

# INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA 2021-2027

Summary of the strategy for the new cooperation programme  
*(please note that the Atlantic Area programme is still under approval by the European Commission and changes may occur)*

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## B. Intervention logic · Atlantic Area challenges



### Large territory, mainly maritime

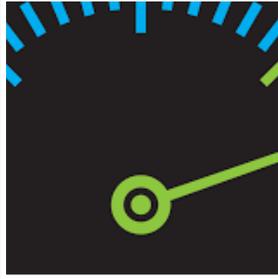
- The AA cooperation area is made up of NUTS2 of 4 MS: Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal, including the island territories of the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands. It is a very large territory, mainly consisting of regions connected to the Atlantic Ocean with many similarities in economic sectors, culture and biodiversity



### Land-sea interactions

- The programme's maritime approach also involves interactions with inland territories, which impact on the coastal areas and the ocean itself. Waste management to prevent waste from reaching the sea, circular economy actions, promotion of renewable energies, economic activities complementary or contributory to the blue economy, innovation centres, sustainable tourism, etc. are examples of the necessary interaction land-sea in the programme

## B. Intervention logic · Atlantic Area challenges



High disparities in competitiveness and innovation

- There are strong disparities between the regions, in terms of innovation capacities and competitiveness. The differences are both between countries (especially North-South) and within each MS, and among close regions in the same MS.
- There is a need to strengthen the sustainability of the territory through balanced and inclusive growth.



Blue growth

- The Atlantic and the blue economy are the common element of the cooperation area.
- The territory has strong economic sectors such as fishing, fisheries, aquaculture, agro-industry, renewable energy ports and water projects, naval sector, tourism linked to landscape, natural and cultural heritage sites. The AA ports are key stakeholders, they are located throughout the coast and the islands, and act as economic drivers. They also have a large capacity for interaction between coast and land and are strong consumers of energy and waste generation.

## B. Intervention logic · Atlantic Area challenges



### Need for Resilience

- The programme territory has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 crises. This will be a constant during the early implementation of the Programme. The reconversion and adaptation to future crisis of certain sectors and product, process and social innovation are basic pillars for the survival and the needed resilience of some economic sectors in the AA



### Tourism

- Tourism is an essential activity throughout the area and faces scenarios of uncertainty for which innovation in the provision of services, digitalisation, adaptation to legal requirements and visitor perception are elements to which the Programme can contribute in a global and harmonious manner. Tourism prioritises elements such as security and diversification.



### Smart blue skills

- The ecological crisis accentuated by the Covid pandemic forces a reconversion of the traditional forms of development of the activities of the blue economy, both in industry and the service sector, giving priority to smart new skills, especially in digitalization, adaptation to change, efficient and non-polluting industry 4.0, etc. SMEs and workers, especially the least qualified, need support in those economic activities specific to the maritime space (blue economy sectors)

## B. Intervention logic · Atlantic Area challenges



### Climate change & risks

- The territory faces common and supranational challenges arising from the effects of climate change and natural risks, particularly coastal and waterways-related risks and the rising of the sea level, to balance economic activities such as tourism and nature preservation.



### Biodiversity

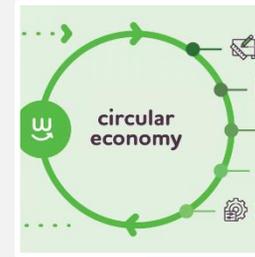
- The territory is very rich in natural protected areas. The biodiversity is a wealth for the cooperation area that must be preserved. At the cultural heritage is a vector of attraction and well-being for the territory that must be put to good use to economic activities such as tourism.

## B. Intervention logic · Atlantic Area challenges



### Resources efficiency, Sustainable energy

- The AA's resources (energy, natural resources, production patterns, consumption patterns) need to be used in a more sustainable way, reducing the need to generate unnecessary materials and associated waste, and decrease the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- The AA has important resources for the generation of renewable energies, in particular, those classified as blue energy: tides, waves, wind. Ports, industries, urban areas are large consumers of energy that can be provided by renewable means, with proximity between the point of production and consumption.



### Circular economy

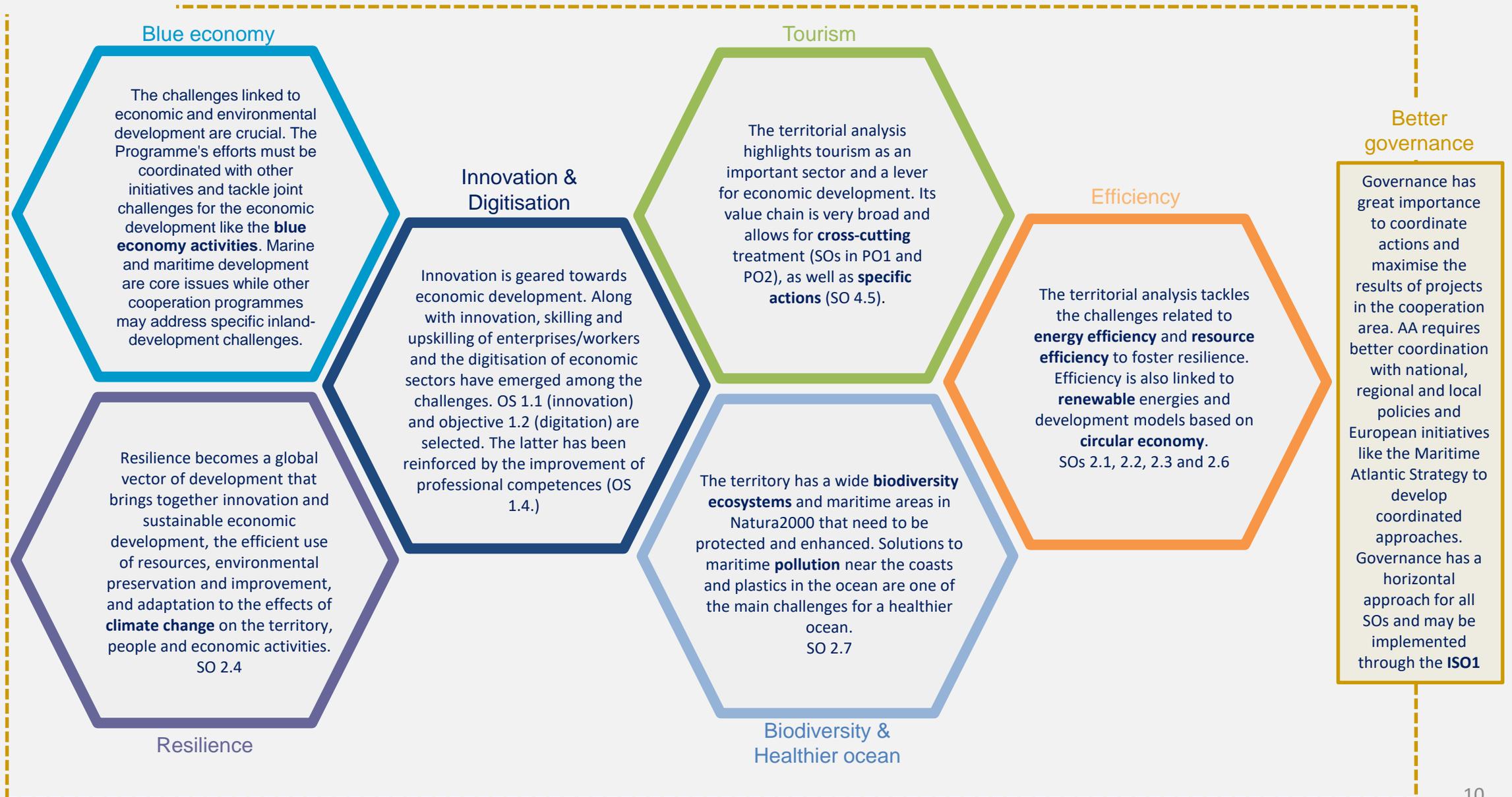
- The circular economy is a critical factor that combines actions of preservation and economic valorisation, promoting more and more efficient use of resources (fluids, waste, etc.) in ports and coastal areas.
- Fighting pollution of the ocean through collection and recycling (plastics) but also preventing inland waste discharge into the ocean is a priority to tackle a good quality environment.

## B. Intervention logic · Consistency with the EU policies

Analysis of consistency with the main maritime and 2021-2027 planning documents. Are the needs and challenges consistent with these orientations?



## B. Intervention logic · Rationale in brief



## B. Intervention logic · Selection of priorities

Challenges	Justification for the selection	PO / SO
Connecting the needs of SMEs with the AA's <b>innovation and knowledge</b> centres to promote the growth and adaptation of SMEs	Innovation is a key element for strengthening the competitiveness of the productive sectors of the AA, from the point of view of transnational cooperation. The connection of knowledge + innovation centres is a priority in the sectors that make up the Blue Economy, due to the Atlantic maritime nature of the cooperation area.	PO1 SO: <b>1.1</b>
To encourage the acquisition and improvement of professional <b>skills of</b> AA workers and enterprises in the Blue Economy sectors	The activities of the blue economy, common throughout the territory, have suffered a special impact due to the Covid-19 crisis. A reskilling of workers towards digitalisation and new technologies must be encouraged. Tourism, shipbuilding, the fishing industry, among other sectors Are very impacted and need urgent adaptation.	PO1 SO: <b>1.2, 1.4</b>
To promote <b>tourism and cultural heritage sites</b> as dynamic vectors for economic development in the AA, so that they become more resilient to unforeseen changes, such as the Covid, and a major vector of economic development, social inclusion and social innovation.	The AA is plenty of cultural heritage sites that need to be enhanced to make them a real asset for economic development, both in urban and rural areas. Likewise, the development of well-trained tourism professionals with the capacity to adapt tourism services to new post-Covid period is required.	PO4 SO: <b>4.5</b> But also cross-cutting issue through the other SOs

NB: Blue economy sectors: marine living resources; marine non-living resources; marine renewable energy; port activities; shipbuilding and repair; maritime transport; coastal tourism (*Blue economy report*)

## B. Intervention logic · Selection of priorities

Challenges	Justification for the selection	PO / SO
To coordinate the efforts of the relevant actors and initiatives in the territory in order to achieve a greater impact on the territory and <b>efficiency</b> in the production and use of resources	AA needs to accelerate its commitment to energy efficiency and smart grid systems. This contributes to the reduction of air pollution, the improvement of the quality of life of citizens and the fulfilment of the objectives of the ODS and the European Green Deal.	PO2 SO: <b>2.1, 2.2 &amp; 2.3</b>
Encouraging the development of sustainable <b>renewable energies</b> in the cooperation area by taking advantage of the resources of a maritime area (blue energy) and the conditions of coastal areas.	Investments in renewable energy are expensive and the cooperation programme does not have the resources to carry them out. However, the programme can encourage the analysis of the possibilities for new energy projects, favour the coordination of regional and national actors and improve the conditions of exploitation. The programme can help to establish a carbon-neutral zone in the Atlantic area.	PO2 SO: <b>2.2 &amp; 2.3</b>
Strengthen the <b>transition</b> of AA businesses and industries and local communities to working methods based on the <b>circular economy</b> by reducing waste generation and reusing those generated to limit pollution	The circular economy is a set of activities, actions and behaviours that lead to the reduction (including elimination) of net waste resulting from human and industrial activities. The AA is a territory that must combine economic recovery with the preservation of its rich natural resources. The circular economy contributes to this objective of making a better use of marine and maritime resources and encouraging recycling in the blue economy sectors.	PO2 SO: <b>2.6</b>
To contribute to the positioning of the <b>ports of the AA</b> as vectors of sustainable territorial development, based on resource efficiency and circular economy	The Atlantic Strategy, in the Action Plan 2.0, positions the ports as protagonists of a pillar of the Plan. These are the dynamic elements of the activities linked to the blue economy. The ports, as major consumers of energy, are also susceptible to high impact interventions in terms of energy savings and conversion towards renewable energies and vectors of the circular economy. Their impact includes all the economic stakeholders around them: workers, suppliers, industrial and technological stakeholders, etc.	PO2 Cross-cutting through: SO: <b>1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6</b>

## B. Intervention logic · Selection of priorities

Challenges	Justification for the selection	PO / SO
Preserve biodiversity areas and maintain a balance between the <b>protection of</b> natural areas and economic activities in the Blue Economy to promote sustainable growth	The area of cooperation is rich in biodiversity and natural heritage resources that constitute a richness in themselves. At the same time, a harmonious development is needed between the protection of protected enclaves and the development of economic activities that stimulate local economies.	PO2 SO: <b>2.7</b>
Strengthen the AA in adapting to the effects of <b>climate change in</b> coastal areas to enable the development of economic activities and the enhancement of the Atlantic Area. Allowing AA actors to improve their capacities to manage natural <b>risks</b>	Coastal areas and areas close to the coast are highly exposed to the effects of climate change on natural environments, current forms of economic activity. It is necessary to continue analysing the impacts and proposing solutions for geographical areas with identical conditions, economic sectors, etc. These proposals must favour the resilience of people, economic activities, flora and fauna to immediate, medium and long-term changes. It is also necessary to contribute to better regional and national actions. Natural risks are a permanent issue in the Atlantic area and have been increased by the effects of climate change. The Atlantic area has the advantage of having common risks for a good part of the cooperation area.  Covid19: Cross-cutting approach through the Programme	PO2 SO: <b>2.4</b>

To support the recovery of economic activity in the AA after the impact of the Covid19	The area of cooperation, like the rest of Europe, faces a challenge arising from Covid19 , to adapt economic activities, mainly those of the Blue Economy, to the new conditions generated by Covid19 and, in particular, in the post-Covid period. The resources available must be mobilised from the point of view of competitiveness and efficiency in order to be able to respond to new challenges in the provision of economic activities, and well being of the Atlantic communities.	<b>PO1 / PO4</b>
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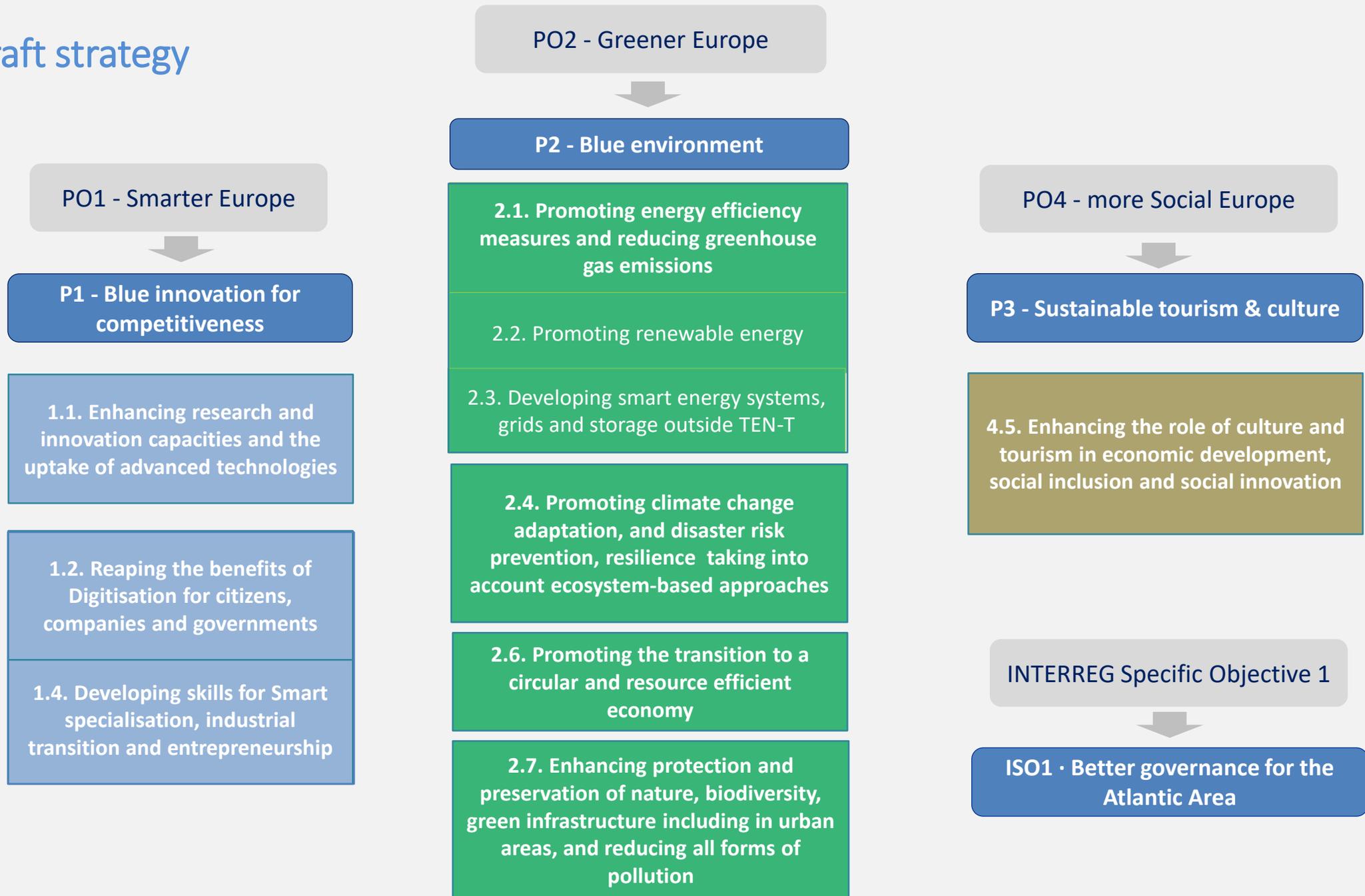
## C. Draft strategy

The members of the Atlantic Area Task Force, made up of the regional and national representatives from the 4 member states of Spain, France, Portugal and Ireland, have developed the following proposed strategy.

The programme is primarily based on 3 priorities, P1 "Smarter", P2 "Greener" and P4 "Social" (specifically SO4.5 - Tourism as an economic driver).

The AA programme would also contribute to a better governance of the cooperation area through the selection of the Interreg Specific Objective 1 (Better Governance of Cooperation).

## C. Draft strategy



## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Connecting the needs of SMEs with the AA's **innovation and knowledge** centres in order to promote the transfer of knowledge and technology, and encourage the growth and adaptation of SMEs  
(SO 1.1)

- Assist with stimulating Innovation and Entrepreneurship with the programme area;
- Supporting Innovation in blue economy traditional and emerging sectors, including social innovation in the Atlantic Area;
- Improving capacities and cooperation, including digitalisation to help technology and innovation transfers to SMEs and other stakeholders (ports, local communities, public authorities...) in the blue economy sectors to increase their competitiveness and resilience (upskilling, social inclusion, etc.);
- Developing and applying new materials for the blue economy activities; Key enabling technologies [TRL-6+ (Technology Readiness Levels)];
- Enhancing sectorial Smart specialisation strategies: enhance the knowledge, skills and innovation communities (KICs), in particular in terms of blue economy;
- Fostering interregional multi-level maritime clusters (quadruple helix);
- Improving collaboration along value chains of products and services through support to innovation, to open up new business opportunities and markets and help societal resilience;
- Supporting marine observation to provide robust data, from which innovative products and services could be developed in established and emerging maritime sectors;
- Supporting innovation in the blue bioeconomy: healthcare and pharmaceutical applications; and aquaculture; industrial processes and manufacturing; energy production, biological waste prevention and recycling through technology and the use and valorisation of marine and maritime (co)products, etc.;
- Supporting the fishing and aquaculture sector through innovation to develop new products and applications in food, feed, fertilisers, cosmetics, nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, bio-materials, etc.;
- Support social entrepreneurship and cultural & creative industries in a post-covid context.

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Encouraging the **digitisation** of the blue economy sectors and the **skilling** and **upskilling** of AA workers and enterprises (SO 1.2+1.4)

- Raise awareness, train and make digital tools / processes /services available: information events, workshops, technology demonstration, free information sessions, one to one consulting, third places with access to digital tools and training, collect and use of data to develop new digital products and services etc.;
- Training programmes/modules to respond to the needs of the companies and workers in the key maritime sectors promoting digital platforms and data, by developing appropriate employment model trainings;
- Promoting maritime training programmes and methodologies valid for the whole AA and transferable among blue economic sectors;
- Coordinating and taking advantage of existing information platforms for job opportunities and harvest their potential for blue jobs;
- Adaptation of Industry 4.0 through collaborative projects with digital upskilling, tools (e.g. online platforms and market places) and processes (e.g. logistics and storage) and digitalisation of the blue economy sectors and public services to adapt to climate change and face the Covid effect;
- Strengthening collaboration between education and industry by assessing the needs for digitalisation in the value chain and promoting the adaptation of the technical and VET plans;
- Reinforcing entrepreneurship and self-employment models in the digital sectors, and by using digitalisation tools in all the sectors;
- Capitalisation actions from previous periods in the AA or in other Territorial Cooperation programmes.

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Coordinating the efforts of the relevant actors and initiatives in the territory in order to achieve a greater impact on the territory and **efficiency in the production and use of green energy resources**  
(SO 2.1)

Encouraging the development of **renewable energies** in the cooperation area by taking advantage of the resources of a maritime area (blue energy) and the conditions of coastal and close to the coast areas.  
(SO 2.2)

Tackling smart and sustainable energy production systems and storage facilities for local communities  
(SO 2.3)

- Supporting common strategies to reduce GES emissions in the industrial sectors and housing and transports in the AA;
- Supporting the development of business networks at AA level for the transition towards a climate-neutral economy and society;
- Improving energy management by developing and comparable models between regions and sectors of the AA, development of energy storage pilots and energy management systems, collection of data on energy management and their interoperability through digital technologies to help the development of green energies, energy efficiency and the reduction of air pollution;
- Develop local, regional and/or sectoral action plans to reduce GES emissions thanks to renewable energies and the application of efficient techniques and technologies, especially related to the sea potential;
- Supporting the development of sustainable ocean energy technologies and their application in the AA;
- Capitalisation of the results of projects in the AA and in other areas of cooperation, in particular those with a maritime component;
- Supporting pilot actions and measures increasing energy efficiency in the sectors of the blue economy (e.g. community led energy grids), and the integration of sustainable energy sources, including green hydrogen, methanisation, etc.;
- Developing technological, legal and training solutions for the enhancement of marine renewable energies and energy efficiency in industrial estates, businesses, public facilities, social housings, etc.;
- Pilot actions to test production of decentralised renewable energy and the empowerment of renewable self-consumers and local communities;
- Encouraging ports (and also marinas) to share good practices, exchanging ideas and tackle problems jointly to reduce energy consumption and tap more into renewable energies;
- Analysing the best options to reduce environmental impact to produce and even store energy, including best sites for marine renewable energy farms and adjacent ports across the Atlantic taking into account potential impacts on the marine environment.

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Strengthening the AA adaptation to the effects of **climate change** in coastal and close to the coast areas to enable the development of economic activities and the enhancement of natural heritage areas.

Strengthening the AA stakeholders to improve their capacities to manage natural **risks**  
(SO 2.4)

- Identification of common natural and / or technological hazards in the AA, data collection, analysis of their impacts, resilience and mitigation measures in coastal and close to the coast areas, development of mapping and joint action plans, especially for sectors of the blue economy and the marine environment;
- Promoting sectoral or territorial plans for adaptation or mitigation to the effects of climate change, especially sectors of the blue economy;
- Developing integrated strategies and solutions to support social resilience and counteracting socio-economic impacts on climate change, on groups and sectors coastal protection measures / nature-based solutions / ecosystem services (e.g. blue and green corridors, floodplains etc.) against natural and/or technological and / or man-made hazards compatible with landscape protection and the development of economic activities;
- Increasing climate resilience of critical infrastructures and cultural heritage sites through improved risks alerts and risks management plans;
- Integrating adaptation to climate change in water management strategies: water quality, flooding, water scarcity, drinking water, water pricing, ground water, promotion of a water saving culture, etc.;
- Supporting marine observation to increase our knowledge and ability to forecast the behaviour of the ocean and its ecosystem and make the best of ecosystem services and stimulate behavioural change among the stakeholders (businesses, ports, public authorities, academics and local communities);
- Strengthening capacity building and awareness raising to address environmental issues in order to change behaviour in the use of natural resources (including in tourism and agriculture practices);
- Tackling the negative impact of main economic sectors (agriculture, tourism, fisheries...) improving information sharing, knowledge, exchange and access to big data (or other available data) and tools on adaptation to climate change;
- Supporting coordinated actions to prevent and response to deliberate and accidental pollution.

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Strengthening the **transition** of public actors, businesses and industries, from the AA to working methods based on the **circular economy** that reduces waste generation and reuses those generated to limit pollution (SO 2.6)

- Identification of the need for improvements, changes, etc. in sectorial value chains (blue economy sectors) and / or local communities and / or industrial estates to reduce barriers for circular economy applications and test pilots to boost behavioural change;
- Increasing awareness of stakeholders about the need to transition towards a circular economy in the blue economy sectors and / or local communities and / or industrial estates in the AA;
- Awareness actions to reduce the use of plastics and other waste and their discharge into the ocean, and developing sustainable alternatives to the use of plastics and other waste by supporting the development of biodegradable organic substitutes or composites;
- Exchanging knowledge and good practices on solutions to support circular economy, use and repair, recycling and upcycling in industrial sectors in blue economy... and testing them in pilot actions in the AA;
- Developing and testing approaches enhancing market demand for recycled materials and products (e.g. sustainable public procurement, ecodesign, etc);
- Supporting eco-innovative business models (possible sector agriculture, food, fisheries, health);
- Supporting sustainable practices for waste reduction and prevention (over packing, focus on plastic).

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Preserving **biodiversity** areas and maintain a balance between the **protection** of natural areas and economic activities in the Blue Economy to promote sustainable growth  
(SO 2.7)

- Restoration of degraded ecosystems, creation of multifunctional ecological continuities (blue and green corridors to foster biodiversity, ecosystem services and for recreational purposes -sustainable tourism);
- Developing measures for the protection of natural heritage for the recovery, enhancement, management, sustainable development of economic activities;
- Plans and coordinated measures to improve and promote biodiversity and reduce threats to AA flora and fauna, including invasive alien species;
- Linking green and blue infrastructures to create and strengthen ecological corridors and protected sites at local, regional and transnational level to reduce landscape fragmentation and improve the connectivity of habitats;
- Supporting the analysis and processing of reliable data on the impact of marine litter and plastics on the marine economy and ecosystems;
- Testing in pilot actions innovative technical solutions for restoring degraded maritime and hinterland ecosystems;
- Testing pilot actions of “litter-free” coastal communities;
- Design and implementation of joint strategies for sustainable tourism that valorises the AA natural heritage: protected areas, wetlands, landscapes, ... through participatory approaches and avoiding usage conflicts;
- Supporting long-term sustainability of both nature and other man-made activities into nature-friendly practices that would benefit the biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Supporting joint actions to promote a public awareness of the problem, e.g. beach days, beach cleaning days, etc.;
- Promoting fishing-for-litter actions to encourage fishermen to bring ashore the waste caught in their nets during their regular fishing activities;
- Reinforcing transnational links to protect and restore more effectively the areas covered by Natura 2000 network and marine protected areas;
- Strengthening land-sea interaction (ecological corridors);
- Exploring and promoting the articulation between cultural and natural heritage and sustainable tourism.

## D. Indicative actions per Specific Objective

Promoting **tourism activities and cultural heritage elements** as dynamic vectors of economic development in the AA, so that they acquire resilience and adaptation to unforeseen or behavioural changes.  
(SO 4.5)

- Plans for the design and promotion of sustainable tourism in the AA, including approaches for common protocols for the provision of tourism services after Covid-19
- Development of innovative solutions and new business models in culture / creative and cultural industries and tourism, supporting cultural clusters through cooperation, networking, exchanges.
- Tackling the diversification of tourism activities, including culture, the extension of seasonal peaks and adaptation to consumer changes after Covid-19 towards less-crowded destinations, rural, natural, coastal tourism
- Driving diverse forms of sustainable coastal tourism such as cultural, rural, sport, nautical,...) and combined products cultural events, cultural routes (e.g. old galleons, remarkable sites), bicycle rides, fisheries, boat trips to see seals or offshore wind-farms and other activities.
- Supporting on-line training systems that favour the transmission of knowledge and the acquisition of professional skills in AA priorities, support the introduction of digital tools in tourism
- Enhancing the adaptation of traditional tourism mobility to a sustainable mobility in line with natural and sustainable destinations
- Facilitating exchange systems between training centres, in vocational education and training (VET)
- Supporting long-term sustainability of both nature and tourism activities

## D. Indicative actions for Interreg Specific Objective 1

**Better governance** for the Atlantic Area based on the coordination of Institutional bodies, programmes and the Atlantic Strategy (ISO1)

- Coordinating with the Atlantic Strategy for the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan 2.0;
- Capitalising of results with other cooperation programmes within the AA area or neighbouring transnational programmes;
- Contribution to better coordination with other EU programmes, national and regional strategies;
- Encouraging studies and data collection about strategic subjects for the AA;
- Improving capacities of public authorities to design and implement integrated, multi-sectoral territorial strategies;
- Development of spatial, coastal, marine and other strategies relevant to the AA Programme.