

# Smart Specialisation in remote areas – the case of the Nordic Arctic region

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Nordregio, Stockholm, Sweden - a leading Nordic research institute within the broad field of regional development

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# Nordic Co-operation Programme for Regional Development and Planning 2017-2020 (Nordic Council of Ministers)

## Thematic Groups (TG):

- ❖ Sustainable rural development (TG1)
- ❖ **Innovative and resilient regions (TG2), including regional smart specialisation strategies in the Nordics**
- ❖ Sustainable cities and urban development (TG3)

Nordic Arctic as one of the focus areas

# Sparsely populated regions

Gloersen et al. (2006): Areas characterised by e.g.

- ❖ low population located in scattered small settlement structure
- ❖ long distances to main urban centres
- ❖ often harsh climatic conditions together with the abundance of natural resources

Sparsely populated regions to be found e.g. in the northern and eastern parts of the Nordic countries, North Scotland, middle parts of Spain

# Smart specialisation in remote and sparsely populated areas

- ❖ 'In theory', the Smart Specialisation policy thinking is supposed to be applicable in any type of regional setting
- ❖ 'In practice', much attention to metropolitan and urban contexts – less attention to the applicability of RIS3 in remote regions
- ❖ How to apply smart specialisation when the geographical area is huge - but the number of people living in the area is small ?

# Regional S3 strategies in the North



# EU JRC WORKING PAPER (2015)



- ❖ Case study regions including Lapland, Västerbotten, Nordland, Highlands & Islands
- ❖ Rovaniemi EU JRC Workshop 2014 on S3 in sparsely populated regions as the point of departure

## EU JRC Working Paper: Findings and recommendations

- ❖ Remote and sparsely populated areas should not be seen as regions lagging behind by definition but as regions with specific characteristics including challenges and opportunities.
- ❖ Innovative environments have been created in in sparsely populated and remote areas, too
- ❖ Remote areas need extra-regional knowledge and networking pipelines - even more so than other types of areas due to lack of critical mass
- ❖ Combination of abundant natural resources and limited human capital needs to be carefully studied.



# Lapland, S3 implementation, and Arctic Smart Clusters

## Case circular economy/industrial symbiosis

- ❖ Kemi/Tornio industrial symbiosis as an essential part of the Lapland S3 strategy implementation – “Arctic Smart Cluster”
- ❖ Providing e.g. an inventory of regional industrial side streams (public-private initiative)



## Lapland, Finland - success factors of S3 process (Sinnova, Cagliari October 2017/JT)

- ❖ Focus on own strengths - arctic natural resources, and know-how on living and working in arctic conditions
- ❖ S3 strategy process - engaging a large number of actors
- ❖ Strong S3 implementation phase after S3 strategy preparation
- ❖ Clear leadership of the process – Regional Council of Lapland
- ❖ Investing in communication and regional branding
- ❖ Trust building among the actors!
- ❖ International S3 peer review process with EU JRC Seville

# Remote Nordic Arctic and local smart specialisation strategies?

- ❖ *"We have the feeling that our region is geographically too big and that there are major regional differences within our region e.g. between coastal and inland areas . "One-S<sub>3</sub> strategy-fits-all" maybe does not apply to our region"* (S<sub>3</sub> event Luleå 3/2016)
- ❖ The regional S<sub>3</sub> strategy may lack sufficient involvement of actors in more peripheral areas. Opportunities for growth from more peripheral areas could be missed
- ❖ Would there be room for **Local S<sub>3</sub> Strategies** for geographically big, remote regions, to complement Regional S<sub>3</sub> Strategies?

# CASE: REGINA 2015-2018 (NPA Programme)

## Local Smart Specialisation Strategies

### Partners:

*Nordregio (Lead Partner)*

University of Lapland

MidtSkandia Sweden

MidtSkandia Norway

Sodankylä Municipality

Storuman Municipality

Nordland Research Institute

BioForsk

Alstahaug Municipality

Brønnøy Municipality

Kommune Kujalleq

North Highland College

### Associated Partners

Highland & Islands Enterprise

Nordlands FylkeKommune

Nordic Council of Ministers

### Total Budget

€2 M



## REGINA 2015-2018 and Local smart specialisation

- ❖ The 6 local partners produce their own S3 strategies with a focus on maximising local benefits associated with large scale resource-based industries
- ❖ The regional S3 strategies provide a broader framework for the local S3 strategies. The design of local S3 strategies follows the philosophy and guidelines of regional S3 strategies – with a local geographic focus

## Conclusion

- ❖ Nordic Arctic has taken a promising start in adopting the smart specialisation concept
- ❖ Regional S3 strategies in the Nordic Arctic region might be complemented with local S3 approaches ?

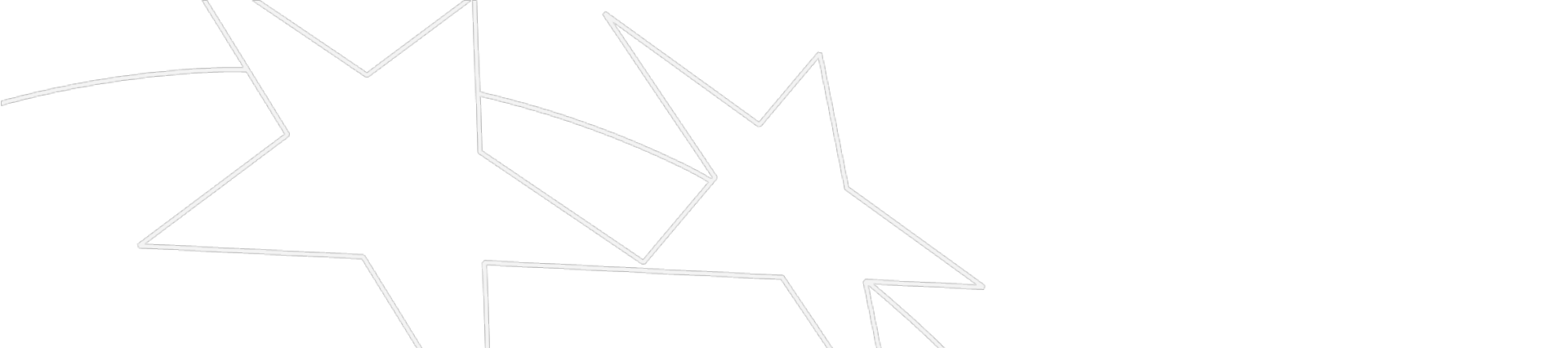


Photo: Kjell Nilsson

**Thank you!**

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