

**ANNOUNCEMENT
THIRD CALL FOR PROJECTS
14 FEBRUARY TO 30 APRIL 2011**

SUMMARY

The Transnational Cooperation Programme Atlantic Area 2007-2013 launches its third call for projects. The Atlantic Area is an Operational Programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It aims to achieve significant and tangible progress in transnational cooperation geared towards cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic Area and its maritime heritage.

Objectives

The following priorities are open:

1. Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks,
2. Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainability.
3. Improve accessibility and internal links.

Financial allocation

An amount of **€ 23 057 055 of ERDF** is available for this call for projects. The ERDF co-financing rate may not exceed 65% of eligible project costs. The following table provides a breakdown of available ERDF funding by specific objective:

Specific Objective	ERDF (M€)
1.2	1 977 715
2.1 and 2.3	10 475 200
3.1 and 3.2	10 604 140

Timetable

The call is open from **14th February to 30th April 2011**. Projects submitted after 8 pm (UTC/GMT/Portuguese time) on 30th April 2011 will be automatically considered inadmissible.

Application process

Project applications must be submitted using the electronic application form. The application form, the Project Applicants Handbook and other relevant documents are available in the "Call for Projects" domain of the Programme website (<http://www.coop-atlantico.com>). The Programme website uploading tool provided in the domain "Call for Projects" must be used for the submission of projects.

Date: 14/02/2011

Background

The European Commission approved the Atlantic Area Operational Programme (OP) 2007-2013 on 20th September 2007 and granted it ERDF assistance.

The Atlantic Area is a recognised EU transnational cooperation region established to increase cooperation across Member States on matters of strategic importance. With the exception of Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands, this territory brings together the Atlantic regions of Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom in a Transnational Cooperation Programme seeking to improve in a sustainable way its economic and social integration and cohesion and enhance its maritime heritage.

The strategic priorities of the Atlantic Area Programme are:

- 1. To promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks**, aiming to develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres, to enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence and to stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting regional endogenous potentials
- 2. To protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainability**, aiming to improve maritime safety, the sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces, to exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment and to protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones.
- 3. To improve accessibility and internal links**, aiming to promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality and to promote short sea shipping and cooperation between ports.
- 4. To promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development**, aiming to pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development, to make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking and to conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest.

Eligible regions

The cooperation area covered by the OP includes the European Atlantic regions listed below. Project partners must be located within the eligible territory of the Atlantic Area regions. However, in duly justified cases, as defined in paragraphs 386 and 387 of the OP, organisations based outside the cooperation area, may join project partnerships of the Programme, if the benefit for regions in the cooperation area is demonstrated.

ATLANTIC AREA REGIONS

Spain

Galicia; Principado de Asturias; Cantabria; País Vasco; Comunidad Foral de Navarra; Cádiz, Huelva and Sevilla.

France

Haute-Normandie; Basse-Normandie; Bretagne; Pays de la Loire; Poitou-Charentes; Aquitaine.

Ireland:

The entire country (Border; Midland and Western; Southern and Eastern).

Portugal:

Norte; Centro; Lisboa; Alentejo; Algarve.

United Kingdom:

Cumbria; Cheshire; Greater Manchester; Lancashire; Merseyside; Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset; Dorset and Somerset Cornwall and Isles of Scilly; Devon; West Wales and The Valleys; East Wales; South Western Scotland; Highlands and Islands; Northern Ireland.



Who can apply?

A wide range of legal bodies, under public or private law, are potential beneficiaries of ERDF funding and may therefore join a project partnership.

Eligible bodies cover entities like:

- National, regional and local authorities including sector departments and related public agencies, or public equivalent agencies;
- Universities, research centres and development agencies;
- Not for profit organisations.

The application must be submitted by a Lead Partner who must assume the financial and legal responsibility for the entire project (under conditions defined by EC regulations). Any type of organisation listed above may act as Lead Partner, subject to sufficient guarantees of its solvency and management capacities being provided. It is assumed that public organisations are solvent.

Furthermore, profit-making enterprises having an industrial or commercial character may participate as partners in an Atlantic Area project and may receive ERDF funding only for travel, accommodation and the corresponding audit costs associated with First level Control.

In order to achieve a strategic dimension, projects will have to involve key actors, decision makers, experts on the issues the project is dealing with, and end users as far as possible.

The Lead Partner must also possess strong administrative and financial capacity, and organisational experience, preferably through engagement in transnational projects, as well as a driving capacity within the partnership.

Funding allocation

An ERDF amount of **€ 23 057 055** is available while the ERDF co-financing rate may not exceed **65%** of eligible project expenditures. The breakdown, by Programme priorities and specific objectives for this call for projects is set out in the following table:

Priority/Specific objective		ERDF (M€)
1	1.2 Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence:	1 977 715
2	2.1 Improve maritime safety: 2.2 Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment	10 475 200
3	3.1 Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality 3.2 Promote short sea shipping and cooperation between ports	10 604 140

Important dates

The call for projects **opens on 14 February 2011 and closes on 30 April 2011**. Projects submitted after 8 pm (UTC/GMT/Portuguese time) of 30 April 2011 will be automatically considered inadmissible. Decisions on applications are scheduled to be taken by October 2011.

Timetable	
14-02-2011	Start up of the third call for projects
30-04-2011 (Portuguese 8 pm)	Deadline date for submission of project proposals
October 2011	Decision on applications

Application process

Project applications must be presented using the electronic application form. The application form, Applicants Handbook and the other relevant documents are available in the “Call for Projects” domain of the programme website (<http://www.coop-atlantico.com>).

The programme website uploading tool provided in the domain “Call for Projects” must be used for the submission of projects. No other method of submission will be allowed. A notification will automatically be generated confirming the receipt of the application.

The application form can be filled in using one of the programme languages (English, Spanish, French or Portuguese). However, as far as possible, the application form should be submitted in the various languages represented within the partnership of the project. At least a summary must be presented in the four languages of the Member States of the Programme.

Once submitted in the valid format, proposals will undergo an admissibility check as well as an analysis under the appropriate selection criteria (as referred to in the Operational Programme and as detailed in the Project Applicants Handbook). The Monitoring Committee will take a decision on the selection of project applications according to the admissibility and selection reports produced by the Joint Technical Secretariat in collaboration with the National Correspondents of each Member State.

Preparing a project application

General rules

Projects must comply with the general basic principles of the Atlantic Area Programme as set out in the Operational Programme and in the Project Applicants Handbook.

The following five admissibility criteria shall be complied with:

- The application was submitted before the closing date through the means established by the Programme.
- The project has not been completed before the date of submission of the application.
- The electronic application form is valid, all compulsory sections are completed and all declarations are presented, signed, dated¹.

¹ A sole PDF version of the electronic application is invalid.

- The lead partner is an organisation within the eligible programme area.
- The project is transnational (involving cooperating partners from at least two Member-States of the five participating in the Programme) and complies with transnational cooperation criteria set out in Article 19 point 1 of EC Regulation 1080/2006 (Cooperate in at least two of the following ways for each operation: joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and joint financing).

Duration of projects

For this call a duration of about 2 years is advised taking into account the time needed for the submission of all certifying documents to the relevant authorities for control and audit purposes, and the corresponding payments. The legal closure of the Operational Programme being 31 January 2015.

Any project intending to have a duration exceeding 2 years and up to 3 years will have to demonstrate its actual capacity to start activities quickly in the very beginning of 2012.

Budget and eligible expenditure

There is no pre-established lower or upper limit to project budgets as the emphasis should be on quality and value for money rather than size of the budget. However, as a general indication, please note that the average budget for projects approved in the first and second calls was € 2.500.000.

Expenditure is considered eligible if it complies with European and national rules. Project Partners should carefully consider the established Programme Budget category thresholds and National Eligibility Rules when preparing financial plans. Project budgets should be prepared taking account of the principles of economic efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Eligible expenses shall be incurred in the eligibility period of the Operational programme.

Notes for applicants

Projects submitted within the limited number of priorities and objectives opened within the framework of the Third call shall achieve a more strategic dimension than in previous calls. This implies a clear horizontal approach and particular consideration of all the aspects mentioned below:

Consistency with European, national and regional policies and reference to state of the art studies, research and expert reports.

Projects having a strategic dimension must:

- Take into consideration the general and specific European, national and regional policies or initiatives, highlighting the potential connections with all the countries involved and/or with the project geographical area as a whole, and demonstrate how they are taken into account in the objectives, work programme and activities;
- Be explicit as regards their added value against the existing European or national / regional policies or existing projects within the definition of their objectives and work programme;
- Make clear reference to any relevant studies research or expert report directly related to the subject of the project, whenever it is available, and demonstrate how some policies or recommendations will be integrated to the project overall and specific objectives.

Impact on the cooperation area

Projects having a strategic dimension must:

- Demonstrate they focus on a targeted impact on the programme cooperation area;
- Provide clear indicators on how the expected impact will be reached.

Type of projects

Projects having a strategic dimension must:

- Capitalise on experience and experimentations, proposing a transfer of know-how of methods and best practices likely to have tangible impact on actors and territories;
- Avoid the sole production of information and analyses having a theoretical approach;
- Not be limited to exchange of experience, otherwise they will not be considered for selection.

Strong and coherent partnerships

- Projects having a strategic dimension need to be developed and implemented in cooperation with key actors (regional authorities, state departments, specialised agencies, intermediary organisations, etc.) and the partnership needs to involve decision makers, experts in the field and the main stakeholders and end users, as much as possible;
- For all the partners, a strong administrative and financial capacity must be demonstrated as well as a clear financial commitment, competence and the necessary skills and experience in the projects thematic areas;
- The Lead Partner must demonstrate the capacity and know how to deliver the project and possess solid administrative and organisational experience, preferably through engagement in transnational projects, as well as a driving capacity within the partnership.

Sustainability of results

Projects must be in a position to demonstrate their capacity to be sustainable that is:

- To have medium to long term impact;
- To secure future support and funding, should it be needed;
- To produce a leverage effect leading to the mainstreaming of EU, national and regional policies.

And must also:

Include provisions and a clear work programme demonstrating:

- How projects results will be promoted and disseminated in direction of the relevant programmes/projects/initiatives;
- How they will be incorporated to the policies of the key project stakeholders, during the life of the project and beyond;
- How concrete cooperation will be established with other public and private bodies during and potentially after the completion of the project.

Methodological and organisational aspects:

- Project methodology should be clear and coherent, demonstrating step-by-step how overall project goals will be reached;
- A sound financial management and budget must be set up and supported by the relevant information and explanations;



- Project management and communication systems must be detailed and explained;
- A system of objective-based indicators allowing for monitoring and evaluation should be established;
- Provisions for sustainability and dissemination of projects results must be set out.

Additional information

Please use the help tools of the Programme website or contact directly the Joint Technical Secretariat or your National Correspondent. Contacts addresses are available on the Programme website (<http://www.coop-atlantico.com>).

