

## **INTERREG ATLANTIC AREA PROGRAMME 2021-2027**

### **Terms of Reference - First Call for Proposals**

#### **OUR MISSION**

The Interreg Atlantic Area Programme 2021-2027 is an EU transnational cooperation programme, funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the European Territorial Cooperation objective of the EU Cohesion Policy. The Programme is anchored on several EU policy initiatives, including the European Blue Growth Strategy, the European Green Deal, the Territorial Agenda 2030 and the EU Atlantic Maritime Strategy.

The Programme's mission is to be at the forefront of the transition to a unique, carbon neutral and climate resilient Atlantic Area Region. The Programme will foster the integration of sustainable economic development, societal well-being, and the preservation of biodiversity.

For this purpose, it will bring together stakeholders from different sectors and regions to work on innovative and pioneering ideas and create benefits for those who live and work in the Atlantic Area.

The Programme partner states will invest EUR 104 699 969 ERDF to co-finance transnational cooperation projects promoted by public and private organisations from the four Atlantic Area countries.

The Atlantic Area covers the western part of the Atlantic Ocean and includes all regions of Ireland and Portugal, as well as several French and Spanish regions close to or on the Atlantic Ocean coast. The total list of regions included in the Programme is as follows:

- France: Bretagne ; Normandie, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, Pays de la Loire.
- Ireland: Northern and Western; Southern; Eastern and Midland;
- Portugal: Norte, Algarve; Centro; Lisboa; Alentejo; Região Autónoma das Açores; Região Autónoma de Madeira;
- Spain: País Vasco; Navarra; La Rioja; Cantabria; Principado de Asturias; Galicia; Andalucía; Islas Canarias.

## **ATLANTIC AREA CHALLENGES**

Transnational cooperation is key to address the global challenges faced by European countries. Indeed, Europe is facing several ongoing mega-trends such as climate change and digitalisation. Their acceleration impacts economies and societies and demands adequate responses from stakeholders working across borders.

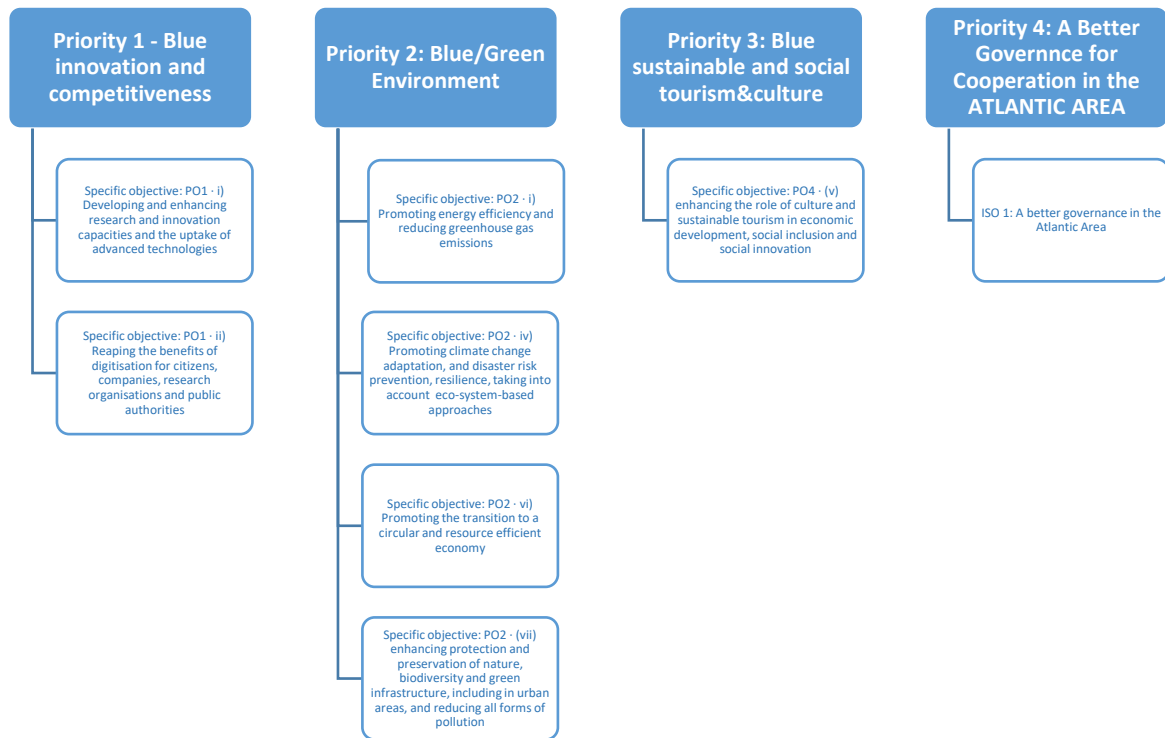
Even though the area is already experiencing climate change direct impacts through extreme weather events, the impacts on ecosystems, territories and economies are often uncertain. The implementation of mitigation and adaptation measures are amongst the priorities of public and civil society organisations.

The Atlantic Area, due to its geographical and maritime characteristics, is in constant evolution and subject to challenges that are common to all the regions that are part of the Programme.

The Atlantic Area is a maritime territory. This characteristic, together with the coast-hinterland interrelationships, corresponds to a major approach to the Programme's conception. In addition, the cooperation area is located within the EU Atlantic Maritime Strategy, so the development of synergies between the Programme and this strategy is highly recommended to complement efforts and achieve more powerful results, with hopefully a more significant impact on the public policies level.

In this sense, the Atlantic Maritime Strategy published in July 2020: the Atlantic Action Plan 2.0, has been considered in the Programme design.

The Atlantic Area strategy for the period 2021-2027 is developed through selected priorities and specific objectives presented in the table below:



For a detailed description of the contents of each priority and specific objectives, including information on the main challenges, type of actions, and the expected contribution to the Atlantic Strategy, please refer to the Interreg Atlantic Area Programme and Programme Manual.

All projects are expected to address the above-mentioned issues, to contribute to innovative solutions, and through their activities, projects are to contribute to reaching the objectives of the Programme. The approaches can be new, even experimental, since the programme is particularly suited for testing new methods in a transnational network.

Transnational cooperation projects bring together project partners from the four countries participating in the Programme, to work on a shared challenge and achieve innovative solutions that can be applied transnationally and also regionally or locally. The development of these joint solutions requires enthusiasm and commitment during project development and implementation. Transnational cooperation enables the establishment of strong and lasting ties with partners in other Atlantic Area regions.

Projects financed by the Atlantic Area Programme must demonstrate high transnational cooperation intensity throughout their lifetime with a clear focus on results. This means that partners must work together to deliver, disseminate and roll-out the results of their project.

Moreover, a special emphasis will be placed on promoting partnerships involving a high diversity of actors covering the quadruple helix approach, including the relevant social and civil society actors, to achieve better linkages between public, private and research actors.

These terms of reference address the first 3 thematic priorities only.

Applicants need to keep in mind the following keystones:

- The total project amount should preferentially be, for this call in a range between EUR 1 and 3.5 million;
- Projects will be co-financed and reimbursed up to 75%;
- The indicative duration is up to 36 months;
- Projects must include at least one partner from each Member State of the cooperation area.
- Should involve 4 to 12 full partners, taking into account that projects must include at least partners from the 4 MS of the cooperation area, one per country.

Project applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the reference values as outlined above. Deviations may be accepted in well-justified cases only.

### **FIRST CALL – Traditional projects**

The first call for proposals intends to select high quality transnational projects, in which relevant organisations cooperate to make regions more resilient to common challenges that know no borders and which cannot be solved alone. Within the first call, project proposals can be submitted under the three thematic Programme priorities and seven specific objectives. The description of Programme priorities and objectives, together with the type of actions, is provided in Programme documents and can be found on the [Programme website](#).

Applicants need to submit the application form through the SIGI platform. Guidance on how to fill out the application form is available in the application kit presented on the [Programme website](#).

### **Types of projects supported and timeline**

For this First Call, the Programme will support the presentation of traditional projects for thematic priorities 1, 2 and 3.



First Call 2022 - **45%** of the Programme budget allocated to thematic priorities. This allocation may be adjusted by the Monitoring Committee in line with the needs of the Programme:

Priority	ERDF		1st call 2022 - 45% ERDF
PO1	29 169 346,00 €	29%	13 126 205,70 €
PO2	54 423 462,00 €	54%	24 490 557,90 €
PO3	17 357 161,00 €	17%	7 810 722,45 €
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 949 969,00 €</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>45 427 486,05 €</b>

**Eligible Lead Partners for the first call for proposals are:**

Lead Partner organisations can be public bodies, universities, education and research organisations, private institutions (not-for-profit) and international organisations acting under national law.

The Lead Partner must be located in the Programme eligible area.

**HOW TO APPLY**

The project application follows a one-step procedure.

Applicants need to submit the application form through the SIGI platform. Guidance on how to fill out the application form is available on the application pack included on the Programme website.

**Application Pack**

The application pack for the call is available on the Programme website and includes the following:

- The present Terms of Reference;
- Programme Manual 2021-2027;
- How to complete the Application Form guide;
- Templates;
- FAQs for the First Call;
- Approved Cooperation Programme 2021-2027;
- Interreg Atlantic Area Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening.



Project applicants who would like to submit a proposal must complete the application form in English, and may also be in other Programme working languages.

The online system runs several automatic validation checks which prevent a user from submitting the form if it is not properly filled.

Furthermore, the following advice for the project development and application should be considered:

- Read carefully the Atlantic Area Programme, as all project proposals are required to identify the priority and specific objective they will be contributing to;
- Get in touch with the Atlantic Area Joint Secretariat or National Authorities in your country for more information;
- Discover the results already delivered by the Atlantic Area Programme on the website;
- Read the Programme manual.

## **HOW PROJECTS WILL BE SELECTED**

All projects will be assessed by the Joint Secretariat with the support of the Atlantic Area National Authorities against a pre-defined set of selection criteria, as stated in the Programme manual. The project assessment is done based on the information submitted at the time of application and the selection is made by the Programme Monitoring Committee.

Training will be provided to successful applicants in relation to effective project implementation throughout the programming period, including Q&A sessions and online tutorials.

## **TIMELINE**

The call will be open for 18 weeks, from the 14<sup>th</sup> of October to the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, until 6 pm (Lisbon time). Results should be communicated to candidates within 6-8 months after submission.

The following timeline is valid for the case up to 100 project proposals are received for assessment. In case more applications are received, the assessment period will be extended proportionally and published on the Programme website soon after the submission deadline.