



**SOUTHERN**  
Regional Assembly  
*Promoting our Region*



**Ireland's European Structural and  
Investment Funds Programmes  
2014-2020**

Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union

**EU Funds:  
Ireland Wales Co-operation  
Programme 2014-2020  
Summary Document**

## WHAT IS THE IRELAND WALES CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME?

The €100m Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme is funded through the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Linking the west coast of Wales with the south-east of Ireland, the Programme's vision statement is:

*'To provide the framework for organisations in the cross-border area to actively cooperate to address challenges and shared priorities of common interest on both sides of the Irish Sea thereby contributing and adding value to the economic and sustainable development priorities of Ireland and Wales.'*

The Programme will support operations with partners based in both Ireland and Wales, focussing on activities across three key priority areas which will go some way to providing solutions to common challenges. The Irish Sea will be a central focus for the Programme given the maritime nature of the border between Ireland and Wales and the significant benefits which can be derived from this important resource.

## FOCUS OF THE 2014-2020 PROGRAMME

- **CROSS-BORDER** – genuine cross-border operations, providing clear added value
- **ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES** – focus on economic activity and jobs and growth
- **QUALITY** – good quality operations seeking solutions to shared challenges and priorities
- **RESULTS AND IMPACT** – strong focus on tangible outcomes with maximum impact

The ERDF intervention rate across the Programme is up to 80% of eligible expenditure.

## PRIORITY AXES

<b>Priority 1: Cross-border Innovation</b>	<p><b>Specific Objective: To increase the intensity of knowledge transfer collaborations involving research organisations and SMEs in line with the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies</b></p> <p>This Priority focusses strongly on increasing innovation within SMEs, including social enterprises, by encouraging collaboration between Higher and Further Education institutions and other public sector organisations with SMEs.</p> <p>The Priority seeks to increase the intensity of collaboration to jointly improve innovation performance and increase productivity within SMEs. Through increasing the flow of knowledge between sectors, the Priority will support mainly the concept/technology validation phase of the innovation idea including design testing and development phases. The Priority will therefore facilitate the translation of research and innovation processes into new and improved products, services or processes in the cross-border area.</p> <p>The Priority will focus on activities in the following sectors which are aligned to shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies in both countries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Marine and Environmental Sciences (including renewable energy);</li><li>➤ Food and Drink;</li><li>➤ Life Sciences.</li></ul> <p>The <b>results</b> this Priority seeks to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● To identify and address the barriers faced by SMEs including social enterprises;</li><li>● To increase the number of cross-border networks between research institutions and SMEs therefore raising the intensity of knowledge transfer through collaboration. The Programme will utilise a wider range of expertise and experience which can be accessed in relation to the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies;</li><li>● To bring new innovative products closer to the market as a result of the cross-border collaboration between research organisations and SMEs in relation to the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies;</li><li>● To strengthen responses to the smart specialisation strategies and provide opportunities to develop the international competitiveness of SMEs in line with the identified shared priorities.</li></ul>
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**Priority 2:  
Adaptation  
of the Irish  
Sea and  
Coastal  
Communities  
to Climate  
Change**

**Specific Objective: To increase capacity and knowledge of Climate Change Adaptation for the Irish Sea and coastal communities**

A key goal for this Programme is to preserve and enhance the marine and coastal environment for the enjoyment of future generations in the face of the increasing impacts of climate change. There is considerable added value in co-operating on a cross-border basis on this issue particularly around building knowledge about the specific impacts of climate change on the Irish Sea.

This Priority will focus on the links between the impact of climate change on jobs and growth and will seek to respond to cross-border challenges on the Irish Sea and coastal communities due to the effects of climate change which have impacted on society, the economy, businesses and our shared ecosystem.

The maritime nature of the border between Ireland and Wales provides an opportunity to increase capacity and knowledge of climate change adaptation across the Irish Sea and its coastal communities by commissioning joint research, sharing existing research and expertise and monitoring the impacts of climate change.

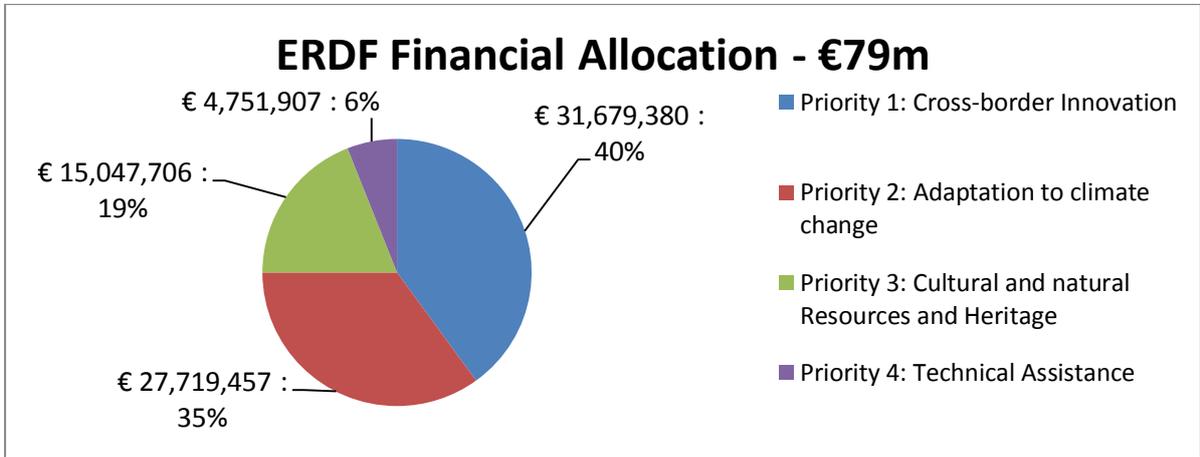
The Priority will support activity aimed at reducing knowledge gaps, the transfer of that knowledge amongst key stakeholders and the wider dissemination within the scientific community and the wider communities of the cross-border region.

The **results** that this Priority seeks to achieve are:

- Better knowledge within Irish Sea coastal communities to adapt to climate change, improving their security, well-being and health;
- Increased knowledge of the impacts of climate change – negative and potentially positive – and greater capacity of adapting them by the use of cross-border strategies and adaptation tools;
- Increased acknowledgement and capacity to benefit from the potential positive impacts of climate change (e.g. increase in tourist numbers due to a lengthened tourist season);
- Increased capacity to share knowledge of climate change across the Irish Sea and the cross-border region.

<b>Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage</b>	<b>Specific Objective: To sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in increasing visitor numbers to coastal communities in the Programme area</b>
	<p>This Priority will focus on enhancing sustainable growth through co-operation by utilising the potential of the natural and cultural assets of the cross-border maritime area.</p> <p>Cultural and natural heritage will be used as a tool to stimulate economic growth by utilising the assets, enhancing the natural and cultural environment and increasing the attractiveness of the coastal communities in the Programme area as places to visit. A key focus will be on supporting and diversifying the tourism sector to increase visitor numbers to coastal communities.</p> <p>The Priority will explore how the Irish Sea can be used to this end and how green and blue growth can be utilised to underpin economic growth, with the aim of capitalising on the strengths of the unique, shared heritage and the maritime and coastal character of the Programme area.</p> <p>The <b>results</b> that this Priority seeks to achieve are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of visitors to the coastal communities of the cross-border region by sustainably utilising their natural and cultural assets;</li> <li>• Increase in the capacity of coastal communities to utilise their natural and cultural heritage as a driver to economic growth.</li> </ul>

The Programme will support two cross-cutting themes which will run through the whole programme: Sustainable Development and Equal Opportunities and gender mainstreaming.



The 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme is a cross-border programme linking Ireland and Wales. The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), as Managing Authority, will lead the management of the Programme in conjunction with its partners in the Southern Regional Assembly, based in Waterford, Ireland.

For more information and to download the 2014-2020 Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme, please visit our website:

<http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/programmes/irelandwales/?lang=en>

Alternatively you can contact the team by emailing [IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk) or [ireland\\_wales@southernassembly.ie](mailto:ireland_wales@southernassembly.ie)



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