

INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA PROGRAMME 2014-2020

CITIZENS' SUMMARY

May 2017

What is the INTERREG Atlantic Area Programme?

Territorial cooperation has been an opportunity for the less dynamic regions to establish connections with more dynamic, innovative and prosperous regions and also for the more developed regions to establish exchange networks and cultural, social and economic ties with other territories.

As part of the Regional Policy of the European Union, the INTERREG Atlantic Area is a European funding programme that supports transnational cooperation projects, contributing to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion of 37 Atlantic regions.

The primary features drawing the area together are its **environmental heritage** and **maritime dimension**, as well as a territorial and urban development common pattern based on a majority of intermediate rural areas and a limited number of large metropolitan areas.

Among other points of convergence of the Atlantic Area, the tradition of cooperation, the existing **strong networks** between relevant actors and the strong cultural heritage and identity operate as key factors for its joint development.

INTERREG Atlantic Area aims, therefore, to achieve significant and tangible progress towards cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic regions and their maritime heritage, promoting solutions to respond to challenges of the actors involved in innovation and competitiveness, resource efficiency, environment and cultural assets, reducing the existing regional disparities.

5 COUNTRIES
FRANCE
IRELAND
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
UNITED KINGDOM

4 PRIORITIES
INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY
RISKS OF NATURAL, CLIMATE & HUMAN ORIGIN
BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL & CULTURAL ASSETS

185M€
BUDGET

“to achieve significant and tangible progress towards cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic regions and their maritime heritage”



Main activities since 2015

The Atlantic Area Programme was approved on 17 November 2015 by the European Commission. The *Cooperation Programme*, the legal document that sets the programme's strategic framework, was drafted based on the findings of the *ex-ante* evaluation carried out in 2014 and on the contributions received under a public consultation addressed to public and private programme stakeholders in 2013.

The first Monitoring Committee (MC) meeting was held in Porto, on 20 January 2016 and a second meeting took place in Dublin, on 7-8 September 2016.

The official Launch event took place in Porto on 24 May 2016, with more than 300 participants from the five Member States. It officially launched the programme and provided further information about the thematic investment priorities and the first call for projects.

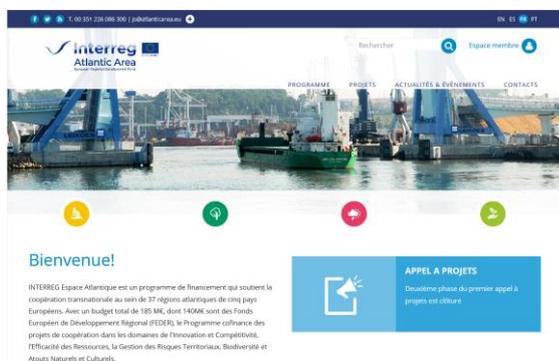
The first call for projects was launched in April 2016, in two steps, and was open to all priorities of the programme. The first step ran from 26 April to 31 May 2016, where applicants submitted 425 Expressions of Interest (EOI). The Monitoring Committee selected 102 EOI to present a full project application on a second stage, which ran from 31 October 2016 to 11 January 2017.



As a result of this call, 45 projects were selected by the Monitoring Committee (3 of them under conditions) at a meeting that was held on the 4-5 May 2017 in Porto. Of the 45 approved projects, 19 projects are under priority 1 (innovation and competitiveness), 9 projects on priority 2 (resource efficiency), 3 projects on priority 3 (territorial risks) and 14 projects on priority 4 (biodiversity, natural and cultural assets). From over 3.400 institutions that applied for funding, the programme will financially support around 560 institutions that will contribute to the sustainable social and economic growth of the Atlantic Area regions.

The Joint Secretariat is working on the contracting process with the partnerships. All information regarding the first call for projects and the list of projects approved are available on the website www.atlanticarea.eu.

During the call for projects, several information workshops were carried out by national contact points at local and regional level, to provide information and guidance to potential beneficiaries.



The Managing Authority carried out a public procurement to develop a new website for the programme. The website was launched in May 2016 with a more attractive and user-friendly layout, responding to the needs and requirements previously identified.

The Managing Authority designation process is still on going and Member States continue to report information concerning their national control systems.



Where does the programme operates?

INTERREG Atlantic Area covers the western part of Europe bordering the Atlantic Ocean. It comprises 37 regions from five countries: the western part UK, the northern and south westernmost part of Spain, western France, Ireland and Portugal.

For 2014-2020 the programme has an expanded area compared to the previous cooperation programme, due to the inclusion of Canary Islands (Spain), the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira (Portugal). The participation of these insular regions will contribute to a more cohesive Atlantic Region, increase its natural and cultural heritage and enhance its comparative advantage related to its maritime perspective.

Projects partnership should reflect the transnational approach and requires the involvement of at least three of the mentioned countries.



How much funding is available?

The Atlantic Area Programme has EUR 140 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for a total budget of EUR 185 million. As a general indication, the average approved amount *per* project in the previous programming period was around EUR 1.5 million / EUR 2 million. Projects will receive financial support up to 75% of their eligible costs.

Who can apply for funding?

Partners participating in projects and receiving funds from the programme must belong to one of the following categories:

- ✓ National, regional, or local public bodies;
- ✓ Education and research institutions;
- ✓ Not-for-profit organisations;
- ✓ Private companies;
- ✓ International, transnational and crossborder organisations.

In some cases, partners outside the Atlantic Area may be allowed to participate if it is demonstrated their added value for the programme area.

How to apply for funding?



The programme foresees to launch a call for projects *per* year until 2020, as long as there are funds available. Information about call for projects will be advertised on the Atlantic Area website [www.atlanticarea.eu], Facebook page [<https://www.facebook.com/AtlanticArea>] and Twitter account [<https://twitter.com/AtlanticArea>].

The *Programme Manual* (available for download at the programme website) explains the rules and procedures of the programme for each call for projects. It contains the necessary guidelines to submit a successful application, as well as guidance on all phases of the project lifecycle. A call for projects can be launched in one or two phases and be open to all or just some of the programmes' priorities. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide full and detailed information in line with the guidance provided at the outset of the application process.

The calendar, criteria for selection and decision-making procedures will be clearly set out in the terms of reference of each call. After approval, a list of all funded projects will be available for consultation on the programme's website.

Who runs the programme?

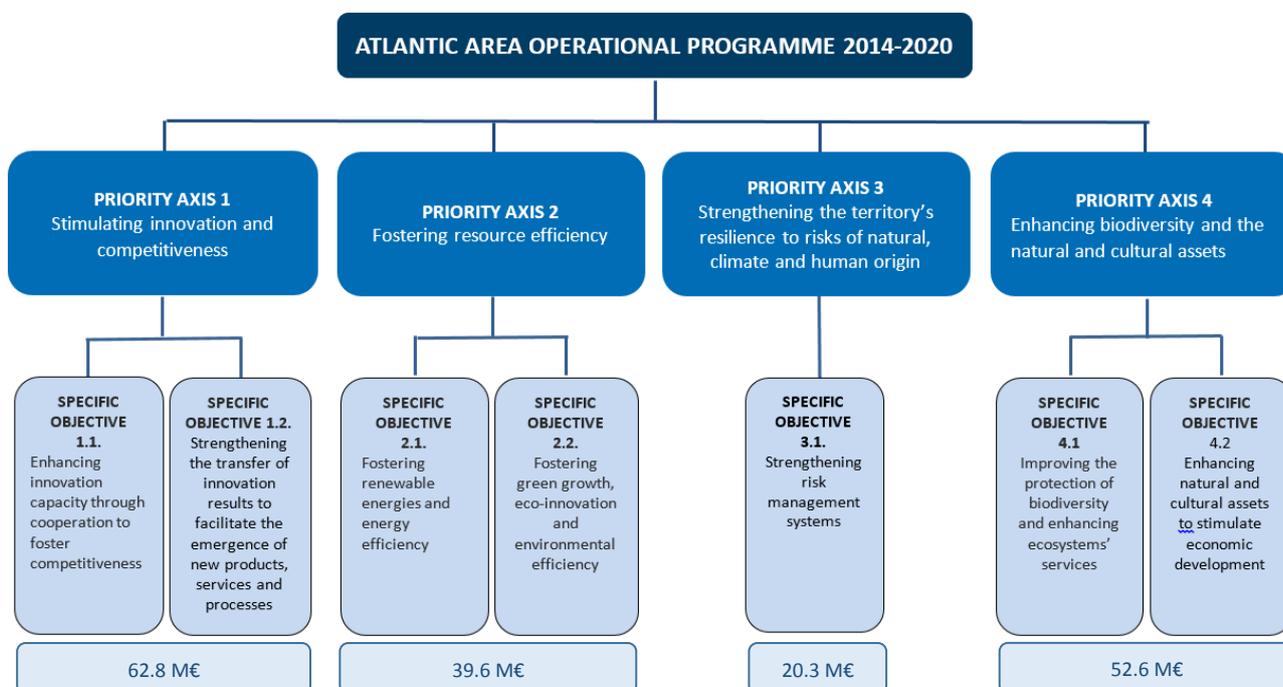
The programme implementation and smooth running is the responsibility of several entities with different roles:

Institution	Main responsibilities
Managing Authority (MA) Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDR-N) - Porto, Portugal	Responsible for the overall programme implementation on behalf of the participating countries. It is also responsible for the programme <i>vis-a-vis</i> the European Commission.
Monitoring Committee (MC)	Main decision making body, composed by representatives of the five Member States and regions, authorities of the Programme, European Commission and cooperation networks as advisory members.
Joint Secretariat (JS) Located at Porto, Portugal	Technical team responsible for the daily management of the programme. Provides information on funding opportunities and prepares projects assessment for the MC final selection decision. Assists lead partners in the implementation of their projects.
National Correspondents One for each country	Network of national bodies which ensures the representation of each Member State in the management structure. Responsible for the dissemination, implementation and management of the programme at national and regional level.
Certifying Authority (CA) Agência para o Desenvolvimento e Coesão - Lisboa, Portugal	Responsible for all certification of expenditure and payment of ERDF contribution both at programme and projects levels.
Audit Authority (AA) Inspeção Geral de Finanças Lisboa, Portugal	Responsible for audits on the management and control system and ensures that audits are carried out on operations.



Which are the investment priorities?

Four thematic areas have been identified that reflect the choice and needs of the programme partners and stakeholders. These thematic areas were poured into four investment priorities that are set up as follows:



A fifth priority, Technical Assistance, aims to ensure the efficient and smooth implementation of the programme. More information about each of the investment priorities is presented on the following pages.

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Priority 1: Stimulating innovation and competitiveness

ERDF: EUR 62.8 million

This priority will contribute to accelerate intelligent growth by supporting the creation of the right environment to stimulate innovation and promoting interventions in the common sectors identified in the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) and in which the area shows comparative competitive advantages. This priority has two objectives:



Objective 1.1: Enhancing innovation capacity through cooperation to foster competitiveness

Contribute to the creation of an innovation-friendly business (but also public and social) environment, encouraging more clustering, cooperation and skills development mechanisms between complementary sectors linked to the region's smart specialisation and between research and economic, public and social actors in a transnational context.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Development of cooperation schemes contributing to organising the development of scientific resource centres, business incubators, clusters, business networks, centres of expertise, research and innovation infrastructures and regional poles of excellence;
- ✓ Development of technology transfer initiatives;
- ✓ Development of innovative based strategies and tools to improve creativity and entrepreneurial mind-sets.

Objective 1.2: Strengthening the transfer of innovation results to facilitate the emergence of new products, services and processes

Support the exploitation of new ideas and research results and the creation of more knowledge-intensive businesses to generate new products, services and processes, especially for emerging and growth sectors (according to smart specialisation strategies in regions) and also with a view to intensify trade and exports.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Development of common mechanisms to ensure cost-efficient exploitation of resources and best use of research results;
- ✓ Development of networking mechanisms and platforms for the generation of business consortia;
- ✓ Supporting the development of different ways of financing innovation such as venture capital mechanisms and other relevant financial instruments.

Priority 2: Fostering resource efficiency

ERDF: EUR 39.6 million

This priority supports the development of renewable energy, including the social acceptance and use, especially those deriving from the sea and promoting the transition to a resource-efficient society. Low carbon economy is a key issue for territorial sustainable development and for EU objectives and for the mitigation of climate change that has strong consequences in Atlantic regions. This priority has two objectives:



Objective 2.1: Fostering renewable energies and energy efficiency

Foster renewable energy and the adoption of energy efficiency patterns in the Atlantic Area, by assisting the process in the development of an adequate institutional, social and technological environment. Transnational cooperation will therefore be structured around a triple dimension, institutional, social and market dimension.

Some examples of actions to be supported are:

- ✓ Development of technological, legal, educational/training, financial and organisational solutions in the field of renewable energy, including economic appraisals and business cases to quantify social, community and environmental benefits and value;
- ✓ Enhancement of cooperation between private, public and research actors throughout the whole value chain related to energy;
- ✓ Practical 'on-the-ground' demonstrations of new techniques and processes and of best practices.

Objective 2.2: Fostering Green Growth, eco-innovation and environmental efficiency

Support initiatives devoted to the introduction of eco-innovations and the green growth economy, contributing to the innovative production and consumption patterns that could help to minimise the negative impact on the environment, bringing also new market opportunities and jobs to the Atlantic Area.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Promoting the adoption of the Agenda 21 in the private sector;
- ✓ Development of mechanisms to reduce the amount of resources (e.g. land, water, minerals) used in industrial processes;
- ✓ Promoting Carbon and Hydric Footprint Labelling.

Priority 3: Strengthening the territory's resilience to risks of natural, climate and human origin

ERDF: EUR 20.3 million

This priority supports a better management of the environment, so that regional authorities and relevant stakeholders are better prepared to adapt to climate change and to potential risks occurring in the Atlantic territory. This priority will also have an integrated territorial management focus incorporating aspects related to the prevention and management of those common risks that Atlantic regions face and will continue to face in the future, deriving from both natural and human activities including maritime economic activities. This priority has one objective:



Objective 3.1: Strengthening risk management systems

Address of transnational cooperation to strengthen risks prevention, emergency and crisis management planning, monitoring, surveillance, exchange of know-how, improving operational capabilities, information systems and mapping, data dissemination, training and guidance material. This approach will be structured around a triple dimension, local and regional authorities the civil society and the industry.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Development of local community and business leaders empowerment to risk prevention, and recovery and regeneration actions;
- ✓ Promote the interlinking of regional, coastal and ocean observation and maritime safety and coastal structures and their forecasting models;
- ✓ Development of methodologies and technologies for the study, procedures, evaluation and compensation of damages linked to risks under this objective;
- ✓ Practical 'on-the-ground' demonstrations of new techniques and processes.

Priority 4: Enhancing biodiversity and the natural and cultural assets

ERDF: EUR 52.6 million

This priority will serve the identified need of protecting the environment and promoting cultural identity in order to make the Atlantic region a more attractive place for local communities and visitors. Securing its vast natural heritage and the richness of the existing natural resources, as well as further protecting the cultural heritage that gives the Atlantic Area its unique character will be key for promoting a sustainable economic and territorial development. This priority has two objectives:



Objective 4.1: Improving the protection of biodiversity and enhancing ecosystems' services

Support cooperation in the field of environmental and natural resources management. The common challenges to tackle here are the following: acquiring an in depth knowledge of the Atlantic ecosystems, their wealth and their vulnerability, and the conditions for their preservation in connection with the development of new marine and land activities.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Development of pilot actions to test new solutions and methods concerning the preservation and restoration of biodiversity;
- ✓ Development of methods for quality monitoring and enhancement of the coastal and inland waters;
- ✓ Development of collecting and disseminating natural environmental data (environmental observatory network), modelling aimed at improving forecasts and environmental management.

Objective 4.2: Enhancing natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development

Support ways to exploit and preserve the natural and cultural heritage as a key element of the Atlantic Area identity. The intention is to promote cooperation in order to generate new sources of wealth and a sustainable development of the area. A specific emphasis is placed on locally based actions, with the involvement and empowerment of local communities and local authorities, therefore playing a key role in bringing concrete benefits to their territories.

Some examples of actions to be supported:

- ✓ Development of joint actions to preserve the cultural and natural heritage;
- ✓ Enhancement of the attractiveness of traditional economic and productive activities, jobs and services;
- ✓ Practical on-the-ground demonstrations of new techniques and processes and of best practices.