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# Light Challenge '26

\*

## Into The Great Wide Open

project document



DARKER SKY

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<b>What is the Light Challenge?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Light Challenge '26 * Into The Great Wide Open - Glowing Nature   DARKER SKY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Which partners are involved?</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Context of the ITGWO art route</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Project principles</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Calendar</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>What, when, and how?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Rules of the game</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Learn more about the partners</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Photocredits</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>attachment 1</b>	



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# What is the Light Challenge?

The Light Challenge is a design challenge that was first organized in 2011. Since then, the Light Challenge has challenged students from various programs to develop innovative lighting concepts for public spaces. Each edition focuses on a current social and spatial challenge, linked to sustainability, biodiversity, circular technology, and the experience of darkness. The Light Challenge was initiated by the Municipality of Heerenveen and supported by a network of municipalities, educational institutions, designers, and knowledge partners. Since 2023, it has been part of the broader European DARKER SKY program (<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/darker-sky>). The Light Challenge is being made possible this year under the banner of the EU Interreg North Sea project DARKER SKY.

Previous editions took place in collaboration with the Floriade Expo 2022, among others, and resulted in a series of experimental and sustainable prototypes and installations that combine nature, technology, and design.

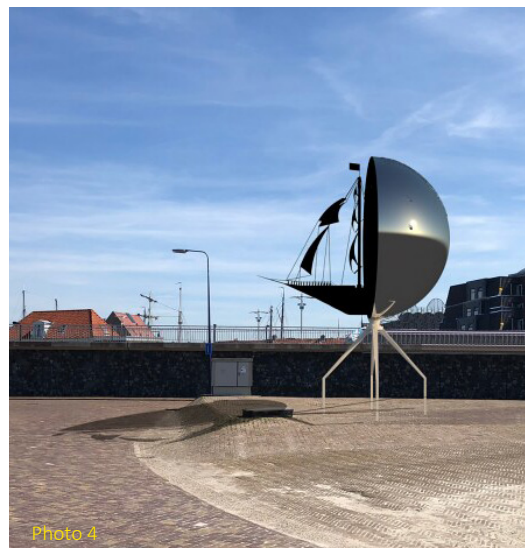




Photo 5



Photo 6

This edition explores a new route and focuses on preserving darkness and visual orientation in a nature reserve that serves as a temporary festival location. The Light Challenge offers a multidisciplinary development and presentation process in which students develop new lighting experiences that will be visible to the public as a prototype or presentation during ITGWO 2026.



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# Light Challenge '26 \* ITGWO

Glowing Nature | DARKER SKY

For the 2026 edition, the Light Challenge will be linked to Into The Great Wide Open on Vlieland. This collaboration offers a unique opportunity to connect the theme “Glowing Nature - DARKER SKY” with the sustainable and culture-driven character of ITGWO, and to literally and figuratively give a new generation of designers the space to experiment with light, darkness, and sustainable technology on the island.

The goal is not only to develop an innovative darkness and light solution for the festival’s art route signage, but also to raise awareness around darkness, energy, ecology, and human experience.





# Which partners are involved?

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Interreg North Sea DARKER SKY

<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/darker-sky>



Municipality of Heerenveen

<https://www.heerenveen.nl/>



C.Light.Wise

<https://clightwise.com/en/>



Landmakers Cooperatie U.A.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/landmakers-cooperatie-u-a/>



Into The Great Wide Open

<https://intothegreatwideopen.nl/en/>



Lab Vlieland

<https://labvlieland.nl/>



Staatsbosbeheer

<https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/uit-in-de-natuur/locaties/vlieland>



Municipality of Vlieland

<https://www.vlieland.nl/home>



Acquire

<https://www.acquire.nl/>



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# Assignment

***Create an innovative darkness & lighting concept, and build a sustainable prototype for the signage and routing of the Into The Great Wide Open art route on Vlieland.***

***Be aware of the impact on biodiversity, make use of energy generation at local level from the immediate environment, and give the darkness back to the night.***

The design concerns a temporary installation, which is used annually in this nature reserve. It is important that the lighting design for the route feels intuitive for visitors to follow and gives a sense of discovery, rather than being overly directive.

The new design must be aesthetically appealing and robust, and suitable for frequent use over many consecutive years.

Photo 8



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# Context of the ITGWO art route

Art, more than anything else, can change the way we look at the world around us. One of the pillars of the festival is therefore the multidisciplinary art program, which takes place between and around the various stages, in the woods, dunes, beach, and in the village.

Each year, ITGWO chooses a theme that runs like a common thread through the art program. It brings the different parts together and adds context or a new perspective to the collection of artistic expressions. We (ITGWO) share this theme in advance as a source of inspiration with the artists who create new work for us.



Photo 9



Photo 10

## Signage and orientation

During the day, wooden arrows were used for signage for the first time in 2025. Before that, there were no signs at all, because we (ITGWO) think it's great when people explore on their own. The arrows worked quite well, though they are not clearly visible in the evening.



Photo 11



Photo 12

All artworks are marked with a small barrel bearing the name and a light that can be turned on in the evening: red indicates route lighting (you should go that way) and blue indicates that there is a work of art there.

This needs to be updated, and Light Challenge participants are asked to design a new solution for this.

On part of the route, cables with red spotlights were also used. Previously, there were only barrels to indicate the location of an artwork, which were placed far apart and had to be switched on and off manually twice a day (and sometimes ended up in disco mode). The red light was nice in a way, but it was much more distracting and can only be used if the works are not too far apart.

In several photos, you can see red lights lit in the background as a landmark.

In some photos, you can also see white-yellow stringlights: this is how the general route between the three main stages (Sportveld, Open Plek, IJsbaan) was indicated.



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 15

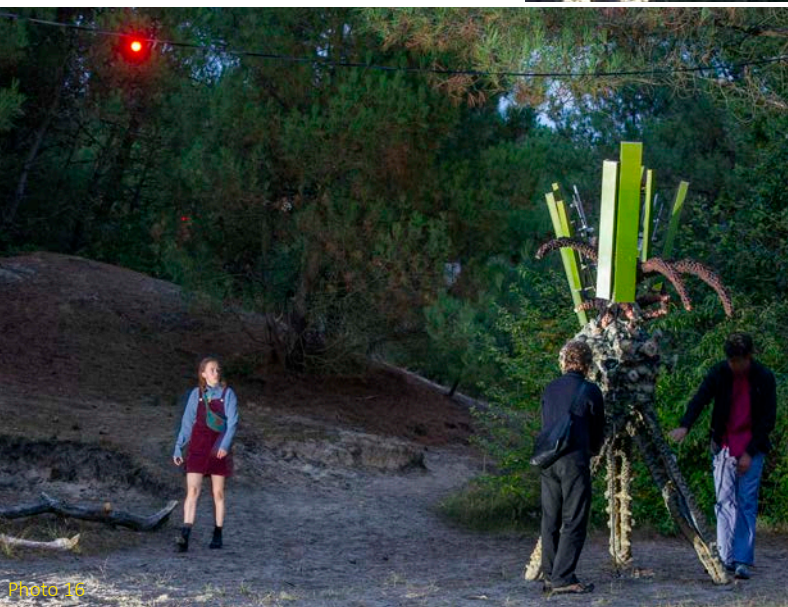


Photo 16



Photo 17



Photo 18



Photo 19



## Art route 2025 for reference

Below you can see last year's map, which gives an idea of the length of the route. Last year, it took about 40 minutes to walk the route without stopping.



Image 1



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# Project principles

- **Art Route**

This concerns the signage and routing of the art route, not the lighting of the artworks.

The artworks can be viewed both during the day and after sunset, and the route is accessible to all island visitors. The current solution needs replacing.

This is a temporary installation, which is used annually in this nature reserve. The new design should be able to be used for multiple times and many consecutive years.

The locations of the artworks are determined annually.
- **Light - Darkness**

Darkness is important. Make sure your solution doesn't contain and spreads more light than the currently used installation.

Explore the effect on the environment and user, examining this from different perspectives.
- **Materials**

Use materials as sustainable as possible. Consider circular and regenerative materials. Research and explain how your solution is future-proof and contributes to CO2 reduction compared to current solutions.
- **Energy**

The island is essentially a large nature reserve with beaches, dunes, and forests, where electricity isn't available everywhere. Explore smart, locally applicable technologies to power your solution and make it easy to switch on and off.

- ① **Fixation, use & maintenance**  
Once the festival is over and everything is cleared away, no permanent changes may be made to the area. Keep this in mind when designing, mounting products, and using the area.
- ② **Production**  
If your design were to completely replace the routing and signage of the art route next year, what would the implementation process look like? Provide an user / businesscase with a general outline and an estimation of costs.



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# Calendar

- **10 February '26** | Online KICK-OFF and introduction of Light Challenge '26
- **3 March '26** | Online Masterclass + Q&A
- **24 March '26** | Online Masterclass + Q&A
- **21 April '26** | Online Pecha Kucha style presentation & feedback
- **12 May '26** | Online Workshop 'Test like the best' by INNOFEST 2,5hrs (starting time tbc)
- **2 June '26** | Online Masterclass + Q&A
- **16 June '26** | Online Presentation & feedback
- **25-30 August '26** | Live testing and final presentation at Vlieland (exact data tbc)

All online events are scheduled for Tuesday and are expected to begin at 4 PM.

The masterclasses will last approximately 60 minutes and include a 15-minute Q&A session. They will be recorded, but active participation is encouraged. You will receive an invitation to participate by Acquire, a few days before the online meetings.



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# What, when, and how?

## Deliverables

The Light Challenge program includes several moments where participants, must submit or prepare deliverables.

- **10 February 2026 - Kick Off**

You will start working on the assignment independently from February 10, 2026.

Participants conduct research, both within and outside their field, on the topic of the LC '26 assignment to gain as much knowledge as possible and initiate the design process. Online masterclasses on related topics are offered. This involves translating research and findings into designs and prototypes. By sharing insights, learning from masterclasses, and developing new partnerships, a wealth of knowledge and experience is transferred to the participants.
- **14 April 2026 - Deadline**

Deadline for presentation submission: April 21, as a PDF via email or weTransfer.

Send this to [lightchallenge26@gmail.com](mailto:lightchallenge26@gmail.com) with the subject line 'midterm presentation' + '(your team name)'.

Prepare a presentation of up to 20 slides that illustrates your current project status. Inform the audience about your progress.
- **21 April 2026 – Midterm presentation & feedback**

A Pecha Kucha-style presentation & feedback session, in which teams present their progress to date.

Maximum 20 slides, maximum 20 seconds per slide (fewer slides and time are allowed, more are not). Your presentation will last a maximum of 6 minutes and 40 seconds.

All participants are expected to attend online. This is the opportunity to share and gain knowledge from other participants.

🕒 **12 May 2026 – online workshop “Test Like the Best”  
by INNOFEST**

During this 2.5-hour training, work on your presentation and prototype testing skills.

Note: There are no screens or internet access on Vlieland, so think carefully about how you will present and test the project and prototype.

🕒 **9 June 2026 – deadline**

Deadline for presentation submission: June 16, in PDF format via email or weTransfer.

Send this to [lightchallenge26@gmail.com](mailto:lightchallenge26@gmail.com), with the subject line ‘presentation’ + ‘(your team name)’.

Prepare a presentation of no more than 10 minutes that illustrates your research and design findings and how your prototype is taking shape. Inform the audience about your process.

🕒 **16 June 2026 - presentation & feedback**

Presentation & feedback session: prepare a presentation of no more than 10 minutes (time is very strict). All participants are expected to attend online.

This is the last online contact session before you present and test the prototype live on Vlieland.

Note: There are no screens or internet access on Vlieland, so think carefully about how you will present and test the project and prototype.

🕒 **25-30\* August 2026 - Live testing and final presentation @ITGWO**

Representatives from each group will meet on Vlieland in week 35 (\*exact dates to be announced) to test and present their prototypes to visitors, the municipality of Vlieland, LABVlieland, ITGWO, Staatsbosbeheer, and DARKER SKY partners, and enjoy the festival.\*\*

\*\* There are a limited number of places available. These will be distributed among the participants. This could mean that one or two representatives from each group will present on Vlieland instead of an entire group. More information will be announced as soon as possible.





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# Rules of the game

- The developed concept fits within the Glowing Nature – DARKER SKY theme of the Light Challenge and aligns with the goals of ITGWO, Lab Vlieland, Staatsbosbeheer (State Forestry Service), and the municipality of Vlieland.
- In this project, a team (or individual) will work on the assignment provided by the Light Challenge organization.
- Each participating team (or individual) will develop an innovative and applicable concept and, from there, a prototype that fits within the Light Challenge assignment.
- If one or more participating Light Challenge teams deem it necessary to collaborate, this can be used to achieve an excellent result.
- Each team (or soloist) has a work budget of €XX\* available to develop a concept and develop it into a working prototype that will be presented during the Light Challenge finals at ITGWO 2026.
- Any team (or soloist) can request the budget; an itemized invoice must be submitted.

\* Details regarding the work budget will be communicated to participants at a later stage during the project.

- The organization acquires the right to use the submitted designs for publicity, publications, exhibitions, and symposia, provided the source is acknowledged for one year after submission. The entrant indemnifies the organization against all third-party claims for copyright infringement. Participants, jury members, or anyone other than the organization are not permitted to publicize matters substantively related to the submissions before the organizer's decision has been announced.
- All participants and partners will agree to the rights and ownership rules as described in Fact Sheet 27 – Intellectual property rights and ownership of project investments (see attachment)



# Learn more about the partners

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## Interreg North Sea DARKER SKY

<https://www.interregnorthsea.eu/darker-sky>

DARKER SKY is an Interreg North Sea project (ERDF funding) which aims at reducing light pollution and increasing biodiversity and ecological connectivity in the North Sea Region (France, Germany, the Netherlands & Denmark) by providing municipalities and ports with innovative measuring, monitoring and co-design methods for the implementation of environmentally sound and energy-efficient light reduction benefitting biodiversity and communities.



## Municipality of Heerenveen

<https://www.heerenveen.nl/>

As initiator of the Light Challenge design competition in 2011, the municipality of Heerenveen has brought change to the world of public lighting by looking/doing things differently and working together with education, entrepreneurs and government. An initiative that receives national recognition and is appreciated. In addition, it is now a unique collaboration in the field of lighting, sustainability, energy, green, waste reuse and innovation.



## C.Light.Wise

<https://clightwise.com/en/>

Carlijn Timmermans, founder and lighting designer of C.Light.Wise, and organizer of Light Challenge '26 acquired by Municipality Heerenveen.

The Light Challenge is very close to her heart and as a lighting designer she is thrilled to be able to organise this edition. Twice she had had the opportunity to coach a student team and also twice she has been part of the jury panel. The value the Light Challenge has for people, the environment and the field of light in the broad sense of the word, and the value it

gives to participants, partners and users of the project areas is indescribably unique. The chance to work with fellow students from different studies on a real-life issue is an experience that will stay with you forever and challenges you to look beyond your comfort zone. Everyone brings their own knowledge about (artificial) light and darkness; designers, biologists, researchers, you name it. The trick is to work together in this. The knowledge that experts share through Masterclasses and that teammates from different disciplines can share with each other is a big plus to the standard study curriculum.

Now that we have the world of innovation and technology at our disposal and can illuminate anything you can think of, it does not mean that this is necessarily a good thing. In my opinion, it is needed to go back to basics and investigate why, for whom or what, when and how we use (artificial) light. In this way, we can reduce light pollution and make our environment more liveable for all users. She wishes all students lots of success and fun with this Light Challenge and look forward to the research, design process and prototypes!

- Take notice of what light does, to everything -



### **Landmakers Cooperatie U.A.**

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/landmakers-cooperatie-u-a/>

Landmakers Coöperatie U.A. is a Dutch cooperative of designers, makers and facilitators working at the intersection of spatial design, culture, ecology and community development. Landmakers specialises in participatory processes, placemaking and regenerative area development, translating complex societal challenges into concrete, place based actions. The cooperative has extensive experience in

European cooperation projects and focuses on activating residents, public authorities and organisations around themes such as biodiversity, climate adaptation and the quality of the living environment.



### **ITGWO**

<https://intothegreatwideopen.nl/en/>

Into The Great Wide Open has been a festival since its first edition in 2009 where things are done a little differently and experimentation is given space. Because the island and what happens on stage inspire both the audience, the artists, and the organization. This leads to innovation in many areas: on stage, in the work of artists, in social and technological aspects, and in the way the festival is organized: a large team sees the festival as a playground and laboratory, a place where they can express something that may not yet be possible in everyday practice: a temporary world, a performance of how things could also be.



### **Lab Vlieland**

<https://labvlieland.nl/>

Lab Vlieland is a driving force behind the sustainable and circular transition and opens its workshop to ideas, projects, and best practices. Sometimes as a storyteller, sometimes as a connector, but always as an accelerator: Good for the Netherlands and the rest of the world.

A place where science connects with art and culture, where dialogue and experiment seamlessly intertwine. A testing ground where students, artists, and entrepreneurs come together to inspire and motivate one another.



### **Staatsbosbeheer**

<https://www.staatsbosbeheer.nl/uit-in-de-natuur/locaties/vlieland>

Vlieland is synonymous with beaches. But the second-smallest Wadden Island offers more. From the towering Vuurboetsduin, crowned by the red lighthouse, you can see almost the entire island: forests, salt marshes, dunes, mudflats, and sand. At the foot of the lighthouse lies the village, which can be pleasantly bustling.

Peace and quiet reign on the second-smallest Wadden Island, and birds rule the roost. More than a hundred species find a place here to breed, feed, or build up reserves for a long journey north or south. The dike along the Kroon's Polders is the perfect spot for birdwatching.



### **Municipality of Vlieland**

<https://www.vlieland.nl/home>

The entire Netherlands must be climate neutral by 2050. Vlieland has the ambitious goal of achieving this goal even sooner. We are working on this together with residents, businesses, guests, government agencies, and social organizations. Together, we are working to create a livable Vlieland for living, working, and recreation. For now and for the future.



### **Acquire**

<https://www.acquire.nl/>

Acquire Publishing is a media and events company based in Zwolle and believes that by connecting people, they can contribute to creating a beautiful, safe, healthy, and sustainable physical living environment. Acquire creates, shares, collects, and processes knowledge so it can be used by and exchanged between professionals.

Acquire Publishing is hosting the online Light Challenge events.



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# Photo credits

Photo 1 | iStock\_Diana Radicchi

Photo 2 | <https://wallpapersok.com/wallpapers/enchanted-firefly-forest-night-05u52245dfjy85gn.html>

Photo 3 | Light Challenge 2013 - Team Venray

Photo 4 | Light Challenge 2017 - Team Harlingen

Photo 5 | Light Challenge 2021 - 4fstudio bioreactor lighthouse

Photo 6 | Light Challenge 2021 - 4fstudio bioreactor lighthouse

Photo 7 | Vlieland plaatjes

Photo 8 | ITGWO25\_KunstrouteBeleving\_ElskeNissen\_20250828\_210412

Photo 9 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Merlijn Toby\_Psychic Sediment\_DSC6580\_Sander Heezen

Photo 10 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Studio Wantij\_Ik Weet Nog Dat\_DSC6681\_Sander Heezen

Photo 11 | signing art route 2025\_Afra Peetoom

Photo 12 | signing art route 2025\_Afra Peetoom

Photo 13 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Anne Fehres & Luke Conroy\_It's All Right\_DSC6270\_Sander Heezen

Photo 14 | signing art route 2025\_Afra Peetoom

Photo 15 | signing art route 2025\_Afra Peetoom

Photo 16 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Merlijn Toby\_Psychic Sediment\_DSC6569\_Sander Heezen

Photo 17 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Sander Hagelaar\_Lucien\_DSC6203\_Sander Heezen

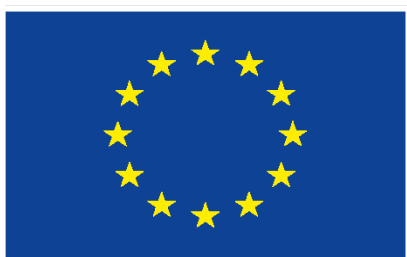
Photo 18 | ITGWO25-30-08\_Kunstroute © Luuk-Roordink-55

Photo 19 | 2025\_ITGWO\_Elsemarijn Bruys\_Resolving\_DSC6609\_Sander Heezen

Photo 20 | ITGWO25\_KunstrouteBeleving\_ElskeNissen\_20250828\_210412

Photo 21 | ITGWO25\_KunstrouteBeleving\_ElskeNissen\_20250828\_205648

Image 1 | ITGWO Map Art Route 2025



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**The Light Challenge is part of:**



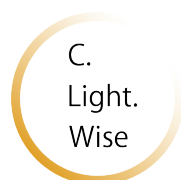
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# Light Challenge '26

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# Into The Great Wide Open

attachment 1



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## Fact Sheet 27 – Intellectual property rights and ownership of project investments

	Valid from	Valid to	Main changes
Version 1	12.05.16		

**Core message:** General programme rules require that all project deliverables and outputs are made available to the general public free of charge. This fact sheet explains exceptions to this rule and sets out the rules on changes of ownership after project closure.

### Background

The programme intervention logic is based on small groups of experts (the project partnership) receiving funding to test new ideas and approaches so that similar organisations throughout the North Sea Region can apply what has been learnt and obtain the same benefits after the end of the project. In this way the small scale outputs of each project can be expected to have a wider impact across the whole programme area. This requires that organisations outside the project partnership can access information on the outputs and how they were achieved.

Grants are also provided in some cases to fund investments for the public good. In such cases it is expected that the equipment and/or infrastructure remain in place at the end of the project and continue to provide the same benefits. As a result there are restrictions on changes of ownership and use after the end of the project.

### Intellectual Property Rights

This section starts by explaining the general rule. Beneficiaries approved under one of the programme's state aid schemes should see the next section.

These rules cover the rights for all materials and ideas developed as part of the project using programme funding even where development has only been part funded by the programme.

- The authors of any material retain at all times the right to be acknowledged as the author of the material



- All materials must be made freely available to the general public in a way and to a level of detail that allows other organisations to replicate the results obtained. Such access should not be subject to restrictions or payment
- It is not possible to claim proprietary rights or to restrict commercial exploitation of project materials

In the event that project materials have been developed based on data or materials provided by a project beneficiary, which are covered by more restrictive rights (e.g. copyright), and which were covered by these rights from before the start of the project, the original restrictive rights continue to apply to the original material – but not to any additional materials developed from them as part of the project.

## Intellectual Property Rights and State Aid

Project beneficiaries approved under either the de minimis state aid scheme or the General Block Exemption may limit access to the materials they produce.

- Beneficiaries who are part of one of the programme's state aid schemes may apply additional rights to materials they produce as part of the project including proprietary rights and the sole right to commercial exploitation
- These rights should not be understood to replace the general programme obligation to publish updates on progress and results achieved but the details of products and/or ideas may be withheld from publication to protect any proprietary rights
- Where projects combine beneficiaries working under an aid scheme with beneficiaries working according to the 'No competitive advantage' rules (see Factsheet 16), the right to withhold material from publication applies only to materials produced exclusively by the beneficiaries covered by the aid scheme. It is not possible for beneficiaries to transfer or assign rights to others.
- Regardless of these provisions, all beneficiaries must at all times make any and all materials available to auditors and programme management bodies as set out in the subsidy contract

## Ownership of project deliverables and outputs

Article 71 of the Common Provisions Regulation (1303/2013) sets out requirements that investments supported for the benefit of the programme area are maintained and continue to provide the same benefit for a reasonable period after the end of the project. In particular, investments in infrastructure or productive investment must be repaid to the programme if within five years of the end of the project:



- The productive activity is stopped or relocated outside the programme area
- Ownership of infrastructure is transferred in such a way that it gives an undue advantage to a firm or public body
- There is a substantial change in the nature, objectives or implementation conditions which undermines the original objectives

All project beneficiaries are required to report all such changes immediately to the programme authorities.

## References

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down Common Provision Regulation, Articles 67-69
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) no 481/2014 of 4 March 2014 Article 3