå museum: Contributes expertise in cultural heritage interpretation, place-based storytelling and community engagement, linking biodiversity to local history and regional identity.

Regular online meetings, joint workshops, and cross-border exchange ensure continuous learning. This structure enables efficient cooperation and creates transferable solutions for biodiversity and community engagement across the Aurora region.

Please see the attached file: Project_summary

How will the financial management of the project be handled?

Financial management will be organised through a clear and transparent structure in line with Interreg Aurora regulations and national legislation. The City of Lapua acts as Lead Partner and carries the overall responsibility towards the Managing Authority for financial coordination, reporting and compliance. Lapua will consolidate the partners financial reports and submit joint payment applications to the programme. A designated financial officer within the City ensures proper bookkeeping, monitoring of budget implementation and timely reporting.

Each project partner is responsible for managing its own approved budget and for ensuring that all costs, including staff, travel, procurement and external services, comply with programme rules and national regulations. Partners will maintain dedicated cost centres for the project in order to guarantee traceability and transparency of expenditure. Internal reporting deadlines will be agreed in advance to ensure that financial information is submitted to the Lead Partner in accordance with programme reporting periods.

Based on the partners verified reports, the Lead Partner compiles and submits the joint progress and payment applications. Once funds are received from the programme, payments are transferred to partners without undue delay in proportion to approved costs.

In case of any financial corrections or reclaims from the Managing Authority, the Lead Partner will coordinate the process. Financial responsibility will rest with the partner to whom the correction relates, as specified in the partnership agreement. This ensures clear accountability, fair distribution of responsibility and sound financial governance throughout the project lifecycle.

How will you communicate your project?

Communication is a strategic tool to break silos, engage citizens, and share our art-based biodiversity models. The core message is that combining art, culture, and cross-sectoral work offers innovative solutions to biodiversity loss while boosting well-being. All communication will clearly state that Interreg Aurora funding enables the project.

We divide our dissemination into three streams:

1. **Citizens and Local Communities (End-users):** To reach residents, children, seniors, and nature visitors, we use our organizations' social media, local press, and face-to-face meetings. The goal is to raise awareness, reduce eco-anxiety, and invite people to hands-on pilot actions. Communication will be visual, accessible, and inspiring.
2. **Professionals and Institutional Stakeholders:** This stream focuses on internal synergy and expert reach. To reach educators, planners, and managers, each partner will host a project webpage. We will share outputs - like pedagogical materials and methodology guides through these sites, cross-border seminars, and professional articles.
3. **Regional Stakeholders and Networks:** Target groups include Leader groups, village associations, regional councils, and local businesses. We focus on the transferability of our models, showing how they can adopt tested solutions. We also use seminars and stakeholders' own newsletters.

As activities are planned cross-sectorally, smooth internal communication via shared digital workspaces and online meetings is vital. There is strong internal communication between work packages to enhance knowledge sharing, as the work packages are interdependent.

We will engage with regional and national press to showcase our transnational approach. Furthermore, we will participate in the Arctic Cooperation network to share findings with other northern projects, maximizing result transferability across the Aurora region.

Contact person

1.7 Project activities

WP1: Cross-Sectoral collaboration and Knowledge exchange and co-creation

Goals are to: Establish a cross-border, cross-sectoral expert network. Co-create new solutions for biodiversity by breaking down administrative silos. Develop and disseminate a scalable working model for cross-sectoral collaboration. WP establishes the theoretical and collaborative foundation for the project. The core challenge is that public sector departments often work in silos, whereas complex issues like biodiversity loss require holistic approaches. The project adopts methods from urban cultural planning. WP1 phases: 1. Assembling a Cross-Sectoral Network of 12-20 experts from Finland and Sweden, including municipal officials, ecologists, pedagogues, and artists. By blending scientific ecological data with artistic facilitation, the network ensures project ownership across the cultural, environmental, and educational sectors. Sharing best practices across borders strengthens the expertise of all participants, providing a framework for sustainability education and "out-of-the-box" citizen engagement. 2. The network creates novel solutions by blending diverse expertise. Before initiating pilots, the network utilizes UCP methodology to identify social needs and the "Genius Loci" which are often missed in traditional planning. Ecologists provide the scientific baseline, artists design participatory methods for resident-led restoration and pedagogues develop tools for learning, all utilizing the multidisciplinary knowledge. Diffusion strategy ensures the model is transferable in the Nordics. WP1.2. establishes a methodology for cross-sectoral cooperation alongside biodiversity solutions. 3. Based on the network's co-creation processes a practical tool kit will be finalized to describe how to systematically combine ecological, pedagogical, artistic, and cultural perspectives in practice to solve biodiversity and other complex issues which is based on the WP1 methodology and gained experiences. Monitoring: Lapua, Skellefteå monitors the Swedish partners locally.

Startdate: 2026-09-30

Enddate: 2029-01-30

Cost: 187418

Activities

1.1. Cross-Sectoral Expert Network, International Knowledge Exchange & Best Practices

This activity focuses on building a cross-border, cross-sectoral expert network comprising professionals from fields such as education, landscape architecture, ecology, art, regional management, and culture. Serving as a pilot and foundation for the methodological model in Activity 1.2., the network aims to share sectoral expertise on biodiversity within school and municipal contexts, co-create novel knowledge to strengthen environmental values by breaking down administrative silos, and disseminate expertise to reinforce local and regional competence between countries. For example, Cultural services and arts professionals will gain an understanding of the operational constraints and requirements of other sectors. Different fields will accumulate experience in cross-sectoral collaboration.

Participants will also be introduced to urban cultural planning, which will be reflected on how it can be utilized throughout the project.

The process begins by mapping and assembling a network of 12-20 experts from Finland and Sweden. Experts from the same fields will be gathered from both countries to facilitate the exchange of best practices for example, by pairing educators from both countries. The network includes two artistic experts one from each country to facilitate the process. To maximize impact, participants are selected from complementary perspectives: landscape architects and ecologists provide the environmental framework, while pedagogues focus on childrens growth toward a sustainable future. Nature tourism managers provide insights into challenges caused by tourism, and regional developers examine the impact on local vitality. Furthermore, artists bring "out-of-the-box" thinking to commit residents to action, while cultural experts utilize culture as a force for societal change. This structure allows the network to operate locally while exchanging proven practices during cross-border meetings.

The project team will also explore 2-4 existing cases of successful multisectoral sustainability cooperation to shape the networks workshops. The primary goal is to develop novel strategies for the biodiversity crisis by bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and citizen engagement. While ecologists possess vital scientific data, arts-based methods are used to foster creative problem-solving and increase peoples readiness for action. These joint solutions feed directly into other work packages, such as engaging residents through environmental actions (WP 2) and educating sustainable citizens through new pedagogical tools (WP 3).

Throughout the project, the focus remains on sharing experiences to increase the competence of all participants. The network will convene locally approximately 3-4 times and jointly 2-3 times. The project team will meet at least 2-3 times in person to exchange gathered knowledge, and co-develop solutions.

To minimize the carbon footprint, cross-border meetings will primarily be hybrid or virtual, utilizing a shared digital platform, while local gatherings are held in person. Activities take also place in Finland and Sweden locally.

Dissemination of best practices will reach beyond the core partnership. Joint knowledge-sharing sessions will be open to additional stakeholders and conducted via virtual platforms as well as physical study tours.

1.2. Developing biodiversity solutions and Cross-sectoral collaboration model

The network creates and finalizes innovative biodiversity solutions (5) by blending diverse expertise. For example, ecologists provide the scientific baseline, while artists design participatory methods for resident-led restoration and pedagogues develop tools for learning. By combining different scientific disciplines, the project creates innovative new ideas to enhance biodiversity. Before initiating pilots, the network utilizes UCP methodology to identify social needs and the "Genius Loci" which are often missed in traditional planning.

Novia UAS contributes methodological expertise in art-based facilitation and participatory artistic processes, ensuring that artistic methods function as structured tools for collaboration, communication and citizen engagement.

This methodology consolidates the work of the expert network established in phase 1.1. and validates the practical experiences gained from the pilots in WP2 and WP3. The network processes feedback from other work packages, which serves as part of the basis for the methodology.

While cross-sectoral cooperation is common, this model is unique in its integration of art-based methods as a core tool for facilitation and problem-solving. Utilizing the lessons learned in network meetings and pilot actions, the model will be refined to ensure its applicability not only to biodiversity but also to a wider range of sustainability and climate change challenges.

Cross-border network meets throughout the project to evaluate and further develop solutions created and piloted.

New biodiversity solutions planned in this activity are piloted in WP2.3. and WP 3.2. In concrete material, the work package establishes a methodology for cross-sectoral cooperation. In section 1.3., tools for practical implementation based on the methodology are introduced.

The model will be compiled into a methodology guide that specifically addresses the following elements:

- Assembling a cross-sectoral expert group: Guidelines on how to build an effective group that bridges the gap between scientific expertise (ecology, land use) and creative competence (arts, culture). It defines the roles required to break down administrative silos.
- Art-based working methods: Identifying specific artistic tools and facilitation techniques that maximize the impact of multidisciplinary expertise. This section describes how art can be used to translate complex scientific data into engaging actions for citizens and decision-makers.
- Feedback loop from pilots: The model includes an evaluation framework based on the real-world pilots (e.g., urban meadows, school activities), ensuring that the proposed methods are tested and functional in municipal, nature tourism and educational contexts.
- Sustainability and continuity: Strategies to ensure the networks activities remain viable and continue beyond the projects duration, supporting the long-term integration of the model into municipal and community strategies.

In the final phase of the project, the completed cross-sectoral network model will be disseminated through the network itself, open-access platforms, and at various expert events to ensure transferability across the Aurora region.

1.3. Finalizing toolkit for cross-sectoral collaboration in practice

The third activity focuses on developing a clear and transferable practical toolkit that supports effective collaboration between ecological, pedagogical, cultural, artistic and other expertise. The toolkit will be based on insights gathered in the expert network and will outline practical steps, tools and roles that enable different sectors to work together in a structured and meaningful way when addressing biodiversity challenges. The toolkit is based on the methodology in WP 1.2. and gained experience.

To ensure that diverse expert perspectives can be integrated, the methodology will describe and guide processes for joint problem framing, facilitation techniques that help translate specialist knowledge into shared understanding, and simple co-creation structures that guide actors through exploration, ideation and refinement stages.

Practical tools include e.g.:

- meeting structures
- techniques for identifying problems
- techniques for facilitating the collaboration
- lightweight tools that help municipalities, schools and cultural actors plan, run and document cross-border and cross-sectoral collaboration in practice.

The toolkit will be refined through small internal tests within the expert group, where selected elements such as collaborative workshop sequences, art-based engagement tools or communication formats are briefly piloted and adjusted before being adopted in WP2 and WP3. This ensures the final model is both practical and adaptable to different local contexts.

By combining the WP1.2. methodology with the practical tools in WP1.3., which are derived from that methodology, a structured cross-sectoral collaboration model will be finalized to address biodiversity challenges based on the networks work. The toolkit and its development process will serve as a foundation for the projects pilots and as a completed, transferable model for other regions in Nordics. It will support organisations in establishing cross-sector and transnational teams, running participatory processes with residents, and integrating artistic and ecological perspectives into concrete biodiversity actions.

Cross-border network spreads and embeds methods in their networks and organisations with project team.

WP2: Art-Based user engagement and pilots

The aim of this WP is to engage people in biodiversity work through artistic methods. The project utilizes the UCP framework, where art and cultural heritage are integrated directly into the development of green spaces. The goal is to influence people's values and attitudes and foster collective responsibility for the environment. A secondary goal is to strengthen the competence of artists, providing them with the skills to utilize their work as a transformative force outside the traditional arts sector. The target group of this WP is local residents, visitors, children and seniors. One element is the intergenerational collaboration between children and seniors (WP2.3. & 3.2.), which aims to strengthen social inclusion and well-being. Acting together for nature is a key driver for communal health and vitality. WP2.1. utilizes arts-based data collection to map the wishes and needs of different groups regarding nature areas. Methods such as applied drama can be used. The goal is enhancing biodiversity, but addressing the specific needs of people increases their sense of agency and commitment. Engagement begins at the planning stage to ensure that the results reflect the community's needs alongside ecological goals. WP2.2. incorporates land use and ownership perspectives. Cooperation with local stakeholders is deepened to ensure that biodiversity models are applicable with areas of diverse ownerships. WP2.3. from communal planning to collective action. Practical measures, such as sowing seeds, will be carried out. Art serves as a catalyst for change and a tool for shaping attitudes. From an aesthetic perspective, biodiversity sites can be designed as artworks e.g. by sowing seeds in patterns that reflect cultural heritage. Novia coordinates the development and implementation of the art-based engagement methodology used in this WP and supports partners in applying these methods in local pilot actions. Each partner coordinates its own practical piloting activities.

Startdate: 2026-11-30

Enddate: 2028-09-29

Cost: 327980

Activities

2.1. Art-based data gathering and Community Engagement

The first phase focuses on Cultural Mapping to identify local potential, social needs, and cultural resources before initiating pilots. Art-based methods are utilized for data collection. Instead of traditional surveys, methods such as storytelling and playful tools (e.g., LEGO modeling) are used to uncover the community's "silent knowledge" and place-based values. The goal is to map the hopes and needs of children, seniors, and local residents and other users, e.g. tourists regarding the areas where biodiversity is being enhanced. For methodological support we use recommendations and guides created for UCP, e.g. in the URBCULTURE-project. By gathering information from the community and involving them in the planning process from the beginning, they are more committed to the project. Early engagement ensures that the process and result are beneficial to the local people.

The art-based engagement methods used in this activity are jointly developed and facilitated with methodological support from Novia University of Applied Sciences. Novia contributes expertise in artistic facilitation, participatory design and creative knowledge translation to ensure that the methods are both inclusive and transferable to different municipal contexts.

Data is collected from diverse groups. Specific art-based methods are tailored for each group, e.g. children, seniors, and underrepresented groups, to ensure equal status and accessibility, to ensure methods suitability. In addition, historical perspectives and place-based narratives are incorporated into the creative processes, linking local cultivation traditions and cultural heritage *Genius Loci* to contemporary biodiversity work. This combination of scientific, artistic and heritage-based approaches deepens participants' understanding of how past and present relationships to nature can shape future green spaces.

Art-based methods will be used to gather insights about how people experience selected nature areas and what they value in them. Through simple creative exercises, such as drawing, storytelling, co-creation with natural materials, guided observation and playful mapping, participants can express thoughts, memories and needs that are not easily captured through traditional consultation. Low-threshold methods also support emotional connection to place, reduce performance pressure and allow individuals of different ages, languages and abilities to participate equally.

Activities will focus on exploring how people relate to nature/a place, what makes them feel welcome, and what kinds of biodiversity elements they notice, appreciate or worry about. When working hands-on and engaging multiple senses, participants articulate both practical wishes and deeper values, helping shape biodiversity pilots that reflect local identity and strengthen ownership. Intergenerational and intercultural encounters are encouraged to broaden perspectives and reveal shared themes.

All material is analysed and used to inform the design of biodiversity pilots in later stages of the project. Material will be discussed and processed with the project team together to exchange knowledge and learn from each other to show best practices.

By gathering this qualitative data, the project gains vital information on the community's vision for the area. This ensures that the enhancement of biodiversity is in line with the practical and emotional needs of the residents.

By involving artists and Novia art and design students in practical actions, the project also expands the professional competence of the artists themselves. It provides them with new insights into how art can be utilized through arts-based methods and how art can be physically manifested within natural environments. In this way, the expertise of artists can be expanded, particularly in terms of how to engage people and influence environmental values through artistic means.

The project utilizes art-based methods to collect 4-6 sets of data.

2.2. Land Use and Stakeholder Synergy

At the second phase of the work packet land ownership perspectives are carefully integrated. This includes identifying factors that influence biodiversity enhancement on lands owned by private individuals, local villages, and municipalities.

During this stage, cooperation is deepened with local stakeholders, such as the Ruha village and Hyppänjokilaakso from Finland's side. In the Swedish partner region, Boden Municipality contributes with strong crosssectoral expertise, involving professionals from environmental strategy, urban development, culture, education, social services and business development. This brings valuable perspectives to land use issues. Boden has also practical experience from wetland restoration projects, where successful biodiversity measures have been implemented through cooperation between multiple actors and landowners. These insights strengthen the project's ability to understand diverse ownership structures and to co-develop effective biodiversity actions across different types of land.

Addressing land ownership is crucial because it allows the project to positively impact biodiversity across a wider range of areas. By incorporating these perspectives, the project ensures that the resulting guidelines and materials provide practical and actionable advice for new municipalities, villages, private land owners and communities.

Furthermore, recognizing diverse ownership structures increases community engagement; when residents see the benefits for private, village, and municipal lands biodiversity, they are more likely to commit to biodiversity restoration. Highlighting the concrete advantages for each stakeholder is key to securing long-term commitment to strengthening biodiversity. Insights into biodiversity benefits also provide a valuable foundation for decision-making and the development of land-use planning.

Data and experiences gathered from pilots (WP2.3. and 3.3.) will be analyzed to inform future decision-making and land-use planning. Sharing knowledge between regions and cross-border to share experiences is vital in the 2.2. to gain expertise to implement biodiversity actions to lands with different ownerships.

2.3. Piloting new biodiversity solutions

Pilots are implemented as UCP Demonstrator projects, where creative experimentation serves as a driver for urban and ecological change. By involving residents in these actions, the project fosters inclusion, collaboration, and community well-being while enhancing biodiversity. These pilots bridge the gap between scientific ecological goals and the daily lives of citizens, ensuring that environmental actions are locally anchored. Art continues to serve as a catalyst for change, reshaping attitudes and values toward a more nature-friendly lifestyle.

Sustainability requires life-long learning. Pedagogical models developed in WP3 will be utilized for a broader audience in this WP 2.3. E.g. Exploratoriet integrates interactive science communication and hands-on learning formats to test and refine the models with families and in the Leader Suupohja and Geopark area, pilots are targeted for nature visitors who often feel an inherent need to "leave a mark" on the environment. This is fostered as a shift

in mindset to fulfill their need for expression through regenerative tourism, leaving a "trace" that strengthens local biodiversity.

The pilots generate science-based, user-driven solutions to reach the ecological values with the well-being of diverse users. The project reshapes public attitudes and values toward a more nature-friendly lifestyle, securing commitment to biodiversity. Beyond ecological impacts, the project expands the professional competence of artists, equipping them with the specialized skills necessary to act as cross-sectoral agents of change outside the traditional arts sector.

There is strong collaboration between WP 2.3. and WP 3.3. 1-3 pilots will be conducted in WP 2 in each project partner area.

Examples of Pilot Actions

- Ruha Village: the project is enhancing biodiversity by establishing a school meadow.
- Lapua's Saarenpääkoti: the project integrates biodiversity management into existing Green Care activities for the elderly.
- Lauhanvuori Geopark: an arts-based outdoor event will be organized in a nature trail to encourage participants to engage people in biodiversity actions. The event provides an experiential way to learn about natural ecosystems.
- Skellefteå municipality: responsible for integrating the practical biodiversity actions into long-term urban planning and the development of public green areas, ensuring structural impact and continuity beyond the project period.
- Exploratoriet Science Center: contributes by embedding interactive science communication and hands-on learning into the activities, helping participants understand ecological processes and the effects of measures such as meadow establishment. Skellefteå Museum strengthens the work by connecting biodiversity actions to local history, cultivation traditions and place-based narratives, thereby deepening residents' sense of identity and continuity.
- Boden Municipality: creative community engagement through an art-based process connected to the annual public event Sommarhänget, which offers free activities for children and young people in the city centre. A dedicated green art corner will be established. After the event, the artworks will be transferred to residential care facilities, where they will enhance indoor environments and support the well-being of the elderly.
- Hyppänjokilaakso: a pilot to invasive species control is implemented.
- Jakobstad: pilot actions take place in collaboration with the City of Jakobstad in the Kittholm area, building on the city's biodiversity enhancement plan. Activities will engage residents of different ages in hands-on biodiversity work through art-based methods.

Experiences and feedback from the pilots are shared within the project team and cross-sectoral expert network to further develop the models which can be scaled to different environments. Pilots can furthermore be established as permanent practices by integrating activities into standard operations.

WP3: Pedagogical Development and Piloting

The aim is to influence the knowledge, values and attitudes concerning biodiversity within early childhood and elementary education and life long learning for local residents and visitors by piloting and developing pedagogical materials. WP 3 refines the knowledge, experiences, and needs gathered in the previous work packages into concrete pedagogical materials, including practical actions and guidelines. The activity 3.1. focuses on developing a draft of learning materials by utilizing cross-border pedagogical experiences and knowledge. These materials also integrate other cross-sectoral expertise (WP 1) to answer key questions, e.g.: How should biodiversity be discussed with children of different ages? How can students be engaged and inspired to act for nature using art-based methods? What can be the concrete

actions? In the phase 3.2. the pedagogical materials and methods are piloted in early childhood and elementary education, combining art-based methods, hands-on biodiversity actions and place-based learning environments. E.g. The apple orchard, school meadow and surrounding public green areas function as open, accessible learning sites that can connect ecological knowledge with historical land use and sustainability challenges. A unique aspect of the learning process is the involvement of senior citizens (with WP 2), particularly in practical activities, e.g. sowing. This collaboration strengthens social inclusion, fosters a sense of community, and promotes well-being. In the phase 3.3. feedback and experiences from the pilots are collected to finalise two sets of pedagogical materials: one for early childhood education and one for elementary school to be used. The tested, developed and finalized, open access materials demonstrate how art, science, municipal planning and cultural heritage can jointly support biodiversity awareness and long-term stewardship. Monitoring: Lapua and Exploratoriet Science Center

Startdate: 2026-12-31

Enddate: 2029-01-30

Cost: 421690

Activities

3.1. Developing Pedagogical Materials

The development of the pedagogical materials for early childhood and elementary education and to be utilized in life long learning is initiated early in the project. These materials integrate multidisciplinary expertise, e.g., utilizing arts-based methods to process emotions and practical actions regarding biodiversity. The drafts are continuously refined based on the information gathered during the project activities.

The materials are based on the pedagogical expertise and knowledge shared between Finland and Sweden and other fields of expertise accumulated during WP1 and WP2. Data, wishes, and thoughts regarding biodiversity-supporting environments are collected from children through art-based methods in WP2, which acknowledges children as active users. This is taken into account in the practical actions.

The pedagogical materials include following themes: Core concepts of biodiversity and the importance of its preservation, practical actions, such as sowing school meadows, and observing and tracking changes in local biodiversity.

1) How to discuss and process the topic of biodiversity with children?

-Information for the teacher about biodiversity and how to process climate emotions with children.

-Information about biodiversity for children.

-Practical materials to be implemented with children, e.g. art-based pedagogical tools and learning materials to explore the topic.

2) Practical examples on enhancing biodiversity in the education context.

-Pedagogical materials for increasing biodiversity with children (e.g., insect hotels, sowing seeds).

-Exploring changes in nature (e.g., plant growth) together with children.

3) A pilot material package for the practical utilization of the pedagogical materials.

-Including the pedagogical materials and necessary tools for learning and practical actions, such as magnifying glasses, small shovels, and toys. The material package is designed to be circulated among kindergartens and schools taking sustainable development and the circular economy into account.

The drafts of pedagogical materials will be tested in phase 3.2. Phases 3.1 and 3.2 (developing and piloting pedagogical materials) are closely intertwined, and the work is carried out in constant interaction with one another.

A core principle is to foster environmental agency without increasing climate anxiety. All materials are solution-oriented and focus on the positive impact of active participation in biodiversity restoration.

3.2. Piloting Pedagogical Materials

By Phase 3.2., preliminary versions of the materials are ready for practical piloting at kindergartens and elementary schools. In this piloting stage, senior citizens (WP 2.3.) are integrated into the concrete actions with children to strengthen social inclusion, foster a sense of community, and promote well-being.

Piloting is essential for ensuring that the materials are genuinely functional and age-appropriate. The pedagogical approach and piloting remains solution-oriented and positive, focusing on empowerment and active participation rather than environmental anxiety. The pilots combine curriculum-linked biodiversity education with hands-on actions such as sowing, habitat creation and seasonal monitoring.

1-3 pilots will be conducted in WP 3 in each project partner area.

Examples of concrete Pilot Actions:

-Lapua city: 2-3 pilots of pedagogical materials will be carried out by creating a school meadow with local villagers and 1-2 biodiversity areas with kindergartens together with the seniors. Areas will serve as an outdoor classroom and public space, also promoting lifelong-learning for other users.

-Leader Suupohja: 1-2 pilots of pedagogical materials: a garden project or nature workshop with local early childhood education centre, as well as workshops related to strengthening biodiversity with primary school aged children at the Playcity camp. The material can also be piloted and used alongside the Geopark environmental education materials. From the perspective of biodiversity loss caused by nature tourism, the target group for Leader Suupohja consists of visitors arriving in the area who are interested in Geopark nature sites.

-In the Swedish part of WP3, 2-3 pilots will be implemented in cooperation with schools and in connection to the apple orchard at Nordanå as an open, place-based learning environment. As part of the site development, small-scale artistic and participatory elements such as a co-created wishing well symbolising hopes for nature and future generations may be integrated to strengthen emotional connection, reflection and a sense of shared responsibility for the area.

-Exploratoriet contributes by facilitating inquiry-based and interactive learning during the pilots, integrating art-based pedagogical tools with simple ecological experiments and observation methods. Skellefteå Museum strengthens the pilots by incorporating cultural heritage perspectives, linking biodiversity themes to historical cultivation practices and local land use. Through storytelling, exhibition-based learning elements and place narratives connected to the orchard and the upcoming cultivation exhibition, the pilots deepen participants understanding of continuity between past, present and future stewardship.

-Boden: will explore the possibilities of establishing a school wetland adjacent to an elementary school located in one of the municipalitys residential areas. By integrating pedagogical perspectives into the design process, the wetland could serve both ecological

functions such as improved biodiversity and water management and become a hands-on educational space.

During and after the piloting phase, experiences are shared between project organizations to increase awareness among educators and to further develop the materials. The same materials are piloted in both countries. This provides valuable and diverse data for finalizing the pedagogical materials in the next phase. Pilot activities will be organized during the spring and summer of both 2027 and 2028. Based on the findings from the first pilots, the materials will be further refined for the final pilot phase in 2028.

Pilots can be established as permanent practices by integrating activities into standard operations and disseminating the materials for further use.

3.3. Finalizing Pedagogical Materials

In the final phase of the work package, the feedback and experiences gathered during the phase 3.1. and 3.2. are utilized to finalize the pedagogical materials. The finalized pedagogical materials reflect the integrated knowledge and expertise gathered throughout WP 1, WP 2 and WP3.

Both educational levels, early childhood education and elementary school, will have its own dedicated material tailored to its specific needs. Material will provide a comprehensive approach to enhancing biodiversity and utilizing arts-based methods as a core pedagogical tool.

To ensure maximum impact and accessibility, these two pedagogical material packets created together will be translated into Swedish and Finnish to ensure wide-scale utilization and accessible use in both countries. Materials will be shared online as open-access and free-of-charge, allowing them to be adopted by every school and kindergarten across Aurora Area.

Also, concrete pedagogical material packets developed and tested will be available to loan from all project organizations for kindergartens and schools. This ensures that the materials are loanable in line with sustainable development and easy for teachers to implement, as the package includes pedagogical guides, instructions, and practical tools such as toys and magnifying glasses for the educational sessions.

As one of Sweden's 20 science centers, Exploratoriet will utilize the national science center network to disseminate the project results, share tested pedagogical models, and promote replication through professional exchanges, joint events and established communication channels reaching educators across the country. Skellefteå Museum will likewise disseminate the results through regional and national museum networks, integrating the projects approaches into museum pedagogy and exhibitions, thereby expanding outreach within the cultural heritage sector.

Pedagogical materials will be also disseminated to areas kindergartens and schools in both countries as well as at the national level. The distribution of these materials will also leverage a cross-sectoral network. Materials can also be utilised and shared within the global Geopark network.

1.8 Indicators

Output indicators

<p>Jointly developed solutions</p>	<p>The main theme of the project is to develop operational solutions that enhance biodiversity through culture- and art-based methods. Simultaneously, this approach boosts human well-being and fosters a strong sense of social inclusion. These methods will be applied across various contexts, resulting in tailored practical solutions for different environments, to enable their scaling and implementation in diverse contexts.</p> <p>The objective is to establish pilot sites for each solution in both Sweden and Finland.</p> <p>The planned pilot environments are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipally owned parks or public green areas 2. Nature tourism destinations 3. Integrating biodiversity areas into early childhood education and elementary schools 4. Integrating biodiversity actions into elderly care <p>Biodiversity management on private land or areas managed by local village communities or other associations.</p> <p>As a sixth jointly developed solution, the project will create a network-based working method to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration both internally within the participating organizations and transnationally among the project partners.</p>	<p>Startvalue: <i>N/A</i> Targetvalue: 6 Unit: Solutions</p>
<p>Strategies and action plans jointly developed</p>	<p>The overarching theme of the project is to develop operational models that enhance biodiversity through culture- and art-based methods. Simultaneously, this approach strengthens human well-being and fosters a sense of social inclusion. This objective is approached from multiple cross-sectoral perspectives.</p>	<p>Startvalue: <i>N/A</i> Targetvalue: 1 Unit: Joint strategies or action plans</p>

	<p>The knowledge and experiences gathered from the pilot actions and cross-border collaboration will be consolidated into a joint recommendation guide (WP 1.2. and 1.3. methodology and toolkit) presenting the project's best practices. The cooperation involves organizations from both Finland and Sweden. In addition to the official project partners, various other local and regional stakeholders will actively participate in the activities.</p> <p>We expect and actively ensure that all seven participating partner organizations will integrate the developed operational models into their own strategic objectives. Furthermore, we aim to influence an additional 5-7 external stakeholders to adopt the jointly developed models into their regular practices. The realization and uptake of these goals will be monitored through the project's Steering Group, which will evaluate the progress at the beginning of 2028 and 2029.</p>	
<p>Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects</p>	<p>The project will develop and implement 18 pilot actions to test new procedures, art-based tools, and the transfer of practices. All pilots are based on the jointly developed cross-sectoral methodology (WP1) and pedagogical materials (WP3). They are co-created transnationally, implemented locally during the project, and finalized before the project closure.</p> <p>Each project partner will implement at least two practical pilots that integrate arts- and culture-based methods with the promotion of biodiversity. These pilot activities include, for example, developing nature tourism visitor management within the Geopark, engaging village communities,</p>	<p>Startvalue: <i>N/A</i> Targetvalue: 18 Unit: Pilot actions</p>

	pedagogical testing in events and fostering collaboration between kindergartens, schools, and urban parks. Additionally, biodiversity and creative methods will be integrated into landscape design, the safeguarding of cultural heritage, and the management of invasive species.	
Organisations cooperating across borders	<p>The project involves seven partner organizations: three from Finland and four from Sweden. In addition, each partner is supported by key stakeholders such as municipalities, associations, and national park who will actively participate in the cross-border cooperation.</p> <p>Some of these stakeholders have already demonstrated their commitment by signing Letters of Intent during the project planning phase.</p>	<p>Startvalue: N/A Targetvalue: 14 Unit: Organisations</p>

Result indicators

Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	<p>The target value of 11 refers to the number of jointly developed strategies and action plans to be adopted and initiated by the end of the project. This value is based on five distinct, context-specific action plans co-created in WP1 and practically implemented in WP2 and WP3. The target value includes our 7 project partners and four organizations that are not official project partners. The goal is to transfer at least one project model or method to two new organizations per country during the project period.</p> <p>The five joint action plans are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-sectoral action plan for municipal green areas: A strategy for urban biodiversity, adopted and implemented by municipal green and cultural services. - Action plan for sustainable visitor management in nature tourism: A strategy for guiding visitor behavior in 	<p>Startvalue: Targetvalue: 11 Unit: Joint strategies or action plans</p>
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	<p>sensitive areas, adopted and implemented by regional developers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogical action plan for education: Guidelines for integrating art-based biodiversity education, adopted and implemented by local schools, daycare centers, and science centers. - Action plan for Green Care and biodiversity: A model combining ecological work with elderly well-being, adopted and implemented by elderly care facilities. - Action plan for village communities and private lands: A community-led biodiversity strategy, adopted and implemented by local village associations and residents. <p>At the time of reporting, the outcome will be verified by documenting the formal adoption of these plans into institutional guidelines or by providing evidence that practical implementation (e.g., pilot actions) has officially begun within the adopting organizations.</p>	
<p>Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion</p>	<p>To fulfill the requirements of this result indicator and ensure the long-term durability of the project (Exit Strategy), the seven partner organizations and three other organizations that have collaborated on the project, will sign a formal agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, during the final phase of the project.</p> <p>This agreement will outline how the entities will continue their cross-border cooperation after the EU funding period ends. The continued collaboration will focus on maintaining the established cross-sectoral expert network, sharing new findings, and further refining art-based biodiversity methods across the Aurora region.</p> <p>Furthermore, key stakeholders involved in the</p>	<p>Startvalue: Targetvalue: 10 Unit: Organisations</p>

	<p>project will be invited to participate in future activities, and support will be provided to launch their own collaborative development ideas. The project partners possess extensive expertise in various funding instruments; future cooperation can leverage resources such as Leader funding from the Rural Development Programme or various Nordic cooperation funding channels. Additionally, the geographical proximity of the regions ensures that continued collaboration remains feasible even through self-financing.</p>	
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1.9 Budget EU

Costs

Cost categories	Lapua Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Åbo Yrkehögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN		Total
Staff cost: Project Manager	119,970	87,330	0	0	57,126	0	0		264,426
Staff cost: Administration and financial expert	0	9,449	0	0	0	0	0		9,449
Staff cost: Expert (pedagogy 40% FTE)	0	0	66,705	0	0	0	0		66,705
Staff cost: Expert (landscape architect, 15% FTE)	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,794		27,794
Staff cost: Project Expert (Artistic Methods)	0	29,218	0	0	0	0	0		29,218
Staff cost: Local project manager (10% FTE)	0	0	27,794	0	0	18,941	20,588		67,323
Staff cost: Expert (biodiversity 15 % FTE)	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,794		27,794
Staff cost: Administration	7,934	0	0	0	5,984	0	0		13,918
Staff cost: Expert (technical / green area services)	9,404	0	0	0	0	19,353	0		28,757
Staff cost: Expert (education)	9,404	0	0	0	0	19,970	0		29,374
Staff cost: Financial Controller	5,799	0	0	0	3,264	0	0		9,063
Staff cost: Expert (pedagogy, 20% FTE)	0	0	0	37,058	0	0	0		37,058
Staff cost: Expert	0	0	0	0	0	19,558	19,558		39,116

Cost categories	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkeshögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
(culture and arts, 10% FTE)										
Staff cost: Expert	0	0	0	0	0	19,353	0			19,353
Other costs 40%	61,004	50,399	37,800	14,823	26,550	38,870	38,294			267,740
Sum costs	213,515	176,396	132,299	51,881	92,924	136,045	134,028			937,088
Deduction of project income										
Total deduction										
Total costs	213,515	176,396	132,299	51,881	92,924	136,045	134,028			937,088
Sum total costs	213,515	176,396	132,299	51,881	92,924	136,045	134,028			937,088

Co-financing

Financier	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkeshögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
Public co-financing										
Skellefteå kommun: Own resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	46,909			46,909
Lapin liitto: National co-financing	52,311	43,217	0	0	22,766	0	0			118,294
Lapuan kaupunki: Own resources	22,419	0	0	0	0	0	0			22,419
Skellefteå Museum: Own resources	0	0	0	18,158	0	0	0			18,158
Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry: Own resources	0	0	0	0	9,757	0	0			9,757
Bodens kommun: Own resources	0	0	0	0	0	47,651	0			47,651
Novia University of Applied Sciences: Own resources	0	18,522	0	0	0	0	0			18,522

Financier	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkehögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
Total public co-financing	74,730	61,739	0	18,158	32,523	47,651	46,909			281,710
Total all public co-financing methods	74,730	61,739	0	18,158	32,523	47,651	46,909			281,710
Private co-financing										
Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB: Own resources	0	0	46,304	0	0	0	0			46,304
Total private co-financing	0	0	46,304	0	0	0	0			46,304
Total all private co-financing methods	0	0	46,304	0	0	0	0			46,304
Total public and private co-financing	74,730	61,739	46,304	18,158	32,523	47,651	46,909			328,014

Support

Financing	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkehögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
Total financing	138,785	114,657	85,995	33,723	60,401	88,394	87,119			609,074

Support and financing

	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkehögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
Total financing	213,515	176,396	132,299	51,881	92,924	136,045	134,028			937,088

Compilation

	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	Ab Yrkehögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	Skellefteå Museum AB	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	BODENS KOMMUN	SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN			Total
Sum total costs	213,515	176,396	132,299	51,881	92,924	136,045	134,028			937,088
Sum co-financing	74,730	61,739	46,304	18,158	32,523	47,651	46,909			328,014

Applied support	138,785	114,657	85,995	33,723	60,401	88,394	87,119			609,074
Support share	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	64.97%	65.00%			65.00%

Support share of actual costs	65.00%
Support share of total costs	65.00%
Support share of financing base for support	65.00%
Support share of total financing	65.00%
Support share of other public co-financing	30.06%
Support share of public co-financing	95.06%
Support share of private co-financing	4.94%

1.10 Norwegian budget

Costs

Cost categories											Total
Sum costs											0
Deduction of project income											
Total deduction											
Total costs											0
											0
Sum total costs											0

Financing

Financier											Total
Public financing											
Total public financing											0
Total all public financing methods											0
Private financing											
Total private financing											0
Total all private financing methods											0
Total public and private financing											0

Support

Financing											Total
Applied support											0

Support and financing

											Total
Total financing											0

Compilation

											Total
Sum total costs											0
Sum co-financing											0
Applied support											0
Support share											0.00%

Support share of actual costs	0.00%
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Support share of total costs	0.00%
Support share of financing base for support	0.00%
Support share of total financing	0.00%
Support share of other public co-financing	0.00%
Support share of public co-financing	0.00%
Support share of private co-financing	0.00%

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1.12 Documents

File name: Hallintosäntö_2024-07-01.pdf
 Description: Administrative Regulations of City of Lapua
 Date attached: 2026-02-18
 File name: letterofintent_hyvaep_2026-02.pdf
 Description: Letter of intent South Ostrobothnia wellfare county
 Date attached: 2026-02-26
 File name: Lapua_Payment_Method_verification.pdf
 Description: Lapua_Payment_Method_verification.pdf
 Date attached: 2026-03-03
 File name: Letterofintent_Ruha.pdf
 Description: Letter of Intent Ruha Village Lapua
 Date attached: 2026-03-04
 File name: LETTER OF INTENT - Exploratoriet and Skelleftea Municipality.pdf
 Description:
 Date attached: 2026-03-04
 File name: Project_summary (1).pdf
 Description:
 Date attached: 2026-03-05
 File name: LOI Biodiversity created by art.pdf
 Description: LOI City of Jakobstad
 Date attached: 2026-03-05
 File name: Letter of Intent - LH Geopark ry.pdf
 Description: Letter on Intent from Lauhanvuori-Hämeen kangas Geopark
 Date attached: 2026-03-06
 File name: Originalansökan
 Description: Inkommen originalansökan - Maskinläsbart format

Date attached:

2026-03-08