

## INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA PROGRAMME

### CITIZENS' SUMMARY

June 2018

#### The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme

As part of the Regional Policy of the European Union, the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme is a financing instrument of the European Territorial Cooperation, which aims to provide a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between actors of five Member States, Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme supports, therefore, transnational cooperation projects by i) contributing to achieve significant and tangible progress towards a cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic regions and their maritime heritage, and ii) 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

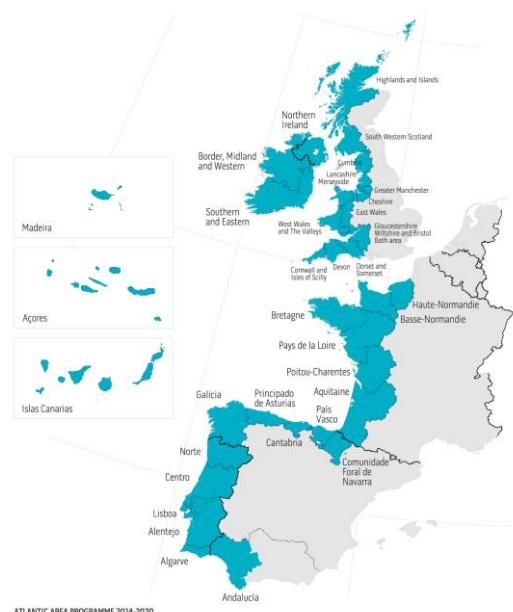
**4 PRIORITIES**  
INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS  
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY  
RISKS OF NATURAL, CLIMATE & HUMAN ORIGIN  
BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL & CULTURAL ASSETS

**185M€**  
BUDGET

The Programme covers the western part of Europe bordering the Atlantic Ocean, comprising 36 regions from 5 countries. For the 2014-2020 period the Programme includes the Canary Islands (Spain) and the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira (Portugal).

Based on the assessment of the potential, needs and challenges of this geographic area, four priority areas of strategic intervention have been identified, with which projects must be aligned and thus contribute to the sustainable social and economic growth of the Atlantic Area regions:

1. Stimulating innovation and competitiveness (EUR 62.8 million)
2. Fostering resource efficiency (EUR 39.6 million)
3. Strengthening the territory's resilience to risks of natural, climate and human origin (EUR 20.3 million)
4. Enhancing biodiversity and the natural and cultural assets (EUR 52.6 million)





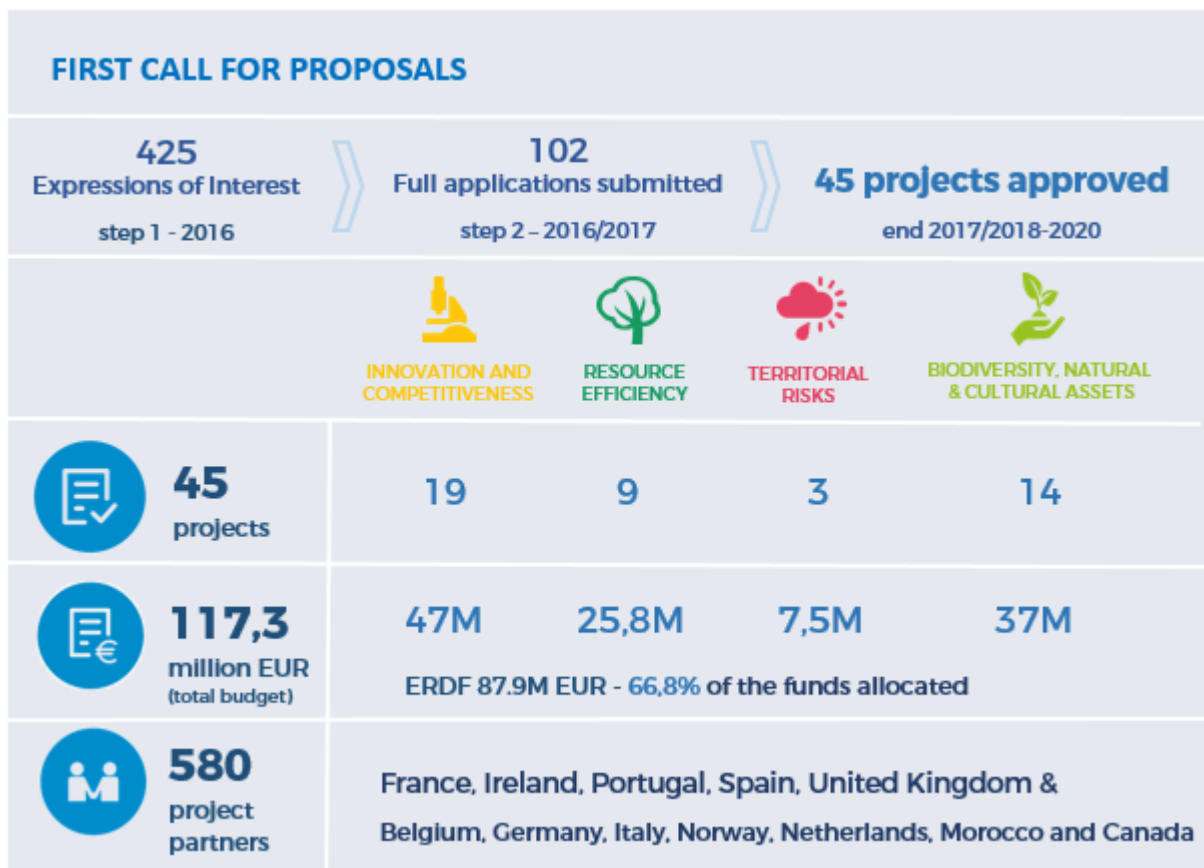
The Atlantic Area Programme has the support of the European Union with an allocation of EUR 185 million, of which EUR 140 million comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Projects supported by the programme receive a financial support up to 75% of their eligible costs.

The Atlantic Area Programme was approved on 17 November 2015 by the European Commission.

### Main activities implemented in 2017

The year of 2017 marked the approval of the first Interreg Atlantic Area cooperation projects under the first call for proposals.

The first call was launched in April 2016 and closed in January 2017, in a two-step application procedure and was open to all the priorities of the programme: step 1, from April to May 2016, to present an Expression of Interest (EOI) and step 2, from October 2016 to January 2017, to present a full project application. As a result of this call, 45 projects were approved by the Monitoring Committee in May 2017 in Porto (42 with recommendations and 3 under conditions), representing a total investment of EUR 117.3 million (ERDF EUR 87.9 million), i.e. 66.8% of the Programme's ERDF budget. More than 3.400 institutions applied for funding.



The list of the projects approved is published on the website: [www.atlanticarea.eu](http://www.atlanticarea.eu).

After an intensive period of projects evaluation, the Joint Secretariat started the contracting procedure with the approved projects, providing all guidance and preparing the necessary documentation to help the beneficiaries with the start of their activities. Some projects already organised their kick-off meetings at the



end of 2017, with the participation of the Joint Secretariat and representatives of the Member States when invited.

During 2017 several activities were carried out and communication tools were used to reach a wide audience, aimed at promoting the programme priorities and the financing opportunities. This was done through the creation of tools to assist potential beneficiaries for project generation and beneficiaries for the projects' initiation and implementation.

The [programme website](#) provides updated information, documents and the necessary guidance to support applicants, beneficiaries and all the programme bodies, as well as information about the main initiatives, news or events related with the programme or projects' implementation.

The programme also manages a [Facebook page](#) and a [Twitter account](#) to reach relevant potential beneficiaries, current beneficiaries, stakeholders and the general public. The social media accounts are used to promote the programme and project events, and communicate specific topics or messages, as well as provide links to the programme website or other media sources.

For the third year, the Interreg Atlantic Area participated at the European Maritime Day – this time in May in Poole, UK. The programme contributed to a joint exhibition stand and a workshop organised by the Knowledge of the Seas Network, coordinated by Interact, together with other maritime-focused Interreg programmes.

The Programme also participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Stakeholder Conference, in November in Glasgow, organising the workshop *“Setting a bridge between history and modernity of the cultural heritage of the Atlantic Area: from the cities' maritime, military and industrial heritage valorisation to the development of new nautical tourism activities, products and innovation”*. The workshop included speakers from the recently approved projects MMIAH and CAPITEN, with an audience of around 50 people. During this event, the Secretariat also



organised an exhibition stand together with other Interreg programmes that impact the Atlantic maritime domain. The programme participation at these major events is important to increase the Atlantic Area's visibility but also to support the implementation of the Atlantic Maritime Strategy, an initiative adopted by the European Commission in 2011. These initiatives held together with other cooperation programmes, are an added value and a benefit in building relationships and a stronger picture of European Territorial Cooperation.

Representatives of the programme Member States also participated in and contributed to several events and meetings at national, regional or local level on issues of ETC, which included disseminating information on the work and progress of the Atlantic Area Programme. Moreover, Spain has developed a horizontal governance model through the “Blue Integrated Territorial Investment”, ITI Azul, which aggregates the support of European Structural Investment Funds to the Atlantic Strategy in Spain.



In 2017 the Monitoring Committee Presidency was under the responsibility of Portugal, the *Agência para o Desenvolvimento & Coesão*. Two Monitoring Committee meetings were organised, one in May in Porto, to select the projects of the first call to be financially supported, and a second meeting in November in Lisbon, mainly to discuss the programme development, the contractualisation process, the launch of the second call for projects and also focusing on Interreg Post-2020. Three National Correspondents meetings were also organised in 2017 and one meeting of the Group of Auditors to address the audit strategy and the designation procedure.

Some of the most relevant decisions made by the Monitoring Committee during this year, besides the already mentioned approval of 45 cooperation projects, were the launch of the second call in 2018, programme baseline indicators, guidelines for project communication, methodology and implementation of simplified cost options, approval of the Technical Assistance budget, Partnership Agreement and Subsidy Contract.

The Secretariat also participated in three meetings of various transnational co-operation programmes to discuss the upcoming regulatory framework (2021-2027), aiming to contribute to improve the performance of future Interreg programmes.

In 2017 the designation process of the Managing and Certifying Authorities was also concluded. The Managing and Information System modules of project management and contracting, technical assistance and expenditure certification were still in development during the year. The Managing Authority, jointly with the Secretariat and the Member States, after the closing of crucial procedures during 2017, such as the designation and the approval of the first cooperation projects, aims at achieving a more effective and efficient implementation of the programme and its goals.