

ANNOUNCEMENT
FOURTH CALL FOR PROJECTS
CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
29 JANUARY TO 15 MARCH 2013

SUMMARY

The Atlantic Area Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 launches its fourth call for projects by means of a call for Expressions of interest. This Operational Programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 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.

Priorities

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.
4. Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development

Application process

The process will be organised in two stages.

First stage - submission and selection of an Expression of interest

Applicants are invited to submit Expressions of Interest, which will provide a broad outline of the proposed project. The Expression of Interest will set out a background and summary of the project, justification for the project, project objectives, a description of the partnership, details on the Implementation Methodology, an indicative project budget and other basic information of the project. The Expression of Interest must be completed on the electronic form provided. Expressions of Interest must propose work programmes of no longer than 18 months.

Second Stage – Shortlisting of Expressions of interest, submission of full projects and approval

1. Following the eligibility check and assessment by the Joint Technical Secretariat of the expression of interest, the Monitoring Committee will decide on their approval and ranking and establish a shortlist.
2. According to their ranking shortlisted applicants will then be invited to prepare and submit a full project application when funding is available. Applicants will have 4 weeks to submit their full projects from the date they are called upon to do so, and a maximum of 4 extra weeks to integrate possible requests and recommendations from the JTS.
3. Approval decisions will be made by the Monitoring Committee within 2 weeks.

Date: 29/01/2013

Practical information

The electronic form for the Expression of Interest, 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.

Timetable	
29 January 2013	Opening of the fourth call for projects
15 March 2013	Deadline date for submission of Expressions of Interest
7 May 2013	Decision on Expressions of Interest
From May 2013	Decisions to approve full project applications

Expressions of Interest submitted after 8 pm (UTC/GMT/Portuguese time) on March 15th 2013 will automatically be considered inadmissible.

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?

Wide ranges 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 Government Departments, public sector agencies or public equivalent bodies;
- 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.

Financial allocation

The selection of Expressions of Interest is a pre-condition for final project approval. No commitment of ERDF will be made at the Expression of Interest stage. Expression of Interest



will be ranked per priority and descending order of their evaluation scores. According to the availability of funds and ranking, shortlisted Expression of Interest will be invited to complete a fully costed Application, including a detailed work plan and budgetary plan.

The ERDF intervention rate will not exceed 65% of eligible project costs.

General rules

In this first stage of project's selection, applicants submit only a broad outline of a project by way of an Expression of Interest. Proposals 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 started before the date of submission of the application.
- The electronic application form is valid and all compulsory sections are completed.
- 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).

The Programme Monitoring Committee will ultimately make the final decision on all applications.

Duration of projects

For this call a shorter duration of a maximum of 18 months applies. The project end date cannot go beyond 31 March 2015.

Budget and eligible expenditure

There is no pre-established lower or upper limit to project budgets. The emphasis of assessment will be on quality and cost-effectiveness rather than size of the budget. However, as a general indication, it must be noted that the average ERDF amount approved per project in the first three calls was € 1.510.000, for an average of 9 partners per project and project duration of 36 months. Projects are requested to take into consideration the requisite 18 month project duration when preparing budgets.

Expenditure is considered eligible if it complies with European and national rules and the established legal limits and if it is directly related to the project and observes the principles of economic efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Eligible expenses shall be incurred in the eligibility period of the Operational programme.

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>).

