



**EU-PROMOTED**

**SUSTAINABLE**

**DEVELOPMENT AND**

**GREEN TRANSITION**

**IN THE ARCTIC**



Funded by  
the European Union

## The EU supports Arctic sustainable development and green transition in many ways\*



**The EU's 2050 climate neutrality goal** will benefit the Arctic as a whole by limiting climate change



**The EU's Arctic policy** emphasises inclusive and sustainable development, focusing on people living in the Arctic



**The Clean Industrial Deal** will address climate change, competitiveness and critical raw materials, with the Arctic playing a role in all three challenges



**Circularity and efficiency** guide the EU's path towards sustainable development, including in the Arctic



The implementation of the **European Green Deal** is supporting sustainable industries, innovation and biodiversity in Europe, globally and in the Arctic, balancing economic growth and the environment



**The European Arctic** is an important contributor to European economic transformation, including for renewable energy, raw materials and sustainable innovations



**The EU offers stability and predictability** for Arctic authorities and investors with programmes, co-investments and loans



**EUR 1.6 billion** has been provided by the European Investment Bank since 1994 for renewable energy and green transition projects implemented in the circumpolar North



**The EU's Just Transition Fund** supports fair and inclusive industrial change, also in the European Arctic



**EUR 273 million** of Interreg funding promotes, among others, sustainability and carbon neutrality (Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, and Aurora Programme, 2021-2027)



With over 500 billion euros invested under **Horizon 2020** and **Horizon Europe**, European Arctic research and innovation supports the transformative European Green Deal agenda with transparent, comprehensive and balanced scientific evidence and innovative solutions

\* These EU-wide policies and programmes are relevant, but not specific, to the Arctic

## Supporting the transition of the Arctic blue economy

The EU emphasises the **responsible stewardship, and use, of ocean resources**. A sustainable blue Arctic economy is achieved through holistic, systems-informed strategies and programmes that support and transform industries such as fisheries, transport, tourism, energy and biotechnology.

**Research, innovation and networking** support the transition to a sustainable blue economy. Initiatives include the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (pooling European research investments and aligning national research programmes), hosting projects such as ARCFISH which uses the digital twin of fish stocks to enhance fishery sustainability.

EU-wide efforts like marine spatial planning demonstrate a **commitment to cross-sectoral collaboration and conservation**.

## Regional cooperation for sustainable Arctic development



**EU-facilitated regional cooperation** in the Arctic supports resilient and thriving communities and regions. Within the EU's Cohesion Policy, national and regional development programmes in Finland and Sweden, and Interreg cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes (Aurora Programme, Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme) promote partnerships and stakeholder involvement.

Operating since 2024, the **Arctic Urban Regional Cooperation** programme is another initiative supporting pan-Arctic cooperation, facilitating peer-to-peer learning on sustainable urban and regional development among Arctic local authorities from EU and non-EU countries.

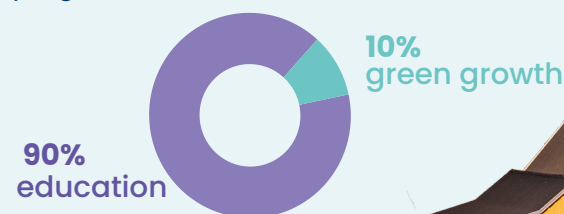


## IN FOCUS

## EU-Greenland partnership for sustainable development

Greenland has a **special relationship with the EU as an Overseas Country and Territory (OCT)**, with a focus on fisheries, education and green growth.

Sermersooq municipality is part of the first **Arctic Urban Regional Cooperation** programme.



The EU provides **EUR 225 million** (2021-2027) for Greenland in the Overseas Association Decision. Greenlandic institutions participated in **12 projects under Horizon Europe** (2021-2024) with a total budget of **EUR 2.8 million**.

A **Business Mission on raw materials** was co-organised by the European Commission and the Government of Greenland in October 2024.



## Recent milestones in EU-Greenland partnership

### November 2023

EU and Greenland sign **strategic partnership** on sustainable raw materials value chains.



### March 2024

**EU Office in Nuuk** is opened by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.



### December 2024

New **6-year protocol** is launched under the 2021 EU-Greenland Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement.



### March 2024

Roadmap operationalising the **Sustainable Raw Materials partnership** is signed.



### September 2024

**Green Growth bilateral programme** is agreed, covering renewable energy, raw materials value chains, environmental preservation and research.





## Multiple EU programmes engage Arctic actors in supporting sustainable development\*

### European Investment Bank

Provides loans and guarantees to support sustainable projects and renewable energy, with a focus on climate action – including a broad portfolio of Arctic projects.

**Geothermal and Hydropower Energy Development:** a combined total EIB-supported investment of EUR 140 million to expand renewable energy in Iceland since 1994.

### NextGenerationEU

A recovery instrument brought in after the COVID-19 pandemic (around EUR 300 billion). Focuses on green transition, including substantial investment in renewables, energy efficiency and sustainable transport.

### Territorial cooperation

Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme (NPA) and Aurora Programme (2021–2027) include over EUR 270 million for cross-border and transnational cooperation in the Arctic, focusing on diverse areas of sustainable development.

### EU Cohesion Policy

In 2021–2027, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund in North Sweden and North-East Finland (around EUR 965 million including JTF) support, among others, sustainable development, green and digital transitions, including reducing GHG emissions and boosting energy efficiency.

### European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF)

Supports sustainable fishing and aquaculture, coastal communities and marine biodiversity (total budget EUR 6 billion for 2021–2027).

**Sámi Council** has received support for actions such as sharing Sámi approaches to the circular economy, and participating in the Commission's expert activities on sustainable forest management.

**The EU Arctic Forum, Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue and Arctic Youth Dialogue** are organised annually by the EU.

### Horizon Europe

The EU's key funding programme for research and innovation, addressing issues such as: climate change (target spending of 35% of the total EUR 93.5 billion budget); biodiversity (target spending of 10%); sustainable resource management; and technological innovation. In 2021–2025, over EUR 200 million were dedicated to Arctic research. This includes the Arctic-Atlantic Lighthouse projects under the EU Mission Ocean and Waters, which focuses on marine and coastal ecosystem restoration and climate resilience.

### Fossil-free Steel Production in North Sweden

The EU is contributing to investments of EUR 40 billion over 20 years to scale up fossil-free steel production, using the EU's Innovation Fund and other sources.

### LIFE Programme

Funds projects on biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation and adaptation (total EUR 5.4 billion for 2021–2027).

### Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

Focuses on European infrastructures (total EUR 33 billion budget for 2021–2027), while also supporting energy efficiency and renewable energy sources integration.

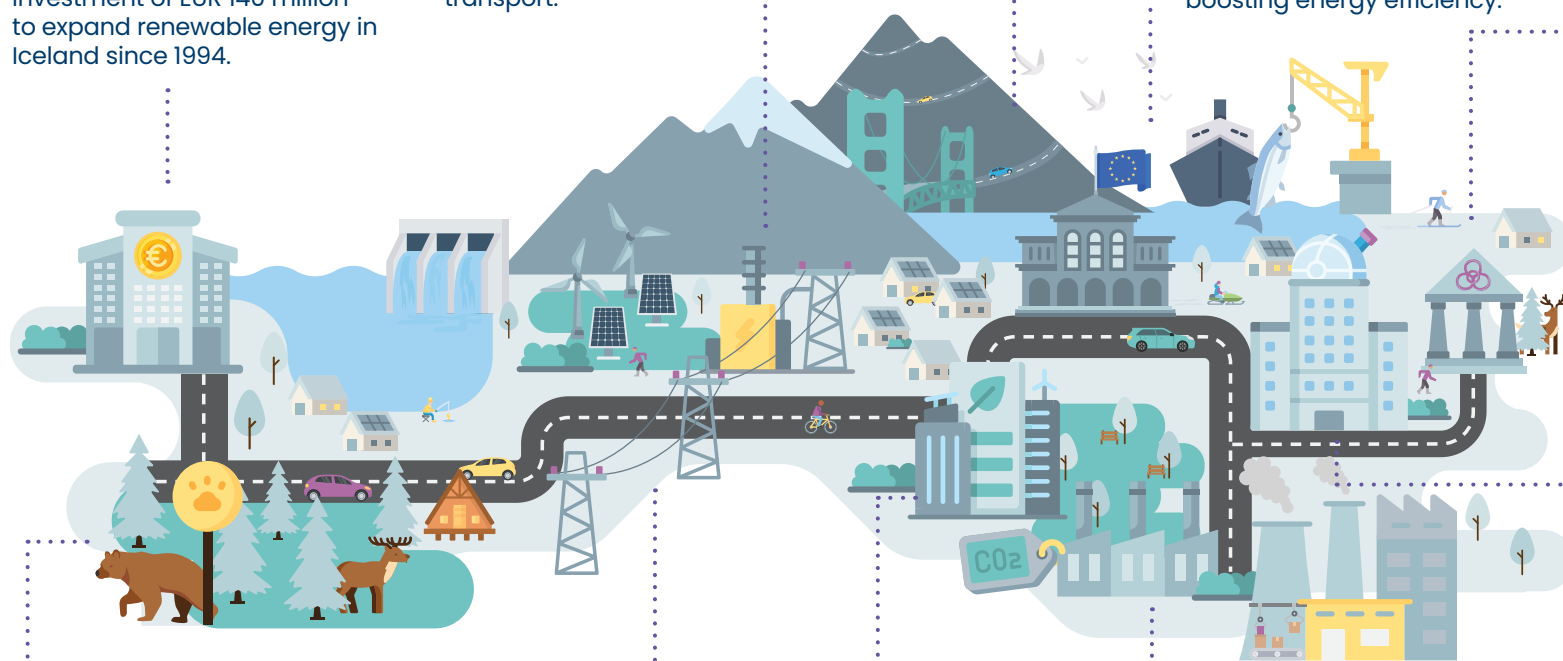
**'Aurora Line' Electricity Transmission Link:** increases transborder electricity transmission capacity between Finland and Sweden with over EUR 130 million of CEF: Energy funding.

### InvestEU

Supports sustainable infrastructure, research, innovation, and digitalisation projects, leveraging public and private investments in green technologies and energy transition. Aims to mobilise EUR 372 billion in 2021–2027.

### Just Transition Mechanism

Supports regions and industries reliant on fossil fuels to transition to low-carbon economy. Expected to mobilise EUR 55 billion in 2021–2027 through the Just Transition Fund, InvestEU, and public sector loans.



\*These EU-wide policies and programmes are relevant, but not specific, to the Arctic.

## Fostering sustainability while ensuring environmental protection

**Environmental protection** is at the core of the EU's efforts in the Arctic.

The **EU's Zero Pollution Action Plan**, targeting air, water and soil pollution in Europe, and globally, is also helping safeguard the Arctic environment.

The EU engages in **international Arctic-relevant agreements** such as the OSPAR Convention (protecting North Atlantic marine environment), the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and the UN Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction.



## Managing critical raw materials in the Arctic

The Arctic holds **significant reserves** of strategic critical raw materials that are needed for green transition. **European Arctic** resources can play an important role in the EU's transition to carbon neutrality and Europe's resource security.

The EU has an interest in developing mutually beneficial **raw material** relations with Arctic partners.

**Strategic partnerships** with Canada and Greenland focus on attracting investments across value chains, and developing resources in a responsible manner, with high environmental standards and broad societal support.

## Empowering the Arctic to have a leading role in the energy transition

**Transition to renewable energy** is essential for achieving global climate objectives, supporting Arctic sustainability, and boosting economic opportunities.

**The Arctic has vast potential** for renewable energy development, including geothermal, wind and hydropower.

**The EU contributes** to sustainable and resilient Arctic economies by prioritising energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment.



## Science, research and innovation for sustainable development in the Arctic

**The EU's Research and Innovation framework programmes** – currently Horizon Europe (2021-2027) – are crucial enablers of sustainable development in the Arctic. They contribute to meeting European and global climate and biodiversity objectives, as well as those of the current EU Arctic policy, which aims to ensure a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic. Projects including Arctic partners from Canada, Iceland and Norway tackle the ecological, social, economic and political challenges caused by climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – taking strong actions to make the Arctic more resilient.

**Horizon Europe** provides innovative solutions, enhances multidisciplinary scientific collaboration, fosters access to Arctic Research Infrastructures, and facilitates data access for scientists and decision-makers.

The energy transition needs to be implemented in a **just and participatory manner**: supporting those affected by change and engaging all stakeholders in decision-making.

The EU invests in **clean energy technologies and infrastructures**, facilitating economic diversification (e.g. through the Green Growth Programme). The EU also continues to cooperate with Arctic partners, including through Green Alliances with Norway and Canada.



## Europe's eyes on the Arctic: supporting environmental monitoring and sustainable development

**Copernicus**, the Earth observation component of the EU Space Programme, equips policymakers and local communities with the data necessary to understand and address the Arctic's unique sustainable development challenges.

**Copernicus services** in Arctic and northern regions include climate change monitoring, land cover and ground motion changes, sea ice and iceberg monitoring, emergency management, emissions and pollution monitoring, biodiversity monitoring, and infrastructure planning.

**The Copernicus Arctic Hub** is a one-stop-shop for all Arctic-related Copernicus products.

[www.arctic.hub.copernicus.eu](http://www.arctic.hub.copernicus.eu)

**THE EU COLLABORATES  
WITH ARCTIC STATES  
IN PROMOTING  
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ATTRACTING GREEN  
INVESTMENTS**

Learn more about EU support  
for sustainable development  
and the green and blue  
transitions in the Arctic



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The EU contributes to sustainable development in the Arctic with a range of programmes, financing and research – and a commitment to the green transition, particularly in the European Arctic.



**The EU in the Arctic**

Reach out to us at

**arctic@eeas.europa.eu**

**EU-ARCTIC-FORUM@ec.europa.eu**

**#EUArcctic**