



**Interreg  
North Sea**



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FREIIA



Høgskolen i Østfold

**INTER - ISLAND**

**PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT**

**GIVE LOCALS FIRST RIGHT TO BUY OR RENT**

**WP4.3; ØSTFOLD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

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# INTER-ISLANDS PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT

The Inter-Island Product and Brand Proposals presented in this report have been developed within the framework of the FREIIA project (Facilitating Resilience Embracing Islands Innovation Approaches), part of the EU Interreg North Sea Region Programme.

The initiative aims to strengthen the innovation capacity and long-term resilience of small European island communities by connecting research-based understanding with the everyday realities, knowledge, and aspirations of local people.

Each proposal is rooted in fieldwork and dialogue, offering a grounded response to real challenges identified by island residents themselves. The work addresses shared concerns such as seasonal economic dependence, youth outmigration, limited housing opportunities, and the need for sustainable value creation that respects local identity and community life. Guided by design thinking and co-creation principles, the proposals combine analysis, creativity, and collaboration to generate practical, transferable solutions that emerge from, and belong to the communities they serve.

A defining strength of these proposals is their inter-island character. Instead of treating each island as an isolated case, they build on shared experiences, common challenges, and complementary strengths within the FREIIA network. This collaboration enables the exchange of ideas, models, and practices between islands such as Hvaler (Norway), Schiermonnikoog (Netherlands), Bornholm (Denmark), Koster (Sweden), Groix, and Ouessant (France). Together, these islands form a living laboratory for sustainable innovation, a space where local insight and experimentation contribute to regional learning and collective growth.

Taken together, the proposals illustrate how locally grounded innovation can advance broader European goals of resilience, inclusion, and circular transition. Each follows a shared framework outlining the target group, identified challenges and opportunities, proposed solutions, implementation needs, and expected impacts. Collectively, they embody FREIIA's core ambition: to empower islands to learn from one another, to innovate with and for their communities, and to show that genuine sustainability begins with cooperation, creativity, and care for place and people.

Among these inter-island proposals, Give Locals First Right to Buy or Rent focuses on securing affordable housing and strengthening long-term community stability on the islands. The concept introduces a structured "locals-first" policy that prioritizes permanent residents when homes are sold or rented. By ensuring that housing remains accessible to those who live and work on the islands year-round, the initiative helps preserve local identity, supports demographic renewal, and provides a model that can be adapted across the FREIIA network.

# INTER ISLAND PRODUCT / BRAND: GIVE LOCALS FIRST RIGHT TO BUY OR RENT

## INTER ISLAND - PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT 4.0



### ISLAND & IDEA TITLE

BORNHOLM, KOSTER, GROIX, OUESSANT,  
SCHIERMONNIKOOG  
GIVE LOCALS FIRST RIGHT TO BUY OR RENT



### TARGET GROUP

LOCAL RESIDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
STRUGGLING TO ACCESS AFFORDABLE,  
LONG-TERM HOUSING; MUNICIPALITIES AND  
PROPERTY OWNERS AIMING TO RETAIN  
LOCAL POPULATIONS.



### PROBLEM AND OPPORTUNITY

A HIGH SHARE OF HOMES IS OWNED OR  
RENTED BY NON-RESIDENTS, PUSHING  
LOCALS OUT OF THE HOUSING MARKET. A  
LOCAL-FIRST FRAMEWORK CAN SECURE  
HOMES FOR RESIDENTS AND SUSTAIN  
COMMUNITY LIFE.



### SOLUTION

INTRODUCE A STRUCTURED "LOCALS-FIRST"  
SYSTEM GIVING PERMANENT RESIDENTS  
PURCHASE OR RENTAL PRIORITY BEFORE  
EXTERNAL BUYERS. IMPLEMENT THROUGH  
MUNICIPAL POLICY OR VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS  
SUPPORTED BY A HOUSING REGISTRY.



### WHAT ALREADY EXISTS?

MUNICIPAL HOUSING REGISTRIES AND  
ACTIVE PROPERTY MARKETS EXIST BUT  
LACK FORMAL PRIORITY RULES FOR LOCALS.



### WHAT IS NEEDED?

POLICY FRAMEWORK, COOPERATION BETWEEN  
MUNICIPALITIES, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND AGENTS,  
PLUS A SIMPLE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AND LEGAL  
COMPLIANCE REVIEW.



### WHO IMPLEMENTS IT?

KOSTER: STRÖMSTAD KOMMUN  
BORNHOLM: BORNHOLMS REGIONSKOMMUNE  
GROIX: MAIRIE DE GROIX  
OUESSANT: MAIRIE D'OUESSANT  
SCHIERMONNIKOOG: GEMEENTE SCHIERMONNIKOOG



### WHEN IS IT FEASIBLE?

A PILOT CAN BEGIN WITHIN 6–12 MONTHS  
AFTER MUNICIPAL APPROVAL AND GUIDELINE  
DEVELOPMENT.



### EXPECTED IMPACTS

IMPROVED HOUSING ACCESS FOR LOCALS AND YOUNG  
FAMILIES, STRONGER POPULATION STABILITY, AND  
REVITALIZED ISLAND COMMUNITIES.



### RISK FACTORS AND MITIGATION

#### STRATEGIES

POTENTIAL LEGAL OR OWNERSHIP OBJECTIONS  
MITIGATED THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS,  
TRANSPARENT PROCESSES, AND CLEAR  
COMMUNICATION OF SHARED BENEFITS.



### POSSIBLE FUNDING OR BUSINESS

#### MODEL

MUNICIPAL FUNDS FOR SETUP, REGIONAL OR  
EU ISLAND PROGRAMS, AND POTENTIAL TAX  
INCENTIVES FOR COMPLIANT PROPERTY  
OWNERS.



### SUGGESTED NEXT

#### STEPS

DRAFT THE LOCAL-FIRST POLICY, CONSULT LEGAL  
AND REALESTATE STAKEHOLDERS, LAUNCH A PILOT  
MUNICIPALITY, AND REFINE BEFORE SCALING TO  
OTHER ISLANDS.

Islands: Koster, Hvaler, Groix, Ouessant, Bornholm, Schiermonnikoog

Title: **Give Locals First Right to Buy or Rent**



### 1. Target group

The initiative targets local residents and young people living on the island who face challenges accessing affordable, permanent housing. It also involves municipalities and property owners seeking to ensure that housing remains available to local residents rather than being used primarily for tourism or seasonal purposes.

### 2. Problem and opportunity

Many island homes are currently bought or rented by non-residents or seasonal visitors. This trend has made it increasingly difficult for local families, young people, and essential workers to find suitable long-term housing. As a result, depopulation and reduced community stability threaten the islands' social and economic sustainability.

The opportunity lies in introducing a structured locals-first policy that prioritizes permanent residents when homes are sold or rented. Such a framework would secure access to housing for those who contribute to the island community year-round, support demographic renewal, and strengthen local identity.

### 3. Your solution

The proposal introduces a locals-first system that grants island residents priority to purchase or rent available housing before it is offered externally. The framework can be implemented through municipal regulation, voluntary agreements, or incentive schemes for property owners who support local housing access. A municipal or community-based registry will list available homes, and a defined priority period (e.g. 3–6 months) will be established for local buyers or renters. Coordination with real estate agents and housing owners will ensure transparent and equitable processes. The system will be supported by digital tools and communication through local information channels to ensure broad accessibility.

#### **4. What already exists?**

Most islands already have functioning housing markets and registries managed by municipalities or real estate agents. However, these systems do not currently include mechanisms guaranteeing priority access for local residents. While some islands maintain informal practices that favor locals, they lack structure, transparency, and legal legitimacy.

#### **5. What is needed?**

Successful implementation requires a clear policy framework or set of municipal guidelines defining locals-first procedures, as well as collaboration among municipalities, property owners, and real estate agents. An administrative system must be established to manage offers, deadlines, and monitoring. A legal review is also necessary to ensure the system complies with property law and anti-discrimination regulations.

#### **6. Who implements it?**

The primary responsibility lies with municipal authorities, who will collaborate with property owners, local organizations, and real estate agents. Community groups can play a supporting role by identifying local housing needs, assisting in awareness campaigns, and ensuring compliance with established guidelines.

#### **7. When is it feasible?**

A pilot phase can begin within 6 to 12 months after developing local policy guidelines and securing municipal approval. The pilot will provide a foundation for scaling the model across other FREIIA partner islands.

#### **8. Expected impacts**

The initiative is expected to improve access to affordable housing for local residents and young families, promote population stability, and strengthen long-term community cohesion. By preserving housing for permanent residents, the project supports balanced demographic development and sustainable island living.

#### **9. Risk factors and mitigation**

Potential risks include legal challenges related to property rights, resistance from property owners, or insufficient enforcement capacity. These risks can be mitigated by initially introducing voluntary agreements, ensuring transparent and fair procedures, and maintaining ongoing dialogue to demonstrate the benefits for both residents and property owners.

### **10. Possible funding or business model**

Funding can be provided through municipal budgets for administration and setup, regional or EU island development funds, or targeted housing programs. Additional incentives, such as reduced property taxes or benefits for owners who prioritize local buyers and renters, can further encourage participation and compliance.

### **11. Suggested next steps**

The first step is to draft a local-first housing policy proposal and consult legal advisors and key real estate stakeholders to ensure regulatory compliance. A pilot version should then be tested in one municipality, with monitoring and evaluation used to refine the model before wider implementation.

# STAKEHOLDER MAP

## KOSTER

Local Government	Strömstad Kommun
Local Development	Koster Framtid AB
Academic Partners	University of Gothenburg
Academic Partners	Högskolen Väst
Local Sponsorship	Kläpphagen Koster
Local Sponsorship	ICA Sydkoster
Local Sponsorship	Torghatten AB
Community Collaborators	Kosterhavet Nature Center

## BORNHOLM

Local Government	Bornholms Regionskommune
Academic Partners	University of College Copenhagen
Local Sponsorship	Torvehal Bornholm
Local Sponsorship	Diva Secondhand De Luxe
Community Collaborators	Destination Bornholm ApS
Community Collaborators	University of College Copenhagen (Campus Bornholm)

## GROIX

Local Government	Mairie de Groix
Academic Partners	Université de Bretagne Sud
Local Sponsorship	Coopérative maritime de Groix
Local Sponsorship	Hotel La Marine Groix
Local Sponsorship	Les Garçon du Port
Community Collaborators	Écomusée de l'Île de Groix

## OUESSANT

Local Government	Mairie d'Ouessant
Academic Partners	Université de Brest
Local Sponsorship	Compagnie maritime Penn Ar Bed
Local Sponsorship	Sport Ouessant Spa
Community Collaborators	Musée des Phares et Balises

## SCHIERMONNIKOOG

Local Government	Gemeente Schiermonnikoog
Academic Partners	University of Groningen
Local Sponsorship	VVV Schiermonnikoog
Community Collaborators	Nationaal Park Schiermonnikoog

## ROLE DEFINITIONS

- **Local Government** - Provides the overall administrative framework.
- **Local Development** - Handle practical implementation and logistics.
- **Academic Partner** - Enters a formal agreements to send students; provides academic supervision and credit.
- **Local Sponsorship** - Offer sponsorship/fees for research, especially related to the marine national park or small-scale retail/services.
- **Community Collaborators** - Acts as a mentors and knowledge providers, collaborating heavily on environmental or sociological research.

