



Call for Priority Axis 3 Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

Guidance for Applicants

April 2017

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1. Background

1.1 Future of Funds

1. The Managing Authority for the Ireland Wales Programme in the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) and our operational partners in Ireland, the Southern Regional Assembly are continuing to deliver the Ireland Wales Cross Border programme (2014-2020).
2. Applications for funding are actively being developed and approved in line with those objectives set out in the Ireland Wales Operational Programme 2014-2020 and agreed by the European Commission and in alignment with the selection procedures agreed by the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC).
3. Following the EU Referendum in the UK, the UK Treasury Funding Guarantee provides a full lifetime guarantee for all European Structural and Investment projects (operations) approved before the UK leaves the EU. This guarantee includes projects approved under the Ireland Wales Programme
4. The Welsh and Irish governments are firmly committed to the successful delivery of the Ireland Wales programme which remains fully open for business.

1.2 Background to the Call for Proposals under Priority Axis 3

5. The Ireland/Wales cross-border programme benefits from 20 years of co-operation and provides an excellent vehicle to develop and exchange best practice and to implement high quality partnership projects which provide solutions to common challenges across our sea border.
6. Together with match funding, the programme is driving a total investment of around €100 million (ERDF €79m) over the 2014-2020 programme period via three Priority Axes (PA's):
 - PA 1 Cross-border Innovation;
 - PA 2 Adaptation to Climate change (Irish Sea and Coastal Communities) and;
 - PA 3 Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage, (with a focus on tourism).

7. This guidance concerns Priority Axis 3 only.
8. **The PA 3 Specific Objective is to sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in increasing visitor numbers to coastal communities in the Programme area.**
9. Priority Axis 3 of the Ireland Wales Programme highlights clear links between the economy and tourism, heritage and the natural environment. The Programme has thus far received an insufficient number of applications aimed at meeting the PA 3 Specific Objective.
10. The Priority focuses on how cultural and natural heritage can be used as a tool to stimulate economic growth by increasing the attractiveness of coastal communities in the Programme area as places to visit. The emphasis will be on how the Irish Sea can be used to this end and how green and blue growth can be utilised to underpin economic growth
11. Emphasis is placed on coastal and marine based environmental areas where the greatest added value can be achieved. These areas have considerable potential to use their natural and cultural heritage and assets – including the Irish Sea – to become more attractive places to visit and to deliver sustainable economic growth through an increase in visitor numbers.
12. Strong, sustainable communities feed into thriving regions which can attract wider economic, social and environmental development. Building healthy local communities involves maximising their unique assets.
13. This Priority also addresses inclusive growth and will focus on the use of cultural and natural heritage in the development and promotion of socially inclusive sustainable development. This allows for interventions which provide societal benefits which can increase the attractiveness of an area and therefore its economic potential

2. Scope of the PA 3 Call

14. The call invites Priority Axis 3 projects through registration of interest to the Joint Secretariat and submission of an Operation Logic Table (OLT). Full details are set out at section 4 – How to apply

15. The Programme Joint Secretariat (JS) has conducted a gap analysis in Priority Axis 3. The MA and its operational partners in Ireland has considered the findings and based on the somewhat limited pipeline of proposals in the system, has decided to open an unrestricted call across PA 3. All applications must however comply with the Specific Objective for PA 3 and the guiding principles for selection of operations as set out in the Ireland Wales Operational Programme document.

<http://irelandwales.eu/sites/default/files/2016-04/150315summaryirelandwales.pdf>

16. The results that this Priority Axis seeks to achieve are:-

- To increase the number of visitors to the coastal communities of the cross-border region by sustainably utilising their natural and cultural assets
- To increase the capacity of coastal communities to utilise their natural and cultural heritage as a driver to economic growth.

17. The result indicator for the Priority Axis is ***the total number of overseas visitors to Ireland Wales coastal communities.***

2.1 Output indicators

18. In demonstrating the intervention logic for your proposal as part of the OLT, you will need to describe how you contribute directly to the objective described in Section 1.2 (To sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in **increasing visitor numbers** to coastal communities in the Programme area). In doing so we expect a quantifiable and directly measurable contribution to the output indicators described below. The nature of the proposal will help determine the selection of the most relevant output indicators, but a combination of these will be the core metrics used to assess performance of approved operations.

19. The outputs for Priority Axis 3 are set out in the Ireland Wales Operational programme document:

- Employment increase in supported enterprises
- Number of new tourism networks promoting, cultural, natural or heritage assets
- Number of coastal communities participating in cross border co-operation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism.
- Number of pilot operations completed

2.2 Eligible Activities

20. The type of activities eligible for support are set out in the Operational Programme document. Activity can only be accommodated if it can be demonstrated to directly contribute to the PA 3 Specific Objective and can contribute to delivery of the output indicators.

21. The types of cross-border co-operation in the Programme will incorporate one or more of the following components in all three Priority Axes including Priority Axis 3:

- The **establishment or development** of a network, co-operation platform, portal or strategy;
- The **transfer or adoption** of knowledge, expertise, technologies or best practice;
- The **enabling or paving the way** for investment in the design, development, testing or delivery of new processes, products, studies or services – for example pilot actions, demonstration models etc.;
- **Minor scale investments** where there is demonstrable cross-border added value and compliance with the objectives of the Programme (e.g. relevant small-scale investment, such as purchase of equipment for pilot or demonstration purposes, e-infrastructure etc.).

Examples of indicative activities are set out on The Ireland Wales Operational Programme Citizens' Summary page 52. -

22. Innovative approaches are welcome if they provide the means to achieve the outcomes sought.

23. Each project (operation) must have at least one Irish and one Welsh partner with a maximum of 6 joint partners per operation. An operation must appoint a lead partner.
24. An essential building block in developing cross border partnerships is the 4 co-operation criteria. These criteria are aimed at ensuring joint working, true cooperation and greater transparency:
- Joint Development
 - Joint Implementation
 - Joint Staffing
 - Joint Financing
25. Within the programme area, a coastal community applies to any community within a local authority which has a coast:
26. For Priority Axis 3 only, In Wales, this excludes Wrexham.
In Ireland this excludes Tipperary, Carlow, Kildare and Kilkenny.
- 27. Partners from the entire programme eligible area are able to participate in projects as long as the benefits of the project to the coastal communities are clearly demonstrated.*
28. As with all proposals the Joint Secretariat will carry out the necessary due diligence checks to ensure organisations are in an appropriate financial and resource position to deliver the proposed activity.
29. Although previous experience of delivering an EU funded operation can be beneficial, it would not be a requirement, and new organisations to territorial co-operation funding are welcomed.

2.3 Available Finance

30. The current funding position for Priority Axis 3 can be seen below. The aim is to commit the remaining funds through this call for proposals.

ERDF (€)	Ireland Wales Programme
Total Allocation	€15,047,706
Total Committed (Approved)	€0
Operations in Business Planning	€5,421,024*
Balance	€9,626,682
ERDF Intervention Rate	80%**

*Subject to fluctuation following JS appraisal procedures.

** Source of match funding to be identified in OLT

3. Dates and deadlines

Launch of Call	15 th May 2017
Deadline for Submission of Proposals	28 th July 2017
Decision to Applicants	17 th October 2017

4. How to apply

Step 1: Potential applicants will need to register their contact (e-mail) details with the Joint Secretariat at the programme mailbox:

IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Step 2: You will be invited to submit an **Operation Logic Table** (OLT), setting out in a table the logic for your proposal, ensuring the outcome and target groups are clear. Guidance on the completion of the OLT can be found on the IW website: <http://irelandwales.eu/apply-funding/guidance-project-proposals-and-approved-projects-ireland-wales-programme-2014-2020>

Step 3: The OLT will be assessed by the Joint Secretariat (see Section 5) and considered by the Technical Group. Successful applicants will be invited into the formal 'Business Planning Stage' to further develop the proposal into a Business Plan.

In completing the OLT:

- Ensure you have read and understand the supporting information and guidance documents available on the IW website.
- Keep the wording brief and concise. Excess information, for example annexes, will not be considered when prioritising proposals. References to independent evidence are however welcome.
- Clearly demonstrate how your proposal closely fits with the scope of the call (Section 2)
- Demonstrate value for money by highlighting the realistic and direct impact your proposal could achieve relative to the costs.

An electronic copy of your Operation Logic Table will need to be submitted to the Ireland Wales mailbox:

IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Before 5pm on 28th July 2017. The JS will not accept any late submissions.

5. Assessment and decision process

31. The Joint Secretariat will follow its standard operation selection and prioritisation processes (<http://irelandwales.eu/apply-funding/guidance-project-proposals-and-approved-projects-ireland-wales-programme-2014-2020>). As described in Section 4, proposals submitted in response to this call will be prioritised by the Technical Group on the basis of the Operation Logic Table (OLT). Each proposal will be judged on its own merits. In assisting with the prioritisation of proposals the Joint Secretariat may seek advice from experts, but the Technical Group will make the final decision on this stage of the process. All applicants will be informed of the results of the exercise.
32. Successful proposals are likely to have:
- Passed basic eligibility criteria
 - A clear focus, intervention logic and delivery approach
 - A close fit with the scope of the call
 - A strong and realistic contribution to the key Output Indicators
 - Demonstrated how the proposal will integrate and add value to existing activity
 - A strong return on investment
 - All Joint Partners should be in place and include at least one partner from both Wales and Ireland. Applicants should consider the balance of the partnership across both countries.
33. Due to the limited availability of funds and the competitive nature of the call, there is no guarantee that proposals that address the scope of the call will be supported by the Technical Group. Those projects considered by the Technical Group to be of sufficient merit will progress through the business planning process for consideration by the Programme Steering Committee. The Programme Steering Committee is mandated to make decisions on project funding in accordance with its Rules of Procedure which have been agreed by the PMC.
34. All proposals that move into the formal 'Business Planning Stage' will be subject to a full appraisal against our published selection and prioritisation criteria <http://irelandwales.eu/apply-funding/guidance-project-proposals-and-approved-projects-ireland-wales-programme-2014-2020>.
35. The evidence provided during the prioritisation exercise will be tested early on in the business planning process. Proposals in business planning can be submitted to the Programme Steering Committee for rejection at any stage before an offer of grant is made. If appropriate, the Technical Group may then invite another proposal into to the 'Business Planning Stage'.

6. Contact/Further Queries

36. The Joint Secretariat is happy to help clarify the process and its priorities for funding, particularly if you are new to European Structural Funds and/or the Ireland/Wales Programme. Discussions about the detail of individual proposals will need to be limited to ensure all applicants have the same opportunities.

37. If you need further information please e-mail the Ireland Wales mailbox: IrelandWalesCrossBorderProgramme@wales.gsi.gov.uk and we will respond to any queries you may have.

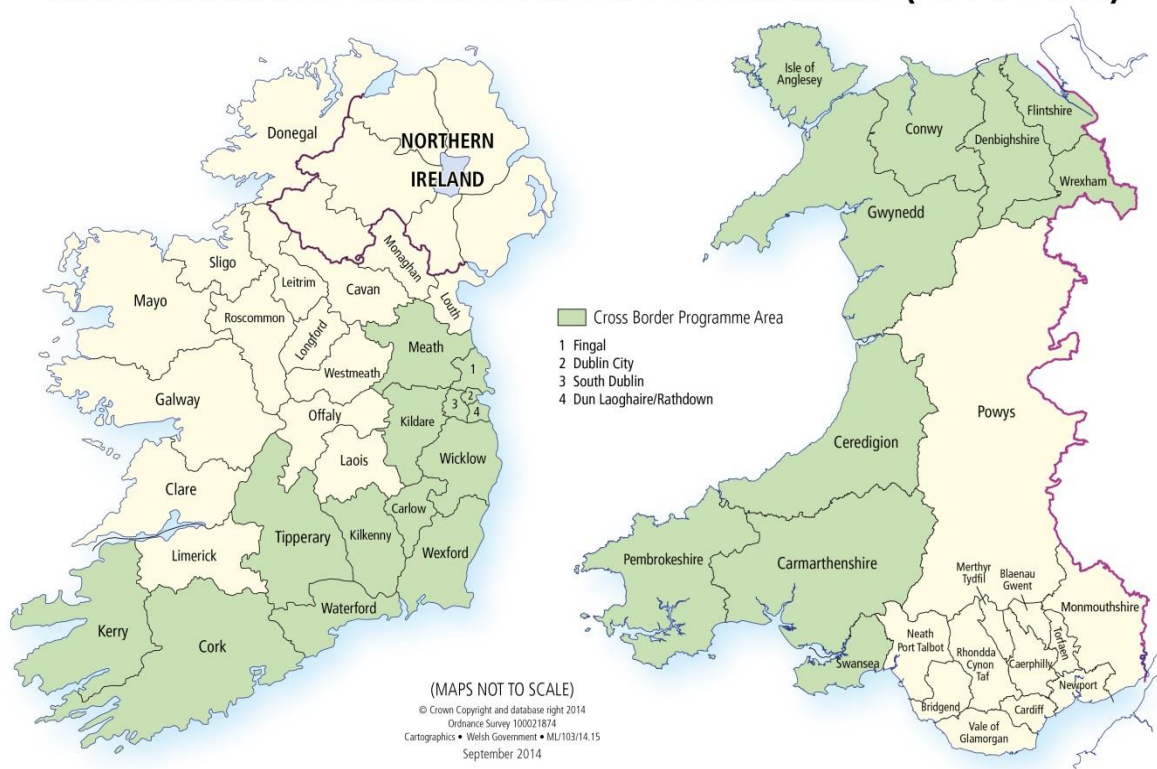
7. Useful Documents/Further Information

38. If you are considering submitting a proposal, you should make yourself aware of the guidance and information documents available on the Ireland Wales website:

<http://irelandwales.eu/apply-funding/guidance-project-proposals-and-approved-projects-ireland-wales-programme-2014-2020>.

A map of the eligible programme area is shown at Annex 1.

IRELAND/WALES CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME (2014-2020)



*For Priority Axis 3 the focus as stipulated in the Ireland Wales Operational Programme document is on coastal communities and excludes:

Wrexham, Wales;
 Tipperary, Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, Ireland.

See also paragraph 29