

FIRST CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST 2016

26 April to 31 May 2016

ANNOUNCEMENT

Introduction

The Atlantic Area Transnational Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 announces its first call for Expressions of interest (EOIs). A **two stage** application process has been agreed for this initial and subsequent Programme calls, beginning with a call for EOI's.

The Programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and supports cooperation addressing shared regional challenges and innovative approaches to strengthen territorial and sustainable economic development in the Atlantic Area. The Programme targets partnership projects which will provide joint solutions to shared transnational challenges faced by eligible regions along the Atlantic coast in France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Co-operation projects financed by the programme will be expected to deliver against the outputs specified in the Co-operation Programme document and produce tangible and sustainable results. This will be achieved by involving key and relevant local and regional stakeholders across the transnational space in the priority areas defined below.

Funds available

No specific amount has been set for the first call for applications. The intention is to organise subsequent calls for projects on an annual basis from 2017 to 2020.

Priorities

All Priority Axes in the Co-operation Programme are open:

Priorities	Specific objectives
1. Stimulating innovation and competitiveness	1.1 - Enhancing innovation capacity through cooperation to foster competitiveness
	1.2 - Strengthening the transfer of innovation results to facilitate the emergence of new products, services and processes
2. Fostering resource efficiency	2.1 - Fostering renewable energies and energy efficiency
	2.2 - Fostering Green Growth, eco-innovation and environmental efficiency
3. Strengthening the territory's resilience to risks of natural, climate and human origin	3.1 - Strengthening risk management systems
4. Enhancing biodiversity and natural and cultural assets	4.1 - Improving the protection of biodiversity and enhancing ecosystems' services
	4.2 - Enhancing natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development

Application process: The process is organised in two stages.

First stage - submission and selection of Expressions of Interest

Applicants are invited to submit EOIs providing a clear outline of the proposed project. The EOI must set out the project summary, overall objective, the transnational challenge tackled, the partnership and its consistency able to respond to the challenge, indicative budget and other basic elements. The EOI must be completed on the electronic form provided.

Following the eligibility check and quality assessment of EOIs by the Joint Secretariat (JS), the Programme Monitoring Committee will consider the JS assessments, the merits of the EOIs and make decisions about those projects to be selected to progress to the second stage of the application process. Decisions on the first stage will be made in September 2016.

Second Stage – Submission and approval of full applications

According to decisions made by the Programme Monitoring Committee, successful applicants will then be invited to prepare and submit a full project application. Applicants will have about 6 weeks to submit their full project application from the date of notification by the JS. Where relevant, any requests and recommendations from the JS and the Monitoring Committee relating to consideration of the EOI, will need to be taken into account by the project partners.

Final decisions on stage 2 applications will be made by the Programme Monitoring Committee by January 2017.

Practical information

The electronic form for the EOI, the Programme Manual which provides detailed support and guidance for applicants and other relevant documents including the Co-operation Programme document are available in the “Call for Projects” domain of the Programme website (<http://www.atlanticarea.eu>). It is important that applicants consult the information in each document before making an application to the Programme.

26 April 2016	Opening of the Call for Expressions of Interest
31 May 2016 - 12 noon GMT	Deadline for the Submission of Expressions of interest
7 September 2016	Monitoring Committee selection decision
16 September 2016	Opening second stage call
4 November 2016 – 12 noon GMT	Deadline for submission of full projects application
January 2017	Monitoring Committee approval decision

Quality of Projects, results and impacts sought

The Atlantic Area Programme Monitoring Committee is the governing body for the Co-operation Programme. It is committed to delivering visible, tangible transnational results through supporting genuinely high quality transnational projects which respond to the Priority Axes and address those specific objectives set out in the Programme document.

The Programme is committed to funding high quality sustainable projects addressing key transnational challenges or common transnational problems shared by different regions across the Atlantic Area. Projects should also be impact oriented, seeking to generate sustainable change in the region. They must therefore have a strong design and relevance for all partner regions involved, respond to genuine transnational need, and have a robust transnational feature, with a strong and balanced coverage of partners and funding over the different countries of the Programme area.

Eligible regions

The cooperation area covered by the OP includes the European Atlantic regions listed below. Project partners must be located within the eligible territory of the Atlantic Area regions. However, in duly justified cases, organisations based outside the cooperation area in the EU or third countries may join project partnerships of the Programme, if the benefit for regions in the cooperation area is clearly demonstrated.

Atlantic Area Eligible Regions

- **France:** Haute-Normandie, Basse-Normandie, Pays-de-la-Loire, Bretagne, Poitou-Charentes, Aquitaine.
- **Ireland:** Border, Midland and Western, Southern and Eastern.
- **Portugal:** Norte, Algarve, Centro, Lisboa, Alentejo, Açores, Madeira.
- **Spain:** Galicia, Principado de Asturias, Cantabria, Navarra, País Vasco, Andalucía (Huelva, Cádiz and Sevilla), Islas Canarias.
- **United Kingdom:** Cumbria, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Bristol/Bath Area, Dorset and Somerset, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Devon, West Wales and the Valleys, East Wales, South Western Scotland, Highlands and Islands, Northern Ireland.

Project Partnership, applicants and beneficiaries

A wide range of organisations under public or private law, are potential beneficiaries of ERDF funding and may therefore join a project partnership. Eligible organisations cover entities like:

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

The number of partners depends on the nature and scope of the project and should reflect an optimum capacity to deliver its aims and objectives and a balanced distribution of roles and funding among partners and over the various countries of the Atlantic area. Therefore the size of the partnership is flexible and should reflect the scope of the project while remaining manageable.

The Lead Partner

Projects have a Lead Partner responsible for coordinating the application and submission process. If the project is approved for funding the Lead Partner becomes responsible for the full management

and operation of the project, it also bears the legal and financial liability for the project partnership while being in charge of communication with the Joint Secretariat and the Managing Authority.

The Lead Partner must be either a public body, a private not-for-profit organisation, a university, an education institution, a research organisation or an international organisation acting under national law, be located in the Programme area, possessing strong administrative and financial capacity to engage transnationally and have the competencies to manage the project and partnership effectively.

Duration of Projects

EOIs should normally propose a work timeline with a duration of 18 to 36 months, with a start in the first quarter of 2017.

Budget and eligible expenditure

There is no pre-established lower or upper limit to project budgets, they depend on the nature, scope of projects and number of partners. To ensure that operations have a robust transnational feature, a strong and balanced coverage of partners and funding over the different countries of the Programme area must be sought by projects.

Expenditure is considered eligible if it complies with European and national rules and the established legal limits and if it is directly related to the project and observes the principles of economic efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Eligible expenditure shall be incurred and paid within the set eligibility period.

Co-financing rate and national match funds

As general rule the Programme offers a maximum co-financing rate of 75% of the total project budget

Language use

Applicants can communicate with the Joint Secretariat in any of the 4 Programme languages. However, the EOI application form must compulsorily be completed in English and optionally in any other Programme language. The project title and the brief description shall be compulsorily completed in all four Programme Languages

Information and assistance

Programme website: <http://www.atlanticarea.eu/>

Documents and facilities available on the Programme website:

- Atlantic Area Cooperation Programme
- Programme Manual for Stage 1
- Application package
- Project idea and partner search tool

For general advice please contact the Joint Secretariat: atlantico.stc@ccdr-n.pt