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# CORA extension

**INTERREG NSR - Call 12**

Intercommunale Leiedal / atene KOM

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## INTROduction

Within the CORA project, over the past three years, a unique yet simple model has been developed and implemented to support digitization in the most rural areas with the aim to close the digital gap between remote and urbanized areas. The model is built on three pillars, digital **services**, digital **skills** and digital **infrastructure**, three key components in which the digital divide is reflected. By thinking about these three components, local governments obtain a better understanding of the challenges their region is facing. Through nine regional pilots and by applying various developed e-learnings and trainings, the CORA project has provided the necessary support and guiding measures in the partner regions to achieve more digitization in the rural regions.

The project has now entered its final six months. Based on outputs and results achieved, the positive experiences in the pilot regions, we now want to take the next important steps and actively spread the CORA knowledge and the developed training material further in the North Sea region.

We build further on the existing pillars and validated CORA tools, to apply them on **partner's neighbouring municipalities** to also make them think about their digital infrastructure, services and skills. As the landscape of municipalities and their digital readiness is quite heterogenic, we will carry out a basis analysis to understand the readiness/maturity of these regions and define together their priorities. But it doesn't stop there. In CORA all participating partners have been using the training courses and modules. By applying the CORA model, the hands-on support provided by the CORA partners and the implementation of the developed e-training courses, we want to work with each municipality or region to understand their needs, think deep and create their own 'digital agenda' for the future or set up new thematic action plans and initiatives.

This extension will allow us to enlarge the CORA community and enhance the awareness and abilities of local and regional authorities beyond the CORA partnership with the aim of increasing **resilience** and **future proof rural areas** through digitalisation.

## 1 WHAT will we do

The CORA project has developed a unique, simple yet also comprehensive and widely applicable model, based on the 3 known pillars infrastructure, services and skills. In addition, valuable pilot experiences led to great expertise and creation of useful materials, tools, e-trainings, learnings and policy briefs. In the extended CORA activities, we will **build further on the existing pillars and validated tools** because their relevance was already proved within the project lifetime, but certainly remains and even grows in importance in months and years ahead of us. Rural areas already needed to bridge a digitalisation gap and become more resilient, moreover the circumstances caused by Covid-19 even increased the awareness of their needs and accelerates the urgency and importance of (well considered) digital transition and change.

Not only will we build further upon CORA outcomes, we will also apply them beyond the area represented within the CORA partnership. We will transfer awareness, knowledge, experience and expertise throughout the North Sea region. We will do this by **reaching out to neighbouring municipalities and regions**, combined with a set variables and criteria accessing a wide range of municipalities representative for the NSR.

The extended CORA activities consist of reaching out to and engaging with other communities and the specific challenges they face. In a first stage, the CORA partners will be **trained** by applying the provided activities on their own municipality, followed by expanding towards the wider region in a second phase by **providing hands-on support**.

The aim of the CORA extension is to develop a method or guide to **enable local authorities and let them think about their digital infrastructure, services and skills**, to map their challenges, develop their own digital agenda and step up the the digital divide.

## 2 WHY do we need to do this?

The CORA project was born out of the knowledge that rural areas needed to catch up in terms of digital transformation in order to close the gap with more urban areas. The CORA outcomes now prove to be of high value, worth building further on to and putting into practice within a wider NSR.

The introduction of Covid-19 exacerbates the already existing needs and challenges municipalities face. The demand and sense of urgency for digitalisation rise. Instead of impulsive implementations of short-term digital changes, municipalities need guidance and support to develop their own roadmap existing of short- and long-term actions with the aim of increasing their digital readiness and resilience.

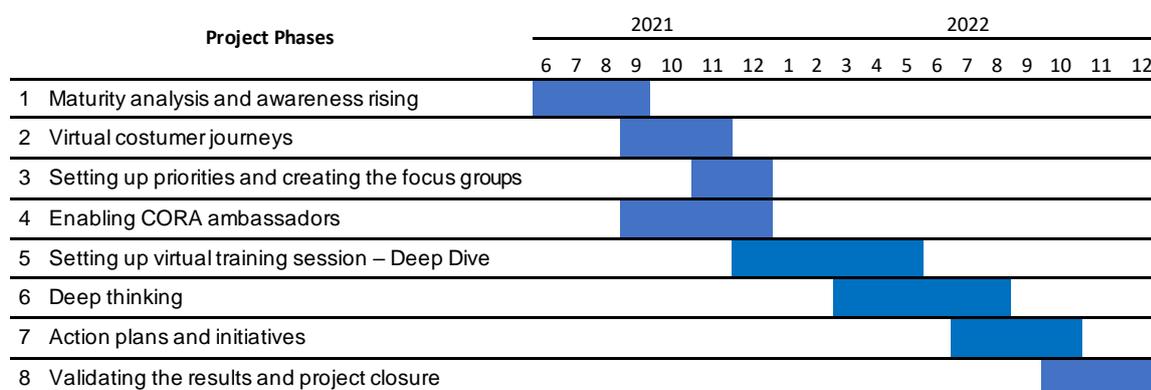
### 3 HOW will we achieve this?

The CORA extension opts for a step-by-step approach. These are:

Phase	aim	Methods/Tools	Potential outcomes
 1	Maturity analysis and awareness rising Where the neighbouring municipalities are with regard to digital transformation, and what could be their potential target!	Maturity analysis Tool + First workshop (exchange/interview)	Qualitative and quantitative status with regard to digitalisation
 2	Virtual customer journeys Where the municipalities aim to go, what are their needs (priorities) and what would be the tailor-made roadmap/quick win strategies/first steps for them	Customer journey	List of priorities with regard to digital transformation – potential analysis
 3	Setting up priorities and creating focus groups Selection of the potential guiding measures for the neighbouring municipalities depending on their needs from the pool of online courses in the CORA project	Delphi	2/3 priority themes for each region
 4	Enabling CORA ambassadors Enabling/equipping the CORA municipalities as the trainers/ambassador + finetuning the modules depending on the local needs!	Train the Trainer	Enabled trainers + fine-tuned modules Translating the modules in the local language (TBD)
 5	Setting up virtual training session – Deep Dive The ambassadors + the local university partners provide training sessions to the neighbouring municipalities	Virtual training sessions (interactive)	X training sessions
 6	Deep thinking The neighbouring municipalities will start thinking	Structured modules for action plans	Draft concept for action plans/initiatives
 7	Action plans and initiatives The neighbouring municipalities define concrete action plans and initiatives to improve their digital readiness. We advise them on their way.	Digital potential analysis. Constant advice of CORA extension team	X concrete set of measures and initiatives

### 4 Duration of the project

Priliminary the duration for the extension is planned for 18 Monthes. This can be however further elaborated in discussion with the participating partners. There is the possibility to continue the extension until end of June 2023. This however, needs to be in line with the planned activities and the available budget. The indicative draft time plan is presented below.



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## 5 WHO will do this

### 5.1 Partnership

To achieve this the expertise of the CORA partnership is needed. Participation within these extended CORA activities is 100% voluntary. Partners who choose not to join become inactive as the CORA project gets extended.

The extended project consortium of partners preferably consists of:

- Project management team: Leiedal + atene KOM (2)
- Municipalities and regions (7)
- Universities (3)

### 5.2 Finance and funding

Total estimated budget: 720.000€  
(from which ERDF funding 50%: 360.000)

Budget available per partner: 50.000 to 60.000€  
(from which cofunding by each partner: 25.000 to 30.000€)

### 5.3 Administrative needs and deadline

New letters of intent signed by participating partners, provided by PMT

**Deadline of submission – 19th March 2021**

Further reading on the call 12: <https://northsearegion.eu/about-the-programme/programme-news/watch-again-call-12-webinar-and-ga/>

## 6 Your contact

For any questions, please feel free to contact:

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