



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

EU Funds: Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

2019 Annual Implementation Report – Summary



Y Ffynonhaudd
Ewrop
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

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Introduction

The €100m Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme is one of a set of European Territorial Co-operation programmes which provide opportunities for regions in the EU to work together to address common economic, environmental and social challenges.

Funded through the European Regional Development Fund, the programme is connecting organisations, businesses and communities on the West coast of Wales with the South-East coast of Ireland.

The Irish Sea is a central focus for the programme given the maritime nature of the border between the two nations.

IRELAND/WALES CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME (2014-2020)

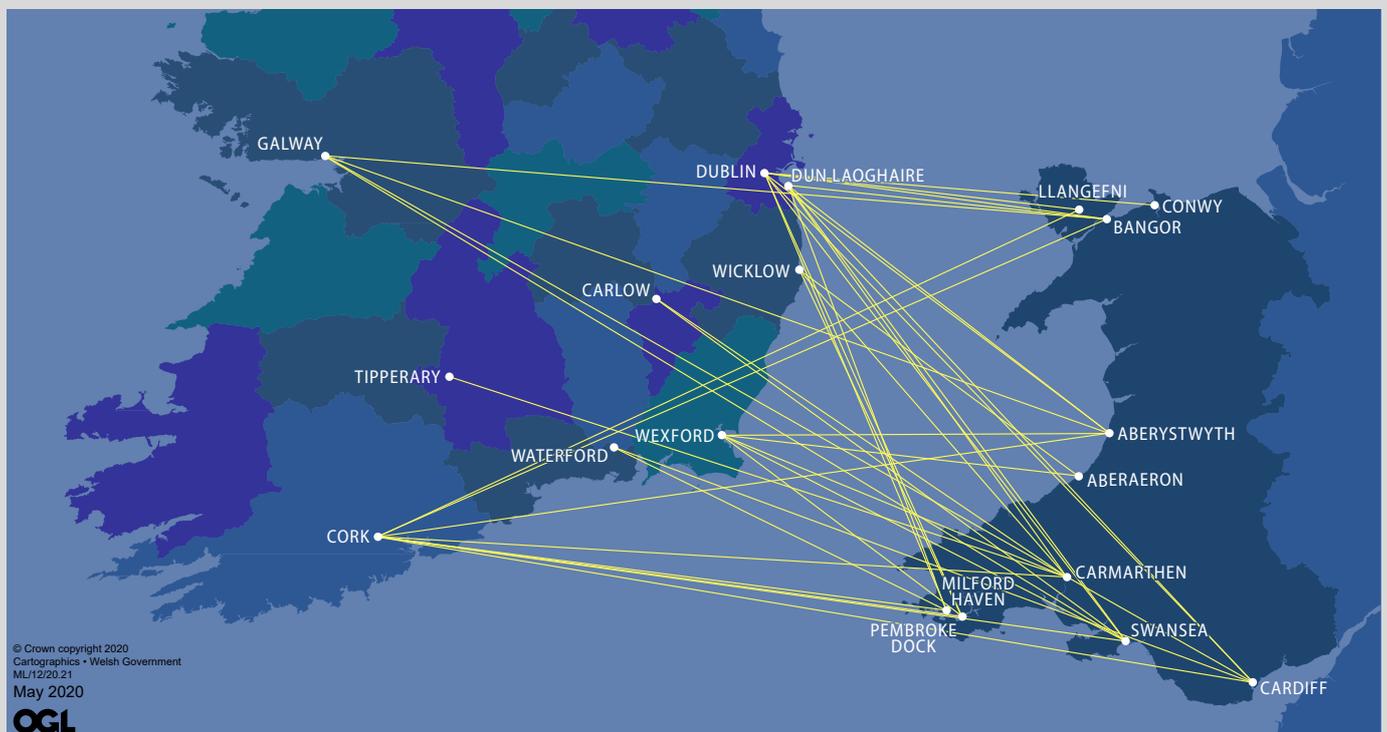


About the programme

The programme's vision is to provide a framework for organisations in the cross-border area to actively co-operate to address challenges and shared priorities on both sides of the Irish Sea, thereby contributing to economic and sustainable development of Ireland and Wales.

The programme's focus on the Irish Sea includes projects that are bringing together scientific expertise from both nations to increase capacity and research into the effects of climate change.

Universities and colleges are also linking with businesses to stimulate collaboration in sectors including food & drink, marine and environmental sciences and life sciences, while the programme is also utilising shared culture, resources and heritage to boost tourism and visitor numbers to the cross-border region.



Collaborative links made between organisations in both nations through the Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme

The Welsh European Funding Office, part of the Welsh Government, is the Managing Authority for the programme and is delivering the programme alongside its operational partners, the Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford, and government partners, the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform in Dublin.



Programme progress

Overview

By the end of 2019, €75m of EU funds had been invested in 21 projects in the cross-border region.

During the year, the profile of the programme was raised through news stories and programme progress being announced by Ministers and covered by news outlets and stakeholders in both nations.

The programme website, www.irelandwales.eu, and @irelandwales twitter channel continue to publish breaking news and information about the progress of the programme.



Programme priorities

Priority 1 – Cross-border Innovation

Projects under this priority are increasing the intensity of knowledge sharing and collaborations between research organisations and businesses.

Priority 2 – Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

Projects under this priority are increasing capacity and knowledge of climate change adaptation for the Irish Sea and coastal communities.

Priority 3 – Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

Projects under this priority are utilising the potential of natural, cultural and heritage assets to increase visitor numbers to coastal communities.

Priority 4 – Technical Assistance

This priority provides funding to support the management of the programme.

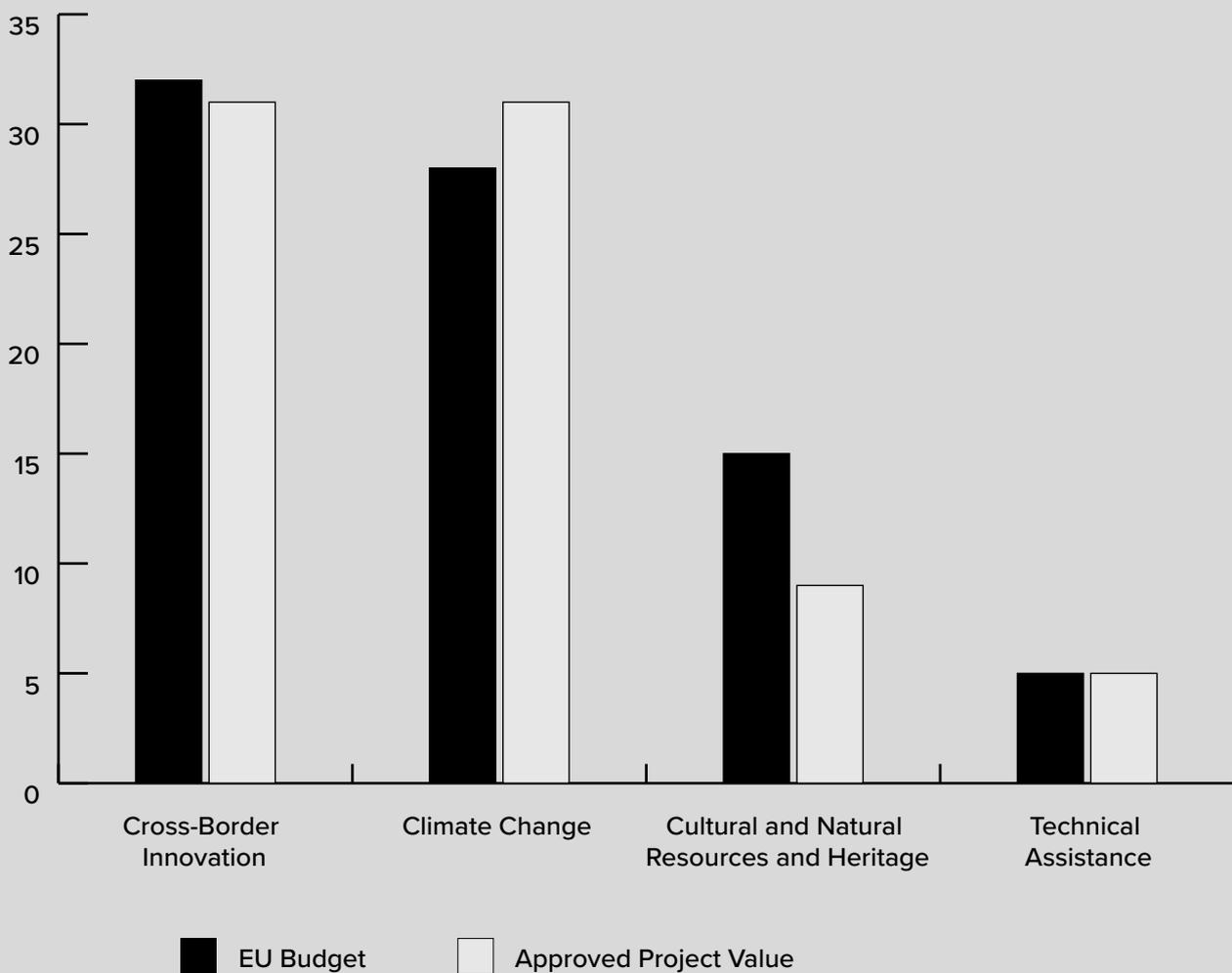


Financial progress

The following chart shows the total allocation of EU funds for the Ireland-Wales programme and how much has been invested in each of the three priorities by the end of 2019.

The Welsh European Funding Office, part of the Welsh Government, is the Managing Authority for the programme and is delivering the programme alongside its operational partners, the Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford, and government partners, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Dublin.

Chart 1: EU Grant: Budget and Approved



Progress by Priority

Cross-border Innovation

By the end of 2019, 98% of EU funds available under this priority had been invested in nine projects.

New EU marine energy project flowing between Wales and Ireland

In July, €4.2m was announced for the Selkie project, which is bringing together leading researchers and businesses from both nations to create technologies to help improve the performance of ocean energy devices being developed by Irish and Welsh businesses.

The project is also establishing a cross-border network of ocean energy developers and supply chain businesses, and is led by University College Cork in partnership with Swansea University, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Anglesey social enterprise Menter Môn, DP Energy Ireland and Dublin-based Gavin and Doherty Geosolutions.

Welsh Government Minister for European Transition, Jeremy Miles said: "Bringing together expertise from Wales and Ireland is vital if we're going to meet the shared challenges and opportunities from our Irish Sea border including the potential to generate clean energy.

"Our relationship with Ireland is very important, so I'm delighted to see our two nations working together on such an important global priority."



Representatives from the Selkie project at the P&O Maritime depot to view equipment used by the Marine Institute and Smartbay, Ireland's national observation and validation facility for the marine and ocean energy sectors

Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

By the end of 2019, the programme had marginally exceeded the total allocation of EU funds available seven projects.

New climate change collaboration between Wales and Ireland

In August, €1.3 million was announced to help coastal communities in Wales and Ireland adapt to the impact of climate change through the Coastal Communities Adapting Together (CCAT) project.

Focussing on the coastal communities of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock in Wales, and Rush and Portrane in North County Dublin, Ireland, the project is supporting local people to observe, interpret and record data about their community and coastal environment, and to take an active role in adapting their communities and businesses.

This data is being used to populate a shared 'participatory map', linking local factors to the bigger, global picture to reveal patterns and trends relating to issues including population change and economic challenges.

CCAT is led by University College Dublin in partnership with Cardiff University, University College Cork, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Fingal County Council and the Port of Milford Haven.

Irish Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D. said: "Climate change is undoubtedly one of the major issues facing all of us today, however, sometimes the scale of the challenge makes it difficult for individuals and communities to identify ways they can adapt and contribute to innovative solutions.

"This project under the Ireland-Wales cross-border programme, by combining academic, business, local government and community expertise from both sides of the Irish Sea, can contribute to our understanding of the impacts and our search for sustainable solutions."



A presentation from the CCAT project on how geogames are helping coastal communities adapt to climate change

Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

By the end of 2019, 58% of EU funds available under this priority had been invested in four projects.

New project to open up Welsh and Irish Sea Ports to tourism

In June, €2.6m was announced for the Ports, Past and Present project which is helping turn five Welsh and Irish Sea ports from passage points to key tourist sites – improving tourism opportunities, tourist experiences, and the livelihoods of coastal communities on both sides of the Irish Sea.

Focussing on the towns and surrounding areas of Dublin, Rosslare, Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock, the project is working with port authorities, transport carriers, tourism agencies and local artists and writers to generate new tourism sites, sights and visitors, and commissioning creative works in the visual arts, literature and film.

The project is led by University College Cork alongside Aberystwyth University, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and Wexford County Council.

Welsh Government Minister for International Relations, Eluned Morgan said: “Our ports make a critical contribution to our economy - providing jobs and added value to local communities. UK and Welsh business depends on ports in order to move their goods efficiently and quickly between Wales and Ireland.

“This new project will help enhance our ports even further, by bringing their unique cultural heritage to life, allowing people to understand the rich and economic and cultural roles they’ve played in our past, and the vital roles they play today and in the future.”



Project visits taking place via ferry services between Rosslare and Fishguard

Project examples

Boosting less discovered tourism opportunities

Celtic Routes is encouraging visitors to explore new areas of Wales and Ireland en route to their final tourist destination, focussing on the areas of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion in Wales and Waterford, Wicklow and Wexford in Ireland.



The enchanting glacial lake of Llyn y Fan Fach is at the western end of the Brecon Beacons National Park and is associated with the 14th century legend of the 'Lady of the Lake'. Over the hills lies the picturesque market town of Llandovery which is home to a 5-metre high stainless-steel statue of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd Fychan. Known as the 'Welsh Braveheart', he was executed here by Henry IV as punishment for his support of Owain Glyndŵr.

Innovation in low carbon technology

Dŵr Uisce is collaboration between Bangor University and Trinity College Dublin which is improving the efficiency of water distribution by developing new low carbon energy-saving technology, including micro-hydropower turbines.

The project's hydropower energy recovery pilot in Blackstairs Water Treatment Works in County Wexford is generating 3kW of electricity from pipe flows and reducing energy requirements at the plant by 20%.

Cherishing cultural heritage

CHERISH (Climate Heritage & Environments of Reefs, Islands and Headlands) is increasing cross-border knowledge and understanding of the impacts of climate change, storminess and extreme weather events on the cultural heritage of reefs, islands and headlands of the Irish Sea.



Drones are an integral part of the CHERISH approach for recording coastal heritage sites. The joint-nation team deploys several qualified drone pilots, one of whom carrying out photogrammetric 3D recording of Caerfai coastal promontory fort in St David's. CHERISH is working with the National Trust and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to further investigate this eroding coastal fort in 2020.



Coastal adaptation to climate change

Ecostructure is raising awareness of eco-engineering solutions to the challenge of coastal adaptation to climate change by providing developers and regulators with accessible tools and resources, based on research in the fields of ecology, engineering and socioeconomics.



As part of the project, Ecostructure scientists believe they have found a way of attracting marine wildlife to man-made shores. By using photogrammetry and 3D printers to produce moulds, they have created tiles that provide the “nooks and crannies” normally found on natural rocky reef habitat on a coastal defence structure in Borth, Wales.

Demystifying climate change in the Irish Sea

The Bluefish marine science partnership is investigating how climate change is affecting the health of fish stocks, the migratory movement of commercial fish, and risks from new non-native species in the Irish Sea.

The project recognises the importance of art as a tool in demystifying climate change concepts and of communicating the relevance of complex scientific research to the wider community. Bringing together artists and coastal communities, and informed by scientific outputs, portfolios of art were developed ranging from graphic design to conceptual pieces, depicting possible climate change impacts and scenarios.

Collaboration in marine energy

Selkie is bringing together leading researchers and businesses from both nations to create technologies to help improve the performance of ocean energy devices being developed by Irish and Welsh businesses.



As part of the project, the tools created will be trialled on wave and tidal devices to determine levels of reliability and commercial potential.

The project was formally launched during 2019 the Ocean Energy Europe event by Welsh Government Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths.



Marine Institute, Róisín Curé and Karen Nolan