

INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA PROGRAMME

CITIZENS' SUMMARY

June 2019

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme is a financing instrument of European Territorial Cooperation which aims to provide a framework for the implementation of joint actions, good practices and policy exchange between actors of five Member States: Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

With the support of the European Union the programme has a total budget of EUR 185 million, out of which EUR 140 million come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

5 COUNTRIES

FRANCE
IRELAND
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
UNITED KINGDOM

4 PRIORITIES

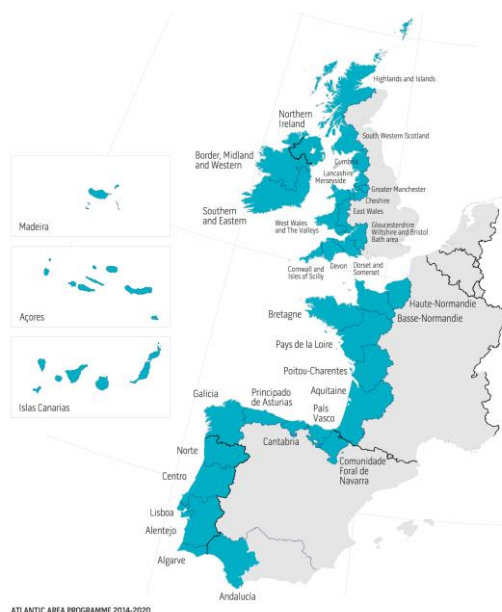
INNOVATION & COMPETITIVENESS
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY
RISKS OF NATURAL, CLIMATE & HUMAN ORIGIN
BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL & CULTURAL ASSETS

185M€
BUDGET

The scope of the funded projects will reflect the objective of sustainable social and economic growth in the Atlantic Area, articulated in four main priority areas:

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





Main activities implemented in 2018








As it is currently in full implementation phase, this year marks an important stage in the life of the programme. The image shows some of the milestones that are worth highlighting:

The second call for projects was held from March to June 2018, during which the Secretariat received 115 applications. In October 2018, in Cardiff, the Monitoring Committee approved 27 projects, representing a total ERDF investment of EUR 46.7 million. The entire available ERDF budget of the programme (EUR 140 million) is now fully committed.

The programme is already funding 45 projects approved in 2017, under the 4 thematic priorities, representing an ERDF total funding of EUR 87.8 million allocated to 466 institutions from the Atlantic regions and beyond.



The 72 projects which have been approved will address common problems to the Atlantic Area and strive to find better solutions for the Atlantic regions and thus for Europe as a whole. The table below shows an overview of the projects split by thematic priority:

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECTS APPROVED				
	 INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS	 RESOURCE EFFICIENCY	 TERRITORIAL RISKS	 BIODIVERSITY, NATURAL & CULTURAL ASSETS
 72 projects	27	15	9	21
 179,4 million EUR (total budget)	62,9M	42,3M	20,4M	53,8M
	ERDF 140 M EUR - 100% of the funds allocated			
 726 project partners	France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom & Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Netherlands, Morocco, Canada, Finland and Switzerland			

A list of the approved projects is available on the website: www.atlanticarea.eu. Information about these projects' activities and results can be found on this website or on the projects' websites.

The [programme website](http://atlanticarea.eu) also provides all the information and necessary documentation related to the main activities, initiatives, and events organized by the programme, addressed not only to current beneficiaries and



project applicants, but also to programme bodies, key actors in European territorial and maritime cooperation and European citizens.

Interreg Atlantic Area further organised a Training Session for Lead Partners of approved projects in the First Call, which was attended by 45 partners, held in February, in Porto; one Informative Session about the Second Call, which took place in May, in Porto and counted with an attendance of 120 participants, as well as a webstream session.



Additionally, the Secretariat supported the Member States in the organization of several workshops in Portugal, Ireland, France, Spain and the United Kingdom, to provide support to the beneficiaries and the First Level Controllers in their respective countries.

Interreg Atlantic Area participated in key events during the year. The [Atlantic Area Annual Event](#) was held in October, in Vigo, under the theme “Blue innovation as a main engine for sustainable growth in the Atlantic Area”. It gathered around 190 participants, representatives of the economic, educational and research sectors, as well as local, regional, national and European bodies.



The main focus of this event was the contribution of the Atlantic Area programme to innovation in the maritime economy, whether through its linkage with the Atlantic Strategy or by sharing the views, experiences and good practices of experts in the field. Five Atlantic Area projects with a high innovative component, ATLANTICKETMED, NASPA, BLUEPORTS, MYCOAST and OCEANWISE, had the opportunity to participate in a round table and share their

experience and good practices related to the improvement of the maritime economy through transnational cooperation. Several other Atlantic Area projects participated in an exhibition to showcase their innovative concepts and practices.



Interreg Atlantic Area also participated in the annual 4-day event [European Week of Cities and regions](#) in October in Brussels, on the #MadeWithInterreg stand “A journey into transnational cooperation”. This exhibition, held jointly with other Interreg Transnational Programmes, aimed to showcase how transnational cooperation strengthens EU cohesion by communicating tangible benefits and illustrating how it is making a difference in regions and cities. CLEANATLANTIC project was invited to join this exhibition to raise awareness about marine litter in the Atlantic Area and to address the need to improve marine litter managing systems.



The Programme also participated in the [5th Atlantic Stakeholder Conference](#), in October in Vigo, where it had a joint stand with Interreg North West Europe Programme. The programme took the lead in organising a Plenary Session dedicated to the contribution of the programme to the Atlantic Action Plan; and a workshop to present good investment practices in the blue economy related to skills, employment and innovation, which counted with the participation of two other Atlantic projects, SAFER and MOSES.

The Atlantic Area [EBB project](#) (European Blue Biotechnology) won the best project prize in the category 'Atlantic Marine and Coastal Environment', as part of the 3rd edition of the Atlantic Project Awards, which were held during the Conference. This event had an audience of around 200 people.

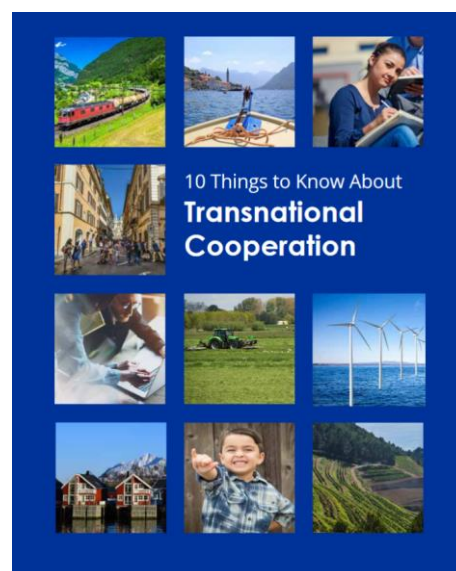
These initiatives, which bring together different cooperation programmes, are an added value and a benefit in building relationships between individuals, as well as a stronger image of European Territorial Cooperation. Representatives of the Programme Member States also participated in and contributed to several events and meetings at national, regional or local level on issues of ETC, which included a presentation of the work and progress of Interreg Atlantic Area.



The Programme 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 to provide links to the programme website or other media sources.



Interreg Atlantic Area also participated in two publications: “[10 things to know about transnational cooperation](#)”, and the E-Book “[Connecting Cultures, Connected Citizens](#)”, aimed at presenting the added value and achievements of transnational cooperation in European countries and regions, identifying examples of projects related to specific issues and its positive impact in the area. Both publications were coordinated by Interact.



In 2018 the PMC Presidency was held by the United Kingdom, through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Programme organised two Monitoring Committee meetings: one in June in Belfast, mainly to discuss the programme state-of-play and further implementation.

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





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.

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-focussed Interreg programmes.

The Programme also participated in the 4th 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.

Main activities implemented in 2015 and 2016

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 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.

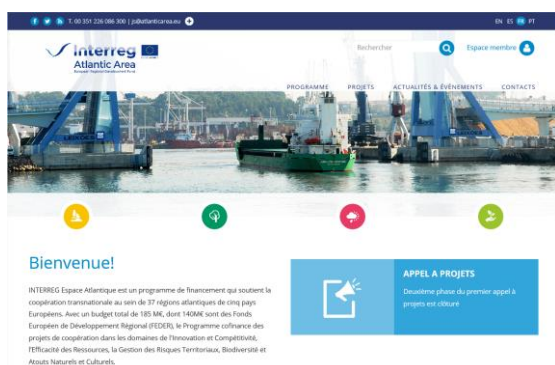


The first call for projects was launched in April 2016, in two steps, and was open to all priorities of the programme. The first step ran from 26 April to 31 May 2016, where applicants submitted 425 Expressions of Interest (EOI). The Monitoring Committee selected 102 EOI to present a full project application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