

COOPERATION AGREEMENT
between
Finnmark County Council, Kingdom of Norway,
and Regional Council of Lapland, Finland,
2026-2029

Preamble

The Finnmark County Council, Kingdom of Norway and the Regional Council of Lapland, Finland, hereinafter referred to as “the Parties,”

recognizing the importance of strengthening bilateral relations and promoting mutual understanding, enhancing cooperation in areas of common interest and to foster sustainable development, acknowledging the benefits of sharing knowledge, expertise, and best practices,

based on objectives in the Finnmark County Council’s Regional Development Plan for Finnmark 2024-2028, and Lapland's Regional Program (Lapland Agreement 2026-2029),

have agreed to enter into this Bilateral Cooperation Agreement under the following terms and conditions.

Article 1: Purpose of the Agreement

The purpose of this Agreement is to establish a strategic partnership that advances sustainable development, green transition, and regional connectivity in the Arctic context. The Agreement aims to reinforce bilateral collaboration in addition to ongoing multilateral frameworks. The long common border and historic ties provide a solid foundation for intensified cooperation to address demographic decline, ageing populations, labour shortages, high service delivery costs, insufficient infrastructure, and east–west connectivity gaps. Joint communication activities will contribute to promotion of the regions and their joint strengths and opportunities.

Article 2: Strategic Goals of the Agreement

The Parties agree to pursue the following strategic goals:

- Advance green transition and climate-friendly solutions
- Improve infrastructure and transport connectivity
- Foster sustainable development and indigenous participation
- Enhance digitalization and innovation ecosystems
- Enhance cooperation in civil security and preparedness

Article 3: Areas of Cooperation

Regional Development

The Parties will:

- Build on existing cooperation under EU funding programs and support project partnerships within northern Nordic multilateral structures.
- Strengthen exchange of experience on regional innovation strategies, focusing on cluster development.
- Facilitate cross-border cooperation and business collaboration.
- Promote sustainable Arctic tourism through entrepreneurship support and sharing of good practices.
- Ensure Sami culture, traditions, and livelihoods are respected in regional development.
- Explore inclusion of digitalization-related cooperation.

Transport and Logistics

The Parties will:

- Cooperate within the Platform North initiative.
- Promote infrastructure priorities identified in the Interreg Aurora “New North” project and its continuation.
- Support the upgrading of key corridors in the border region.
- Support the development of cross-border public transport, including reliable bus routes, climate-friendly solutions, and assessment of potential future air connections.
- Jointly promote road safety for freight and passenger transport and support regional security of supply.

Sustainable Development

The Parties will:

- Foster cooperation in energy production and utilization, with emphasis on wind power, hydrogen, and minerals, and facilitate stakeholder collaboration through joint events.
- Exchange knowledge and develop cooperation on sustainable mineral extraction, including safeguarding local and indigenous community rights.
- Support the implementation of the Norway–Finland agreement on managing transboundary waterways.

- Promote and facilitate cross-border cooperation on climate adaptation and mitigation, including the exchange of knowledge, best practices and innovative approaches to strengthen resilience in Arctic communities.
- Strengthen cultural cooperation across heritage institutions, literature (especially Norwegian–Finnish/Kven), and artistic exchange.,
- Support cross-border exchange and learning for upper secondary school students and staff, and contribute to the further development of cross-border vocational competitions.

Support cross-border exchange of knowledge and best practices to strengthen public health and local communities in the region.

Civil security and preparedness

The Parties will:

- Promote cooperation on civil security and emergency preparedness, enabling joint approaches and better understanding of each other’s systems.
- Cooperate to maintain continuity of public services, protect critical infrastructure, and ensure societal resilience during crises.
- Exchange practices and strengthen cooperation in communication, including countering disinformation and enhancing strategic communication.

Article 4: Implementation and Financing

- The Parties will cooperate through joint projects and programs, regular meetings, joint events and by strengthening relevant networks.
- the Parties will allocate the resources, including funding and personnel, to support the implementation of the Agreement and will leverage EU’s funding schemes, Nordic Council of Ministers and national grants to support joint projects and initiatives.
- The Parties agree to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the cooperation

Article 5: Final Provisions

- The Parties shall ensure that any information exchanged under this Agreement is treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed.
- This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of signature by both Parties and shall remain in force for 4 years and may be renewed upon mutual agreement.
- This Agreement may be amended by mutual written consent of the Parties.
- Either Party may terminate this Agreement by giving written notice to the other Party.

Signed in [City], on [Date], in two originals in the English language.

For Finnmark County Council:

For Regional Council of Lapland:

Name:

Name:

Title:

Title: