



**Interreg
North Sea**



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FREIIA



Høgskolen i Østfold

INTER - ISLAND PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT ISLAND WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

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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, Island Work Experience Program focuses on connecting people with the everyday work life of the islands. The concept offers short 1-2 week job-shadowing stays where participants can experience several local professions and sectors, guided by local mentors. By combining learning, community engagement, and practical experience, the initiative helps newcomers discover real opportunities while supporting local employers in attracting new workers. Through this shared model, the FREIIA islands strengthen cooperation, knowledge exchange, and long-term resilience.

INTER ISLAND PRODUCT/BRAND: ISLAND WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

INTER ISLAND - PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT 9.0



ISLAND & IDEA TITLE

HVALER, KOSTER, GROIX,
SCHEIRMONNIKOOG, OUESSANT, BORNHOLM

ISLAND WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM



TARGET GROUP

YOUNG PEOPLE, STUDENTS, AND POTENTIAL
NEWCOMERS SEEKING SHORT-TERM WORK
EXPERIENCES ON THE ISLANDS; LOCAL
EMPLOYERS AND MUNICIPALITIES WANTING
TO ATTRACT NEW WORKERS.



PROBLEM AND OPPORTUNITY

MANY ISLANDS LACK LABOR AND STRUGGLE
TO RECRUIT NEW RESIDENTS. A SHORT,
GUIDED WORK-EXPERIENCE STAY HELPS
PEOPLE EXPLORE ISLAND LIFE BEFORE
COMMITTING LONG TERM.



SOLUTION

INA 1-2 WEEK JOB-SHADOWING PROGRAM
WHERE PARTICIPANTS ROTATE THROUGH
SEVERAL LOCAL JOBS IN DIFFERENT
SECTORS, SUPPORTED BY MENTORS,
HOUSING, AND MUNICIPAL COORDINATION.



WHAT ALREADY EXISTS?

STRONG LOCAL EMPLOYERS, NETWORKS,
AND PREVIOUS INITIATIVES LIKE
WORKATION AND ACADEMIC RESIDENCY
PROVE THAT SHORT RESIDENCIES CAN LINK
NEWCOMERS WITH COMMUNITIES.



WHAT IS NEEDED?

COORDINATED COORDINATION, SHORT-
TERM HOUSING, LOCAL MENTORS, AND
MODEST FUNDING FOR TRAVEL, INSURANCE,
AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS ISLANDS.



WHO IMPLEMENTS IT?

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



WHEN IS IT FEASIBLE?

PILOT CAN START WITHIN A YEAR ON ONE
OR TWO ISLANDS AND LATER EXPAND BASED
ON FEEDBACK AND DEMAND.



EXPECTED IMPACTS

IMPROVES RECRUITMENT AND SKILLS, BUILDS
UNDERSTANDING OF ISLAND WORK AND
LIFESTYLE, AND STRENGTHENS LOCAL IDENTITY
AND SOCIAL CONNECTION.



RISK FACTORS AND MITIGATION

STRATEGIES

POSSIBLE LOW PARTICIPATION OR
LOGISTICAL ISSUES MITIGATED THROUGH
EARLY COORDINATION, STRONG PROMOTION,
AND MUNICIPAL SUPPORT.



POSSIBLE FUNDING OR BUSINESS

MODEL

EU REGIONAL OR EMPLOYMENT GRANTS,
MUNICIPAL BUDGETS,
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS,
AND SMALL PARTICIPANT FEES ENSURE
SUSTAINABILITY.



SUGGESTED NEXT

STEPS

LAUNCH A PILOT WITH SELECTED HOST
ORGANIZATIONS, DEVELOP ROTATION SCHEDULES,
SECURE FUNDING, AND EVALUATE TO SCALE ACROSS
THE FREIA ISLANDS.

Islands: Hvaler, Koster, Ouessant, Bornholm, Groix & Schiermonnikoog
Title: **Island Work Experience Program**



1. Target group

The initiative targets young adults, students, and potential newcomers interested in exploring work opportunities and lifestyles on small islands. It also benefits local employers, municipalities, and community organizations seeking to attract new workers and residents.

2. Problem and opportunity

Many islands struggle with labor shortages, especially in seasonal industries, public services, and specialized professions. At the same time, people curious about island life often hesitate to relocate without first understanding the realities of working and living there.

A short-term job shadowing program creates a bridge between these two groups - turning curiosity into real-life experience and potential recruitment.

3. Your solution

The Island Work Experience Program offers 1–2 week immersive stays where participants can explore multiple local jobs during their visit. They rotate through different sectors, such as hospitality, fishing, renewable energy, crafts, and public services to gain a holistic understanding of island life and employment opportunities.

Each participant is matched with local mentors and receives accommodation and guidance. Municipalities and businesses coordinate the program, ensuring both meaningful learning and community integration.

4. What already exists?

Most islands already have strong local employers, tourism companies, and municipal networks capable of hosting short-term placements. Existing programs like Workation and Academic Island Residency demonstrate that structured mobility and short residencies can successfully connect newcomers with local communities.

5. What is needed?

A coordination system to match participants with host organizations, short-term accommodation options, and local mentors.

Basic funding to cover travel, insurance, and logistics is also required, along with marketing support to promote the program across the FREIIA islands.

6. Who implements it?

The program should be coordinated by municipalities in collaboration with local businesses, employment offices, and educational institutions.

Support from regional development agencies and tourism boards ensures visibility and integration into broader recruitment and innovation strategies.

7. When is it feasible?

A pilot project can be launched within 12 months, involving one or two islands initially. After evaluating participant feedback and community impact, the model can be scaled up to include all FREIIA partner islands.

8. Expected impacts

The program is expected to create positive economic, social, educational, and cultural effects across the participating islands. Economically, it can help address labor shortages and support local businesses in finding new talent. Socially, it strengthens the connection between newcomers and residents while encouraging community renewal. The educational impact lies in offering participants practical learning and insight into diverse career paths. Culturally, it promotes understanding of island lifestyles and local identity, contributing to stronger and more resilient island communities.

9. Risk factors and mitigation

Potential risks include limited participation, logistical challenges, and insufficient host capacity. These can be mitigated through targeted promotion towards universities and job centers, early collaboration with local employers, and flexible scheduling supported by municipalities. Clear coordination, funding for accommodation, and phased implementation will help ensure smooth operation and community acceptance.

10. Possible funding or business model

Funding may come from EU regional and employment grants, municipal budgets, or partnerships with businesses benefiting from the program.

A small participation fee or corporate sponsorships could support long-term sustainability.

11. Suggested next steps

The next steps involve identifying suitable pilot islands and establishing partnerships with willing host organizations that can offer a range of work experiences. Once the framework is in place, a rotation model including several job sectors per participant should be developed to ensure variety and meaningful engagement. Funding for travel, coordination, and accommodation must be secured to guarantee smooth implementation. Following the first pilot period, an evaluation phase should assess participant experiences and community outcomes, providing the foundation for scaling the program across the FREIIA network.

STAKEHOLDER MAP

KOSTER

Local Government Strömstad Kommun

Local Business Koster Marin AB

Local Business Kläpphagen

Local Education Kosters Samhällsförening

Local Industry/NGO Naturum Kosterhavet

GROIX

Local Government Mairie de Groix

Local Business Hotel Le Ty Mad

Local Business Hotel La Marine

Local Education Collège de Groix

Local Industry/NGO Groix et Nature

BORNHOLM

Local Government Bornholms Regionskommune

Local Business Destination Bornholm

Local Business Bornholmslinjen

Local Education University of College Copenhagen (Campus Bornholm)

Local Industry/NGO Maker's Island Secretariat

OUESSANT

Local Government Mairie d'Ouessant

Local Business Centre Nautique de Kornog

Local Business Sport Ouessant Spa

Local Education APE École Jacques Burel et Collège des Îles du Ponant

Local Industry/NGO Ouessant Vend de Bout

HVALER

Local Government Hvaler Kommune

Local Business Hvaler Næringsforening

Local Business Fjordtaxi Hvaler

Local Education Hvaler Barne- og Ungdomsskole

Local Industry/NGO Skjærhalden Fisk & Sjømat

SCHIERMONNIKOOG

Local Government Gemeente Schiermonnikoog

Local Business VVV Schiermonnikoog

Local Business Hotel van der Werff

Local Education Samenwerkingsschool Yn de mande

Local Industry/NGO Van Schier

ROLE DEFINITIONS

- **Local Government** - Provides official endorsement, manages administrative coordination, and offers public sector work placements.
- **Local Business** - Recruits private sector companies for hosting work experience and facilitates crucial logistical support, such as travel or participant housing.
- **Local Education** - Acts as the primary recruitment channel for local youth and provides the social structure and meeting places for participant integration.
- **Local Industry/NGO** - Offers specialized work placements unique to the island's core economy, nature, sustainability, or unique local crafts.

