SECOND CALL FOR PROJECTS
15 March to 01 June 2018
ANNOUNCEMENT

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2014-2020 invites organisations in the Atlantic Area regions to submit applications to its second call for proposals.

Objectives

The Programme is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation objective of the European Union Cohesion Policy for the programming period 2014-2020. The Programme 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.

The Programme runs from 2015 to 2020 and invests EUR 140 M ERDF to co-finance transnational cooperation projects promoted by organisations from the Atlantic Area. Projects will be expected to deliver against the outputs specified in the reference document "Atlantic Area Cooperation Programme" 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. The latest version of the Cooperation Programme document constitutes the legal basis for this call for projects and is available on the Programme website (click here to access this document).

Eligible regions

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

Atlantic Area eligible regions
France: Territories of the former Regions : 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.

Priorities and ERDF budget availability

The Programme has EUR 43 M remaining for this second call for proposals. The table below provides more details on how much is remaining for each of the four Programme priority axes. This allocation may be adjusted by the Monitoring Committee in line with the needs of the Programme.

Priorities	Specific objectives	Indicative ERDF allocation
1. Stimulating innovation and competitiveness	1.1 - Enhancing innovation capacity through cooperation to foster competitiveness	EUR 11 M
	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	EUR 10 M
	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	EUR 10 M
4. Enhancing biodiversity and natural and cultural assets	4.1 - Improving the protection of biodiversity and enhancing ecosystems' services	EUR 12 M
	4.2 - Enhancing natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development	

All priority axes in the cooperation Programme are open. Under the terms of this call, a project proposal must focus on only one priority axis and one specific objective.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to check the already approved projects in the respective thematic areas to avoid duplication and make use of synergies. The Committee will not approve project applications that duplicate what has already been funded.

Application process

The second call for projects is organised according to a one step procedure. Full project proposals must be submitted only through the web-based application form which will be made available on the Atlantic Area Programme website (www.atlanticarea.eu).

Submission and approval of full applications

Applicants will have 11 weeks to submit their full project application. The Joint Secretariat of the Programme will assess all the applications on the basis of the selection criteria approved by the Monitoring Committee composed by the Members States of the Programme. Final decisions will be made by the Committee by end of October 2018. The notification to applicants will be made by email no later than one month after the decision date. The decision results will also be made available on the Atlantic Area Programme website (www.atlanticarea.eu).

Practical information

The electronic application form, the Programme Manual - which provides detailed support and guidance for applicants - and other relevant documents including the "Atlantic Area Cooperation Programme", will be made available in the "Call for Projects" domain of the Programme website (www.atlanticarea.eu). It is important that applicants consult all the information in each document before applying for the Programme.

Calendar

15 March 2018	Opening of the call for projects
1st June 2018 – 1:00 PM (Lisbon time)	Deadline for the submission of the application
End of October 2018	Monitoring Committee approval decision

Quality of projects, results and impacts sought

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme Monitoring Committee is the governing body for the 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 the Programme specific objectives.

The Programme is committed to fund high quality 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 changes in the region. They must, therefore, have a strong design and relevance for all partner regions involved, respond to a 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. The Monitoring Committee also prioritises sustainable projects, so will pay attention to how projects plan to leave a legacy and to roll out results widely across the programme area.

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. It 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. Nevertheless, it must involve at least 3 partners located in eligible regions and from 3 different Member States, and demonstrate how it can benefit the whole programme area.

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 eligible area, possessing strong administrative and financial capacity

to engage transnationally and have the competencies to manage the project and partnership effectively.

Duration of projects

Projects should normally propose a work timeline with a duration of 18 to 36 months, with a start in the first half of 2019 and taking into account that the latest possible end date for a project is 31 December 2022.

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 MS of the Programme area must be sought by projects. The programme considers value-for-money to be very important, so project budgets should be proportionate to the results they will deliver.

Expenditure is considered eligible if it complies with European and national rules and the established[1] 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 (If the project activities are regarded as State Aid relevant[2], restrictions might be applied (lower co-financing rate, ceiling of ERDF contribution etc.), which is reimbursed by certified payment claims.

Award criteria

The received applications are assessed following a standardised procedure, which safeguards the principles of transparency and equal treatment. After a formal/administrative compliance check,

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[1] Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 - Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation laying down subject matter and scope, thematic concentration and investment priorities, programming, monitoring and evaluation, eligibility, management, control and designation, financial management and common output indicators.

[2] Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid and Commission Regulation (EU) N°651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty

eligible proposals are evaluated against the following list of strategic and operational assessment criteria:

Selection criteria	Weight
Strategic criteria (60%)	
Consistency and policy relevance	5
Transnationality and cooperation intensity	5
Partnership	5
Relevance to the Programme intervention logic	15
Sustainability & Results	15
Value for money	15
Operational criteria (40%)	
Work plan: main outputs	5
Work plan: work packages	10
Work plan: risk management	10
Work plan: communication	5
Work plan: budget	10

Documents to be provided for the submission

Each partner will have to submit:

- A Co-financing Declaration as the template provided by the Programme, signed by the organization's legal representative;

- A probative/ official template provided by the Programme indicating that the signing Legal Representative is in capacity to commit the organization;

- For those projects involving partners from countries that do not belong to the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme, the template provided by the Programme for this purpose must be signed by the partner indicating that the relevant and entitled national authority responsible for certification[3] has been contacted.

Language use

Applicants can communicate with the Joint Secretariat in any of the 4 Programme languages (Portuguese, Spanish, French or English). However, the project 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. It is important to take

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[3] Article 20-2 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation laying down subject matter and scope, thematic concentration and investment priorities, programming, monitoring and evaluation, eligibility, management, control and designation, financial management and common output indicators – Contact list is available here.

time to get this right and to use the wider project partnership to help with this; poor translations cannot be assessed properly and suggest a lack of close partnership working.

Information and assistance

More details about the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme is available at: www.atlanticarea.eu

It is also possible to contact representatives of the National Contact Points/Correspondents located in each Atlantic Area Member State or the Joint Secretariat (js@atlanticarea.eu) based in Porto. Contact information is available on the Programme website.