

Notification of decision EU-support

The Managing Authority has on the 2026-06-09 made a formal decision to allocate 609 073 EUR from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to the project. The support from ERDF is 65,00% of eligible costs

Project name	Biodiversity created by art, culture and cross-sectoral collaboration
Reference number	20379666
Priority	Green and sustainable transition
Specific objective	Nature protection and biodiversity
Type of project	Regular project
Sub-area	Aurora
Lead Partner EU	Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua
Project partners EU	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN Ab Yrkeshögskolan vid Åbo Akademi BODENS KOMMUN Skellefteå Museum AB
Project start date	2026-09-01
Project end date	2029-02-28

Justification for decision

The Steering Committee of sub-area Aurora has on 2026-06-04 selected the project to be financed by Interreg Aurora.

The project meets the requirements set by the programme regarding cross-border cooperation, specific objective, sustainable development, partnership, logical, value for money and relevance for target group.

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.

Aurora

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.

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.

Start date: 2026-10-01

End date: 2029-01-31

Cost: 187 418

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.

Cost: 72 378

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.

Aurora

- 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.

Cost:

54 885

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, artbased 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

Aurora

and it's 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.

Cost:

60 155

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.

Start date: 2026-12-01

End date: 2028-09-30

Cost: 327 980

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 URBECULTURE-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.

Aurora

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 Genious 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.

Artbased 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. Lowthreshold 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 handson 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.

Cost:

77 945

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 Hyypänjokilaakso 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.

Cost:

84 502

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 Saarenpääkotit: 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.

Cost:

165 533

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: 2027-01-01

Enddate: 2029-01-31

Cost: 421 690

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.

Aurora

- 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.

Cost: 147 811

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

Aurora

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.

Cost: 169 722

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

Aurora

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 utilise 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.

Cost:

104 157

Expected results

Output indicators

Jointly developed solutions	Targetvalue: 3
Strategies and action plans jointly developed	Targetvalue: 1
Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	Targetvalue: 3
Organisations cooperating across borders	Targetvalue: 8

Result indicators

Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	Targetvalue: 1
Organisations cooperating across borders after project completion	Targetvalue: 7

Aurora

Budget EU

Cost categories	Lapua	Novia	Exploratoriet	Skellefteå Museum	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys	BODEN	SKELLEFTEÅ	Total
Staff cost	152 511	125 997	94 499	37 058	66 374	97 174	95 734	669 347
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	136 044	134 028	937 087

Financier	Lapua	Novia	Exploratoriet	Skellefteå Museum	Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys	BODEN	SKELLEFTEÅ	Total
SKELLEFTEÅ KOMMUN	0	0	0	0	0	0	46 909	46 909
Lapin liitto	52 311	43 217	0	0	22 766	0	0	118 294
Lapuan Kaupunki - City of Lapua	22 419	0	0	0	0	0	0	22 419
Skellefteå Museum AB	0	0	0	18 158	0	0	0	18 158
Suupohjan Kehittämisyhdistys ry	0	0	0	0	9 757	0	0	9 757
BODENS KOMMUN	0	0	0	0	0	47 651	0	47 651
Ab Yrkeshögskolan vid Åbo Akademi	0	18 522	0	0	0	0	0	18 522
Exploratoriet i Skellefteå AB	0	0	46 304	0	0	0	0	46 304
EU-support	138 785	114 657	85 995	33 723	60 401	88 393	87 119	609 073
Total financing	213 515	176 396	132 299	51 881	92 924	136 044	134 028	937 087

Aurora

Appeal

This decision can not be appealed.

Decision-making officer

Tina Nilsson has made the decision after a presentation by Veronica Estling.

Reporting and payment applications

The payment application regarding the EU-funding is submitted in Min Ansökan by the Lead Partner EU with a joint progress/final report for the whole project. For instructions on how to report, please see www.interregaurora.eu

Period	Start date	End date	Date for submission
1	2026-09-01	2027-02-28	2027-04-30
2	2027-03-01	2027-08-31	2027-10-31
3	2027-09-01	2028-02-29	2028-04-30
4	2028-03-01	2028-08-31	2028-10-31
5	2028-09-01	2029-02-28	2029-04-30

Questions

For questions regarding this decision, please contact Amanda Mannervik.

Lead partner EU is responsible for distributing this notification to all project partners.

ANNEX:

General conditions – support from Interreg Aurora (EU - ERDF)

All partners shall make sure the project is implemented in accordance with the regulations of the European Union, the national laws, any other provisions and documents applicable to the EU support, as well as the programme manual for Interreg Aurora and in particular:

- keep separate accounts for the project (not applicable to flat-rates)
- pay the expenditures of the project within deadlines for reporting
- follow the regulations regarding public procurement
- keep all project documents and accounts available for a period of seven years following the end of the calendar year when the project was formally closed by the Managing Authority, or longer if it is stipulated in other rules applicable to the project partner
- repay to the Lead Partner any amounts unduly paid
- highlight the support from EU, and upon request, make communication and visibility material available for use by Union institutions, bodies, offices or agencies.

The Lead partner shall, in particular:

- conclude a partnership agreement with all partners of the project,
- ensure implementation of the project within the project period,
- ensure that the expenditure presented by all partners has been paid in implementing the project and corresponds to the activities in the decision of EU-support to the project,
- deliver progress- and final reports regarding the implementation of the project
- make payment applications regarding the EU-support for the project
- ensure that the other partners receive their part of the EU-support
- as soon as known, inform about any changes regarding the implementation of the project
- repay to the Managing Authority any amounts unduly paid.