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**TG2: Svinesund cross-border activities 2020**  
**JOINT LEARNING SVINESUND AND BOTHNIAN ARC & EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS**  
**Revised Version "Covid-19", May 26 2020**

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## Background

Nordic thematic group on *Innovative and Resilient regions* (TG2) 2017-2020 includes two cross-border cooperation programmes, with Bothnian Arc and Svinesund as partners. During the period of 2017-2020, TG2 has undertaken 4 major cross-border studies in the Bothnian Arc and Svinesund cross-border regions. In the **Bothnian Arc**, a study was conducted that was considering economic and social resilience and another study on skills supply and labour mobility across borders is in progress. In the **Svinesund** region, a study on digitalisation and blue growth was undertaken, and a project concerning informal governance structures and resilience is currently in progress. TG2's budget presents another opportunity for furthering cross-border investigations, with funds allocated for yet another couple of cross-border activities in TG2 for 2020 for Bothnian Arc and for Svinesund.

According to preliminary discussions (Svinesund/Bothnian Arc/Nordregio), there is an opportunity in 2020 to summarize and synthesise the learnings so far gained on resilience, skills, digitalisation, and smart specialisation in Nordic cross-border regions, with Svinesund and Bothnian Arc as case regions. Moreover, it would be desirable to share the results across border regions of the Nordic Countries and invite stakeholders to learn from the work done and from each other. Additionally, there is a possibility to learn from other Nordic cross-border committees and from European cross-border experiences, especially through collaboration with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

## Ex-post

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020, cross-border activities have dramatically come to a halt. On a macro level, the interruption of flows of people and goods has added stress on every aspect of social life, as well as challenging the supply and value chains. Border regions are experiencing hard borders, divided by the measures adopted by individual states. Collaboration across borders is being tested. This raises the need for gaining more knowledge on the immediate and short-term effects of pandemics on cross-border collaboration, and what mechanisms are missing for ensuring resilient cross-border regions. Insights learned from the current crisis should inform possible actions for future cross-border collaboration.

## Proposal:

Svinesundkommittén and Nordregio will implement a TG2 cross-border activity to 1) synthesise the learnings of the work undertaken throughout the 2017-2020 TG2-period, and delve further into the Covid-19 effects and impacts on border regions and collaboration; 2) share experiences with the Bothnian Arc and generate joint Nordic learning among cross-border committees; and 3) to learn from stakeholders outside the Nordics. This last point will be carried in collaboration with the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

## Main Activities:

### 1) Svinesund

The cross-border study on the impacts of Covid-19 on the cross-border region of Svinesund will seek to carry out the following action point: a) Provide a brief description of the immediate economic and social consequences of Covid-19 on cross-border activities in Svinesund; b) Provide a brief analysis of challenges and opportunities regarding the post-COVID-19 future in Svinesund, using the framework of the finalised TG2 studies from 2017-2020; c) Provide a brief desk study of international experiences regarding the consequences and impacts of the pandemic on cross-border regions\*. This qualitative case study will be drawing on interviews with the most relevant stakeholders and reported as a working paper to be presented at the cross-border conference (see section2).

- Project leader: Nordregio
- Budget allocation: 125K DKK

### 2) Cross-border conference – end October 2020

The cross border conference will be hosted by Svinesundskommittén by the end of October 2020. The conference will be held within the framework of the findings from the finalised TG2 2017-2020 and supplemented with the findings from the recent study on the Covid-19 pandemic's effect on cross-border regions. The conference will invite stakeholders from border regions from across the Nordic region and Europe.

- Project leader: Svinesundskommittén, supported by Nordregio
- **Budget allocation:** 125K DKK (this includes venue costs, catering, and any travel costs of selected keynote speakers )

**Total budget: 250k DKK**

\*The desk study is a joint venture with the Bothnian Arc

## Svinesund: Cross-Border Conference - Draft Agenda

<b>Title: Cross-border regions and covid-19: Impacts and future steps</b>	
<b>Location: Strømstad?</b>	
<b>Date: mid-late October 2020 (any preference?)</b>	
<b>Duration: 9:00 – 16:00 (+ additional social activity / study visit)</b>	
9:00-9:15	Welcome coffee
9.15-9.30	Opening words (local politician / key person)
9.30-10.15	Cross-border collaboration: major challenges and opportunities (Martin Guillermo Ramirez / Commentary remark: Ann-Sofi Backgren)
10:15-10:45	Coffee break

10.45-11.00	<b>Overview of Nordic TG2 2017-2020 and cross-border activities: what have we learned? (Jukka Teräs, Nordregio)</b>
11.00-11.45	<b>Key findings: Study on Covid-19 and cross-border activities (Mari + Alberto, Nordregio )</b> <b>Commentary remarks: Elsie Hellström, Svinesundskommittén</b>
11.45-12.45	<b>Lunch</b>
12.45-14.00	<b>Workshop / Panel discussion key findings (who can be in the panel?)</b>
14.00-14.15	<b>Coffee break</b>
14.15-15.30	<b>Wrap-up of Workshop 14.15-14.45</b> <b>14.45-15.30 Concluding Panel</b>
15.45	<b>Workshop / final words (N.N.)</b>
Evening / day before / day after	<b>Side events: e.g. dinner – study-trip?</b>

**Invitee suggestion:**

- EK-R member
- Representatives from the national level (SE/NO/FI)
- European Association of Border Regions (Ann-Sofie, Martin Guillermo Ramirez)
- Representative from border committees in other regions in Europe (E.g. Poland/Germany, Germany/Switzerland).
- Brussels - representatives for lifting the dimension EU/non-EU border regions.
- Key local stakeholders / interviewees