IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR THE EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION GOAL

**PART A**

# IDENTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL/FINAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

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| Title | Interreg V-A - United Kingdom-Ireland (Ireland-Wales) |
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# 2. OVERVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

## Key information on the implementation of the cooperation programme for the year concerned, including on financial instruments, with relation to the financial and indicator data.

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| By the end of December 2016 the Cooperation Programme had begun to make good progress, with three joint operations approved across two of the three Operational Priority Axes. A further operation was supported under the Technical Assistance Priority Axis. Some €26.2m of total eligible costs has been committed; of which just over €20.7m of EU Grant has been awarded. During 2016 there was, and continued to be, high levels of interest in the Ireland Wales Cooperation programme.  As set out in the Operational Programme document, there will be no financial instruments supported under the Programme.  Following its three meetings in 2015, the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) met twice further in 2016:  PMC4 – 7th July 2016 – Deganwy Wales  The PMC recognised the progress which had been made with implementation of the Programme and the healthy level of interest in the pipeline.  The PMC also welcomed developments with the Programme web-site.  The first approved Programme operation, Dwr Uisce was presented to the PMC by the project partners.  PMC5 – 24th November 2016 – Cork, Ireland  The PMC noted that the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) had secured formal designation as Managing Authority (MA)for the cross-border Programme. The Audit Authority had issued an unqualified opinion on the article 72 report and were content with MA systems.  The PMC noted that the first programme payment claim would be submitted to the European Commission in December.  The PMC noted the significant progress which was being made with programme implementation.  The PMC noted developments with the Programme Communications Strategy and asked for it to be reviewed and refreshed based on discussions at the meeting.  The selection criteria for the programme and the Joint Secretariat (JS) work programme had been agreed by the PMC in 2015.  Two Technical Group (TG) meetings have been held during the period, following initial meetings in 2015:  TG4 – 2nd February 2016  TG5 – 6th September 2016.  The Programme Steering Committee was mandated by the PMC to select operations for funding. The  inaugural  Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was held in November 2015.  No PSC meetings were  held  during the reporting period, however the PSC continued to pro-actively conduct its business through utilisation of the Programme PSC Portal in alignment with its Rules of Procedure.  The PSC  considered 9 business plans at Gateway 1 and 8 business plans at Gateway 2 (approval) during the period.  In terms of the EU funds available, EU Grant commitment stood at around 38% of the EU Grant allocation available under Priority 1 (Cross-Border Innovation), where two joint operations had been approved by the end of 2016. These were the 'Dwr-Uisce' and 'CALIN' operations. EU Grant commitment stood at around 15% of the EU Grant allocation available under Priority 2 (Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change), where one operation had been approved by the end of 2016. This was the 'CHERISH' operation. There were no funds committed under Priority 3 (Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage) by the end of 2016.  EU Grant commitment stood at around 97% of the EU Grant commitment available under Priority 4 (Technical Assistance). This was represented by one operation to enable the Managing Authority, WEFO and its operational partners in the Southern Regional Assembly in Ireland to manage the delivery of the Ireland / Wales Cooperation Programme, which had been formally approved in 2015.  In addition to those projects formally approved and contracted by end 2016,  the PSC had also supported a  further four operations in Priority Axes 1 and 2.which would progress to formal approval and contracting in the early part of 2017.  These projects had been approved on the Programme PSC Portal in alignment with PSC Rules of Procedure.  The projects in question are pISCES, the Irish Sea Portal Pilot, Acclimatize and Bluefish.  By the end of December 2016 just over €0.35m had been declared by beneficiaries to the Managing Authority; all under Priority 4 (Technical Assistance). Section 3.2 shows forecast data for selected (approved) operations. No indicator achievements are reported in Section 3.2 because this data is only reported when operations are fully implemented and there were no fully implemented operations by the end of December 2016.  The Performance Framework is closely monitored, the programme is at early stage of the implementation and operations are only now entering the delivery phase.  No slippage has been reported to date.  E-cohesion requires a system to allow the electronic transfer of data between beneficiaries and the Managing Authority. To manage Structural Funds WEFO uses an IT system called PPIMS, used by Managing Authority Officials.  The externally facing system, used by beneficiaries to enter data, including everything from appraisal documentation to transaction lists and claims is called WEFO Online. Some minor developments were required during 2016, but by allowing the electronic transfer of data, WEFO Online meets the conditions of an Electronic Data Exchange System under the e-cohesion requirements and therefore WEFO was compliant with e-cohesion as of November 2015.  The Managing Authority submitted the Article 72 report (on the Management and Control Systems) to the European Commission in December 2016.  During 2016 a range of actions to implement the communications strategy were carried out to raise awareness and understanding of the opportunities and benefits presented through the Ireland Wales programme. In particular, given the stage of programme delivery, the focus of communications activities was mainly focused on promoting programme opportunities and setting up effective information channels, including the establishment of a new Ireland Wales website, which since its launch, the website attracted over 2,700 visits, and Twitter updates. By the end of December 2016, the @irelandwales Twitter channel had over 500 followers.  Following the approval of two Ireland Wales projects - Dŵr Uisce and CALIN, press notices were issued to the media to mark these milestones. Both announcements were also promoted on the Welsh Government, WEFO and Ireland Wales websites. |

# 3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY AXIS

## 3.1 Overview of the implementation

| ID | Priority axis | Key information on the implementation of the priority axis with reference to key developments, significant problems and steps taken to address these problems |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PA1 | Cross-Border Innovation | By end 2016 around 39% of the total allocation available had been committed to two operations under the Priority. These were 'Dwr-Uisce', a proposal for integrated low carbon and smart energy solution for the water sector, and 'CALIN', a nano-health technology operation. A further operation - 'pISCES' - had been approved by the Programme Steering Committee but not formally approved.  During 2016 eleven proposals were in the pipeline for the Priority, of which three were in the 'business planning' and a further three in the 'detailed business planning' stages.  The three operations in 'detailed business planning' were the 'Irish Sea Portal (Pilot)' operations, which will aims to test the concept of a link between HEI’s, Research Institutions and SMEs operating in the Irish Sea; the 'Bucanier' operation which is aiming to improve the innovation processes in new and established SMEs; and 'More than a Club (Pilot)' which will test using sports clubs as hubs to develop social enterprises.  At the 'business planning' stage were the 'Celtic Food Cluster' operation, the 'Cross Border Social Enterprise Accelerator ' operation and the 'CATALYST (Pilot)' operation.  Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016. |
| PA2 | Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change | By end 2016 around 15% of the total allocation available had been committed to one operation under the Priority. This was 'CHERISH', a proposal to gather evidence and develop knowledge and indicators for assessing threats and opportunities posed by climate change impacts upon the cultural and maritime heritage of small islands and reefs in the Irish Sea. A further two operations had been approved by the Programme Steering Committee but not formally approved.  During 2016 five proposals were in the pipeline for the Priority, of which one was in the 'business planning' and a further was in the 'detailed business planning' stages.  The operation in 'detailed business planning' was 'Eco-structures', a proposal to explore how coastal communities can meet the challenges of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change while minimising the impacts on the natural environment.  At the 'business planning' stage was 'STREAM' operation.  Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016. |
| PA3 | Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage | By end 2016 no operations had been approved under the Priority.  During 2016 six proposals were in the pipeline for the Priority, of which three were in the 'business planning' stage. Interest from stakeholders in developing potential operations for the Priority grew towards the later part of 2016.  The three operations at the 'business planning' stage were 'Heritage Trails in Ireland and Wales', 'Celtic Trails (Pilot)' and 'LIVE (Ecomuseum)'.  Not all the operations in the pipeline may necessarily progress to the business planning stages, or be taken through to funding decision. No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016, however the MA, JS and operational partners in Ireland recognised that progress with developing proposals in this PA was slower than was the case in the other two Operational Priority Axes which had resulted in a lower rate of implementation. The PMC also discussed this issue during 2016 and noted that the nature of this Priority Axis and historically, the type of organisations which traditionally engaged in the type of activity was a key reason for the slower pace in developing ideas. The MA intended to refresh the Communications Strategy which could be helpful in this context and having reflected on the position with the PA, took steps early in 2017 to set up a specific call for operations. |
| PA4 | Technical Assistance | By end 2016 around 97% of the total allocation available had been committed to one operation under the Priority. This was the operation to enable WEFO and the Southern Regional Assembly to manage the delivery of the Programme.  No significant problems were identified whilst implementing the Priority during 2016. |

## 3.2 Common and programme specific indicators (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

**Priority axes other than technical assistance**

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| Priority axis | PA1 - Cross-Border Innovation |
| Investment priority | 1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies |

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **Measurement unit** | **Target value** | **2016** | **Observations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | Enterprises | 1,200.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | Enterprises | 1,200.00 | 341.00 |  |
| F | CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | Enterprises | 1,200.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | Enterprises | 1,200.00 | 341.00 |  |
| F | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | Full time equivalents | 35.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | Full time equivalents | 35.00 | 21.00 |  |
| F | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Enterprises | 70.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Enterprises | 70.00 | 46.00 |  |
| F | CO27 | Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects | EUR | 791,984.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO27 | Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects | EUR | 791,984.00 | 558,000.00 |  |
| F | CO28 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | Enterprises | 30.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO28 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | Enterprises | 30.00 | 9.00 |  |
| F | CO29 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | Enterprises | 600.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO29 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | Enterprises | 600.00 | 72.00 |  |
| F | CO41 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Enterprises | 50.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO41 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Enterprises | 50.00 | 40.00 |  |
| F | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Organisations | 45.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Organisations | 45.00 | 14.00 |  |
| F | PS01 | Number of new or enhanced cross-border innovation networks | Networks | 6.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS01 | Number of new or enhanced cross-border innovation networks | Networks | 6.00 | 2.00 |  |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 3.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 3.00 | 0.00 |  |

Table 2(a) Common and programme specific output indicators for 2014 and 2015 reporting years

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **2015** | **2014** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO01 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving support | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO04 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO27 | Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO27 | Research, Innovation: Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO28 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO28 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO29 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO29 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO41 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO41 | Productive investment: Number of enterprises participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS01 | Number of new or enhanced cross-border innovation networks | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS01 | Number of new or enhanced cross-border innovation networks | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |

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| Priority axis | PA1 - Cross-Border Innovation |
| Investment priority | 1b - Promoting business investment in R&I, developing links and synergies between enterprises, research and development centres and the higher education sector, in particular promoting investment in product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation, and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in key enabling technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies |
| Specific objective | SO1 - To increase the intensity of knowledge transfer collaborations involving research organisations and SMEs in line with the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies |

Table 1: Result indicators

| **ID** | **Indicator** | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) Total | 2016 Total | 2016 Qualitative | Observations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI01 | Levels of investment in R&D and innovation arising from cross-boder collaboration in shared priorities as specified in smart specialisation strategies | TBC |  | 2015 | 0.00 | 0.00 |  | An amendment has been made to the CP via SFC to provide a baseline and target for this SO. Proposed baseline: EUR 1,493,568,970 (2011-2015); proposed target: An increase of 1% on the baseline for the 2019-2023 period. Supplementary result indicator: ‘Business spend on R&D (BERD)’: proposed baseline (2013): EUR 2,451,253,000;proposed target: An increase of 0.2% on the 2013 baseline. |

Table 1(a): Result indicators for reporting years 2014 and 2015

| **ID** | **Indicator** | 2015 Total | 2015 Qualitative | 2014 Total | 2014 Qualitative |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI01 | Levels of investment in R&D and innovation arising from cross-boder collaboration in shared priorities as specified in smart specialisation strategies | 0.00 |  | 0.00 |  |

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| Priority axis | PA2 - Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change |
| Investment priority | 5a - Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches |

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **Measurement unit** | **Target value** | **2016** | **Observations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Organisations | 10.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | Organisations | 10.00 | 2.00 |  |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 2.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 2.00 | 0.00 |  |
| F | PS03 | Number of new awareness raising initiatives targeting coastal communities | Awareness raising initiatives | 60.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS03 | Number of new awareness raising initiatives targeting coastal communities | Awareness raising initiatives | 60.00 | 9.00 |  |
| F | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | Organisations | 24.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | Organisations | 24.00 | 4.00 |  |

Table 2(a) Common and programme specific output indicators for 2014 and 2015 reporting years

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **2015** | **2014** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO42 | Productive investment: Number of research institutions participating in cross-border, transnational or interregional research projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS03 | Number of new awareness raising initiatives targeting coastal communities | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS03 | Number of new awareness raising initiatives targeting coastal communities | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | 0.00 | 0.00 |

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| Priority axis | PA2 - Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change |
| Investment priority | 5a - Supporting investment for adaptation to climate change, including ecosystem-based approaches |
| Specific objective | SO2 - To increase capacity and knowledge of Climate Change adaptation for the Irish sea and coastal communities |

Table 1: Result indicators

| **ID** | **Indicator** | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) Total | 2016 Total | 2016 Qualitative | Observations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI02 | Levels of knowledge of adaptation to climate change amongst communities and businesses | TBC |  | 2015 | 0.00 | 0.00 |  | An amendment has been made to the CP via SFC to provide a baseline and target for this SO. Proposed baseline: 64% of communities (2015) and businesses; proposed target: 70% of communities and businesses |

Table 1(a): Result indicators for reporting years 2014 and 2015

| **ID** | **Indicator** | 2015 Total | 2015 Qualitative | 2014 Total | 2014 Qualitative |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI02 | Levels of knowledge of adaptation to climate change amongst communities and businesses | 0.00 |  | 0.00 |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA3 - Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage |
| Investment priority | 6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage |

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **Measurement unit** | **Target value** | **2016** | **Observations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | Full time equivalents | 10.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | Full time equivalents | 10.00 | 0.00 |  |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 2.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | Completed pilot projects | 2.00 | 0.00 |  |
| F | PS05 | Number of new tourism networks promoting cultural, natural or heritage assets | Cross-border networks | 12.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS05 | Number of new tourism networks promoting cultural, natural or heritage assets | Cross-border networks | 12.00 | 0.00 |  |
| F | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Communities | 20.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Communities | 20.00 | 0.00 |  |

Table 2(a) Common and programme specific output indicators for 2014 and 2015 reporting years

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **2015** | **2014** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | CO08 | Productive investment: Employment increase in supported enterprises | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS02 | Number of pilot projects completed | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS05 | Number of new tourism networks promoting cultural, natural or heritage assets | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS05 | Number of new tourism networks promoting cultural, natural or heritage assets | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | 0.00 | 0.00 |

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| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA3 - Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage |
| Investment priority | 6c - Conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage |
| Specific objective | SO3 - To sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in increasing visitor numbers to coastal communities in the Programme area |

Table 1: Result indicators

| **ID** | **Indicator** | Measurement unit | Baseline value | Baseline year | Target value (2023) Total | 2016 Total | 2016 Qualitative | Observations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI03 | Total number of overseas visitors to the coastal communities of the Programme area | Number of overseas visitors | 6,902,000.00 | 2012 | 7,040,040.00 |  |  | Latest data available for Ireland part of programme area in 2015: 8,279,000. Wales data not available until later in 2017. |

Table 1(a): Result indicators for reporting years 2014 and 2015

| **ID** | **Indicator** | 2015 Total | 2015 Qualitative | 2014 Total | 2014 Qualitative |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RI03 | Total number of overseas visitors to the coastal communities of the Programme area | 6,902,000.00 |  | 6,902,000.00 |  |

**Priority axes for technical assistance**

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| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA4 - Technical Assistance |

Table 2: Common and programme specific output indicators

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **Measurement unit** | **Target value** | **2016** | **Observations** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | PS07 | Number of training events held | Training Events | 4.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS07 | Number of training events held | Training Events | 4.00 | 4.00 |  |
| F | PS08 | Number of project visits and participations in project events by JS | Project visits | 300.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS08 | Number of project visits and participations in project events by JS | Project visits | 300.00 | 300.00 |  |
| F | PS09 | Number of PMC meetings | PMC meetings | 14.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS09 | Number of PMC meetings | PMC meetings | 14.00 | 14.00 |  |
| F | PS10 | Number of press releases | Press releases | 10.00 | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS10 | Number of press releases | Press releases | 10.00 | 10.00 |  |
| F | PS11 | Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA | Number of FTEs |  | 0.00 |  |
| S | PS11 | Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA | Number of FTEs |  | 11.00 |  |

Table 2(a) Common and programme specific output indicators for 2014 and 2015 reporting years

| **(1)** | **ID** | **Indicator** | **2015** | **2014** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F | PS07 | Number of training events held | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS07 | Number of training events held | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS08 | Number of project visits and participations in project events by JS | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS08 | Number of project visits and participations in project events by JS | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS09 | Number of PMC meetings | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS09 | Number of PMC meetings | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS10 | Number of press releases | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS10 | Number of press releases | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | PS11 | Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| S | PS11 | Number of employees (FTEs) whose salaries are co-financed by TA | 0.00 | 0.00 |

## 3.3 Table 3: Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework

| **Priority axis** | **Ind type** | ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | Milestone for 2018 total | Final target (2023) total | 2016 | Observations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PA1 | F | FI01 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 4,751,906 | 39,599,224.00 | 0.00 |  |
| PA1 | I | IS01 | Number of projects approved with enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Number of projects | 5 |  | 0.00 |  |
| PA1 | O | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Enterprises | 0 | 70.00 | 0.00 |  |
| PA2 | F | FI02 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 4,157,919 | 34,649,320.00 | 0.00 |  |
| PA2 | I | IS02 | Number of projects approved with organisations cooperating on a cross-border basis to enhance the marine and coastal environment | Number of projects | 4 |  | 0.00 |  |
| PA2 | O | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | Organisations | 0 | 24.00 | 0.00 |  |
| PA3 | F | FI03 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 2,257,156 | 18,809,632.00 | 0.00 |  |
| PA3 | I | IS03 | Number of projects approved involving coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Number of projects | 4 |  | 0.00 |  |
| PA3 | O | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Communities | 0 | 20.00 | 0.00 |  |

Table 3(a): Information on the milestones and targets defined in the performance framework for reporting years 2014 and 2015

| **Priority axis** | **Ind type** | ID | Indicator | Measurement unit | 2015 | 2014 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PA1 | F | FI01 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA1 | I | IS01 | Number of projects approved with enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Number of projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA1 | O | CO26 | Research, Innovation: Number of enterprises cooperating with research institutions | Enterprises | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA2 | F | FI02 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA2 | I | IS02 | Number of projects approved with organisations cooperating on a cross-border basis to enhance the marine and coastal environment | Number of projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA2 | O | PS04 | Number of organisations cooperating in enhancing the marine and coastal environment | Organisations | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA3 | F | FI03 | Total amount of eligible expenditure entered into the accounting system of the certifying authority and certified by the authority | EUR | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA3 | I | IS03 | Number of projects approved involving coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Number of projects | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| PA3 | O | PS06 | Number of coastal communities participating in cross-border cooperation around cultural, natural or heritage tourism | Communities | 0.00 | 0.00 |

## 3.4. Financial data

**Table 4: Financial information at priority axis and programme level**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority axis** | **Fund** | **Calculation basis** | **Total funding** | **Co-financing rate** | **Total eligible cost of operations selected for support** | **Proportion of the total allocation covered with selected operations** | **Public eligible cost of operations selected for support** | **Total eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries to the managing authority** | **Proportion of the total allocation covered by eligible expenditure declared by beneficiaries** | **Number of operations selected** |
| PA1 | ERDF | Total | 39,599,224.00 | 80.00 | 15,298,087.00 | 38.63% | 14,911,378.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 2 |
| PA2 | ERDF | Total | 34,649,320.00 | 80.00 | 5,183,913.00 | 14.96% | 5,183,913.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 1 |
| PA3 | ERDF | Total | 18,809,632.00 | 80.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00% | 0 |
| PA4 | ERDF | Total | 5,939,883.00 | 80.00 | 5,735,197.00 | 96.55% | 5,735,197.00 | 347,738.00 | 5.85% | 1 |
| **Total** | **ERDF** |  | **98,998,059.00** | **80.00** | **26,217,197.00** | **26.48%** | **25,830,488.00** | **347,738.00** | **0.35%** | **4** |
| **Grand total** |  |  | **98,998,059.00** | **80.00** | **26,217,197.00** | **26.48%** | **25,830,488.00** | **347,738.00** | **0.35%** | **4** |

**Where applicable, the use of any contribution from third countries participating in the cooperation programme should be provided (for example IPA and ENI, Norway, Switzerland)**

|  |
| --- |
| Not applicable to the Programme. |

**Table 5: Breakdown of the cumulative financial data by category of intervention**

As set out in Table 2 of Annex II to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1011/2014 (Model for transmission of financial data) and tables 6-9 of Model for cooperation programmes

| **Priority axis** | **Fund** | **Intervention field** | **Form of finance** | **Territorial dimension** | **Territorial delivery mechanism** | **Thematic objective dimension** | **ESF secondary theme** | **Economic dimension** | **Location dimension** | **Total eligible cost of operations selected for support** | **Public eligible cost of operations selected for support** | **The total eligible expenditure declared by eneficiaries to the managing authority** | **Number of operations selected** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PA1 | ERDF | 002 | 01 | 05 | 01 | 01 | 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08 | 20 | UKL18 | 11,961,292.00 | 11,574,583.00 | 0.00 | 1 |
| PA1 | ERDF | 062 | 01 | 01 | 07 | 01 | 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08 | 11 | IE021 | 3,336,795.00 | 3,336,795.00 | 0.00 | 1 |
| PA2 | ERDF | 087 | 01 | 05 | 03 | 05 | 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08 | 22 | UKL14 | 5,183,913.00 | 5,183,913.00 | 0.00 | 1 |
| PA3 | ERDF |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PA4 | ERDF | 121 | 01 | 07 | 07 |  | 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08, 08 | 18 | UKL1 | 5,735,197.00 | 5,735,197.00 | 347,738.00 | 1 |

**Table 6: Cumulative cost of all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Operation (2)** | **2. The amount of ERDF support(1) envisaged to be used for all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area based on selected operations** | **3. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 2/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level \*100)** | **4. Eligible expenditure of ERDF support incurred in all or part of an operation implemented outside the Union part of the programme area declared by the beneficiary to the managing authority** | **5. Share of the total financial allocation to all or part of an operation located outside the Union part of the programme area (%) (column 4/total amount allocated to the support from the ERDF at programme level \*100)** |

**(1) ERDF support is the Commission decision on the respective cooperation programme.**

**(2) In accordance with and subject to ceilings set out Article 20 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013.**

# 4. SYNTHESIS OF THE EVALUATIONS

|  |
| --- |
| No evaluations available at present. |

# 5. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN

(a) Issues which affect the performance of the programme and the measures taken

|  |
| --- |
| During 2016 the programme focussed on working with potential beneficiaries and progressing early stage ideas through the Gateway system to consideration of funding decisions by the Programme Steering Committee. The Joint Secretariat met with key stakeholders and attended events in both Wales and Ireland to raise the profile of the Cooperation Programme and to encourage engagement, resulting in a strong pipeline of proposals.  The Ireland Wales website was launched in mid 2016 providing the Cooperation Programme with a dedicated site to promote the programme and a one stop shop for potential beneficiaries looking to access funding.  The website allows the MA and JS to promote and cascade relevant news items.  It includes a dedicated page for the work of the Programme Committees provides a link to social media, including WEFO’s programme twitter feed.  The result of EU Referendum in June was a significant event, however,  the UK Treasury commitment to provide a full lifetime guarantee for all structural and investment operations approved before the UK leaves the EU (including European territorial Co-operation Programmes)  has been welcomed by beneficiaries. The Joint Secretariat took appropriate steps to provide reassurances to Ireland Wales customers.  The PMC did note a perceived reduction in engagement in Ireland as a result of the EU Referendum in the UK.  (To note that the Managing Authority has taken steps to address this situation with a specific PA 3 bidding round in 2017 supported by an event in Ireland aimed at helping to re-energise the Cooperation Programme.)  The Ireland Wales Cooperation Programme was designated on 5th December 2016. The Statement of Management Controls was based on a version that had already been completed and agreed for the mainstream ESF / ERDF Programmes in Wales already designated but amended to reflect some of the unique characteristics of the ETC programmes.  This was particularly complex where processes used in one state are significantly different to the processes in place in the other.  ARACHNE has now been fully implemented in the mainstream ESF/ ERDF Programmes in Wales and it will be implemented for the Ireland / Wales ETC Programme. WEFO has offered to share with SRA the processes and documentation produced by the WEFO Anti-Fraud Steering Group in order to aid its implementation. |

(b) OPTIONAL FOR LIGHT REPORTS, otherwise it will be included in point 9.1. An assessment of whether progress made towards targets is sufficient to ensure their fulfilment, indicating any remedial actions taken or planned, where appropriate.

|  |
| --- |
| In accordance with the AIR reporting model, this information can be found under Section 9.1. |

# 6. CITIZEN'S SUMMARY (Article 50(9) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

A citizen's summary of the contents of the annual implementation report can be found at Annex 1.

# 7. REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Article 46 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Not applicable.

# 8. PROGRESS IN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR PROJECTS AND JOINT ACTION PLANS (Article 101(h) and Article 111(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(3)(b) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

**8.1. Major projects**

Table 7: Major projects

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project** | **CCI** | **Status of MP** | **Total investments** | **Total eligible costs** | **Planned notification/submission date** | **Date of tacit agreement/ approval by Commission** | **Planned start of implementation** | **Planned completion date** | **Priority Axis/ Investment priorities** | **Current state of realisation — financial progress (% of expenditure certified to Commission compared to total eligible cost)** | **Current state of realisation — physical progress Main implementation stage of the project** | **Main outputs** | **Date of signature of first works contract (1)** | **Observations** |

(1) In the case of operations implemented under PPP structures the signing of the PPP contract between the public body and the private sector body (Article 102(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013).

Significant problems encountered in implementing major projects and measures taken to overcome them

|  |
| --- |
| No Major projects had been approved under the Cooperation Programme by the end of December 2016. |

Any change planned in the list of major projects in the cooperation programme

|  |
| --- |
| No Major projects are planned to be approved under the Cooperation Programme. |

**8.2. Joint action plans**

Progress in the implementation of different stages of joint action plans

|  |
| --- |
| No Joint action plans had been implemented under the Cooperation Programme during 2016. |

**Table 8: Joint action plans (JAP)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title of the JAP** | **CCI** | **Stage of implementation of JAP** | **Total eligible costs** | **Total public support** | **OP contribution to JAP** | **Priority axis** | **Type of JAP** | **[Planned] submission to the Commission** | **[Planned] start of implementation** | **[Planned] completion** | **Main outputs and results** | **Total eligible expenditure certified to the Commission** | **Observations** |

No Joint action plans had been implemented under the Cooperation Programme during 2016.

**Significant problems encountered and measures taken to overcome them**

|  |
| --- |
| No Joint action plans had been implemented under the Cooperation Programme during 2016. |

# 9. ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

## 9.1 Information in Part A and achieving the objectives of the programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA1 - Cross-Border Innovation |

|  |
| --- |
| It is too early to assess the contribution of the Priority Axis to the result indicator and an evaluation has not yet been undertaken.  The evaluation approach to this result indicator will involve research with supported businesses to determine whether they have increased their investment in R&D and innovation and whether the Priority Axis played any role in this.  Results from the research will be considered in the context of changes in the result indicator, with a wider consideration of any other factors which may have had an effect.  The two operations supported under PA 1 in 2016 are expected to make a significant contribution to the Priority Axis 1 objective.  The flagship life sciences operation directly targets one of the shared key sectors in the Smart Specialisation Strategies in both countries as set out in the Operational Programme and will directly partner businesses in the cross-border region with R&D experts in Universities and global healthcare leaders, aiming to establish new products, technology and jobs.. It is expected to make a marked contribution to programme targets.  The energy centred operation targets efficiencies in water distribution by developing new low carbon energy-saving technology.  This operation will contribute to increased linkages between enterprises and the HE/FE sector and is expected to have important environmental and economic impacts on the cross-border region. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA2 - Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change |

|  |
| --- |
| It is too early to assess the contribution of the Priority Axis to the result indicator and an evaluation has not yet been undertaken.  The evaluation approach to this result indicator will involve research with supported businesses to determine whether they have increased their knowledge of climate change adaptation and whether the Priority Axis played any role in this.  Project level evaluations will focus on effectiveness of projects in raising this knowledge. These findings will be considered in the context of any changes in the result indicator, with a consideration of any other factors which may have had an effect.  The one approved operation in 2016 will contribute directly to the PA objective and programme targets by 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. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA3 - Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage |

|  |
| --- |
| It is too early to assess the contribution of the Priority Axis to the result indicator and an evaluation has not yet been undertaken.  The evaluation approach to this result indicator will involve research with supported businesses to determine whether they have increased trade, probing whether this is due to increased tourism, and whether the Priority Axis played any role in this.  Project level evaluations will focus on effectiveness of projects in increasing tourism potential of coastal communities.  These findings will be considered in the context of any changes in the result indicator, with a consideration of any other factors which may have had an effect.  No projects were selected in 2016, however as reported at sections 3.1 and 5 of the AIR steps have been taken to accelerate implementation in this PA during 2017. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Priority axis | PA4 - Technical Assistance |

|  |
| --- |
| It is too early to assess the contribution of the Priority Axis to the result indicator and an evaluation has not yet been undertaken.  A programme-level evaluation will be commissioned in 2017-18. Information about events and communications activity is included in section 10.2. |

## 9.2. Specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of specific actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to promote non-discrimination, including accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the cooperation programme and operations

|  |
| --- |
| The model used to build this Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) into the Co-operation Programme is through horizontal measures, which raise the profile and encourage a learning process in relation to equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming across a diverse range of organisations.  A CCT assessment is carried out at Business Plan stage  and recommendations made for improvements. Guidance has been developed by the MA , which provides specific information on how beneficiaries can address equal opportunities and gender mainstreaming within their operations.  All Business Plans are formally assessed by the Joint Secretariat against the selection criteria approved by the PMC.  The selection criteria includes an assessment of how the proposed operation will maximise its contribution towards the Cross Cutting Themes including Equal Opportunities.  Applicants are asked to describe  how the operation will fulfil its statutory obligations under all legislation relating to the CCTs.,  how the operation will align with and support all relevant policies and strategies relating to the CCTs, how the operation will maximise its potential to contribute towards the CCTs objective, how the provision for inclusive growth will be maximised within the operation and  how any indicators that will contribute towards the CCT objectives will be delivered.  The operation is ranked against the selection criteria including an assessment of contribution towards the CCTs which is considered by the PSC as part of the overall selection criteria.  At the Programme level, it is intended that update reports are provided to the PMC, to monitor progress in this area once implementation of operations accelerates. |

## 9.3.Sustainable development (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 2, (e) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

An assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the principles set out in Article 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 on sustainable development, including, where relevant, depending on the content and objectives of the cooperation programme, an overview of the actions taken to promote sustainable development in accordance with that Article

|  |
| --- |
| The model used to build this Cross Cutting Theme (CCT) into the Co-operation Programme is through horizontal measures, which raise the profile and encourage a learning process in relation to sustainable development across a diverse range of organisations.  A CCT assessment is carried out at Business Plan stage and recommendations made for improvements. Guidance has been developed by the MA, which provides specific information on how beneficiaries can sustainable development within their operations.  All Business Plans are formally assessed by the Joint Secretariat against the selection criteria approved by the PMC.  The selection criteria includes an assessment of how the proposed operation will maximise its contribution towards the Cross Cutting Themes including sustainable development.  Applicants are asked to describe how the operation will fulfil its statutory obligations under all legislation relating to the CCTs.,  how the operation will align with and support all relevant policies and strategies relating to the CCTs, how the operation will maximise its potential to contribute towards the CCTs objective, how the provision for inclusive growth will be maximised within the operation and  how any indicators that will contribute towards the CCT objectives will be delivered.  The operation is ranked against the selection criteria including an assessment of contribution towards the CCTs which is considered by the PSC as part of the overall selection criteria.  At the Programme level, it is intended that update reports are provided to the PMC  and other stakeholders to monitor progress in this area once implementation of operations accelerates. |

## 9.4. Reporting on support used for climate change objectives (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Calculated amount of support to be used for climate change objectives based on the cumulative financial data by category of intervention in Table 7

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Priority axis** | **Amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (EUR)** | **Proportion of total allocation to the operational programme (%)** |
| PA2 | 4,147,130.55 | 14.96% |
| **Total** | **4,147,130.55** | **5.24%** |

|  |
| --- |
| The above table shows the calculated amount of support to be used for climate change objectives based on approved Operations. The calculation is made based on a methodology, developed by the European Commission, which applies a specific weighting to the expenditure recorded against the codes of categorisation that have been assigned to operations in Table 5 of Section 3.4. The relevant weighting of 0%, 40% or 100% that apply to each code of intervention can be found at Annex 1 of the implementing regulation 215/2014. As at end December 2016 the amount of EU Grant of operations that is to be used in support of climate change objectives is €4.1m (just over 5% of the total allocation of the Cooperation Programme).  Priority 2 of the programme is dedicated to climate change adaptation delivery activity.  One project has been approved, CHERISH, this will gather evidence and develop knowledge and indicators for assessing threats and opportunities posed by climate change impacts upon the cultural and maritime heritage of small islands and reefs in the Irish Sea.  Interest in the Priority has been strong and includes activity focussed on exploring how Irish and Welsh coastal communities can meet the challenges of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change while minimising the impacts on the natural environment and maximising potential secondary ecological and socio-economic benefit; environmental and economic sustainability of commercially important marine organisms; technological solution to monitor coastal and estuarine regions for the impacts of climate change on industries operating in these regions with particular emphasis on shellfish, fishing and leisure industries and identify the main pollution pressures on Irish and Welsh bathing waters, develop assessment tools to evaluate the impact of climate change on the bathing waters and then develop management tools to limit the impact of that change on the bathing waters.  A key output for the activity will be raising awareness amongst those communities and organisations that could potentially be affected;  business plans are identifying the importance of ensuring that their findings are made available to the key policy makers in both Ireland and Wales. |

## 9.5 Role of partners in the implementation of the cooperation programme (Article 50(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 and Article 14(4), subparagraph 1, (c) of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

Assessment of the implementation of actions to take into account the role of partners referred to in Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, including involvement of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the cooperation programme

|  |
| --- |
| The partnership approach established when developing the Programme document continues with engagement from all the sectors.  The Operations Officers have played a key role in relaying key messages from the Joint Secretariat to our beneficiaries and vice versa.  The Joint Secretariat welcomes feedback from beneficiaries and key stakeholders and modify their approach accordingly.  Both the Programme Monitoring and Programme Steering Committees have been established on the partnership principle and takes full account of the best practice set out in the European Code of Conduct on Partnership. The Programme committees have a balanced membership from both Ireland and Wales, a broad gender balance and are drawn from across the sectors.  The membership of the both the PMC was determined by the Welsh & Irish Governments and the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) in Ireland respecting the relevant EU legislation and advice of European Commission officials.  The Welsh & Irish Government and SRA complies with the European Code of Conduct on Partnership (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/ 2014).  PMC membership was determined via a nomination process which secured a good  balance and symmetry between key partnership organisations on both sides of the Irish Sea which reflects the strategic objectives of the Programme. They were co-opted on a representative basis, from partners and statutory bodies, including local government, higher education, the public and private sectors, trade unions and the voluntary sector. Representatives covering the cross-cutting themes and sustainable development were also co-opted.  The  MA and JS monitors attendance of members at PMCs and has the MA has the authority to consider replacement membership in the event of frequent non-attendance. |

# 10. OBLIGATORY INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENT ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 14(4), SUBPARAGRAPH 1 (a) AND (b), OF REGULATION (EU) No 1299/2013

## 10.1 Progress in implementation of the evaluation plan and the follow-up given to the findings of evaluations

|  |
| --- |
| During 2016 WEFO set up the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory Group (MEAG).  The role of the MEAG is to help support the Strategy Team (formerly known as the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation (RME) Team) produce robust monitoring and evaluation evidence on the ESI funds in Wales, including the Ireland-Wales Programme.  Neither of the two MEAG meetings to date have covered any Ireland-Wales issues but these will feature in future meetings.  At the end of 2015 the WEFO Strategy Team commissioned YouGov to collect baseline data for the result indicators for Specific Objectives 1 and 2.  The fieldwork for this took place in February 2016 and involved telephone interviews with businesses in Ireland and Wales (covering both Specific Objectives) and telephone interviews with individuals in Ireland and Wales (covering Specific Objective 2 only).  The outputs of this work allowed the Strategy Team to calculate baselines and set targets for the two result indicators.  These have since been submitted to the EC.  During 2016, the Strategy Team provided advice and guidance to Ireland Wales projects on their monitoring and evaluation plans and related activity. In addition to this, the Strategy Team also advised projects on their proposed procurement activity. |

## 10.2 The results of the information and publicity measures of the Funds carried out under the communication strategy

|  |
| --- |
| During 2016 a range of actions to implement the communications strategy were carried out to raise awareness and understanding of the opportunities and benefits presented through the Ireland Wales programme. In particular, given the stage of programme delivery, the focus of communications activities was mainly focused on promoting programme opportunities and setting up effective information channels, including the establishment of a new Ireland Wales website and Twitter updates.  Website  The new Ireland Wales website http://irelandwales.eu/ was launched in May 2016.  It aims to further raise the profile and increase interest in the Ireland Wales Cooperation Programme. The website has a branded identity linked to the wider European Territorial Cooperation or ‘Interreg’ programmes.  The key functions of the website include:   * Latest news, key messages, and events; * Interactive map of the programme area showing the eligible regions in both Ireland and Wales; * Through an interactive map of the programme area, a user-friendly search facility of projects approved to date; * Information to know before applying for funds (e.g. is my organisation eligible? what is the criteria?) and how to apply for funding (including an overview of the process and contact details for further information); * Link to WEFO Online – the application portal; * Step-by-step guidance on project delivery for sponsors.   The website homepage also includes key statistics relating to the progress of the programme e.g. number of projects approved, projects in the pipeline. During 2016, since its launch, the website attracted over 2,700 visits.  Twitter  From May 2016, the management of the Ireland Wales Twitter channel has been led by WEFO, which  opened up opportunities to link in with @wefowales/cymru (2,500 followers) and @WelshGovernment (64,000 followers) twitter channels. It  also helped to join up messages with other EU funding programmes promoted through these Twitter channels. By the end of December 2016, @irelandwales had over 500 followers.  Information and Publicity Guidelines  During 2016, the Information and Publicity Guidelines were  published on the Ireland Wales website at http://www.irelandwales.eu/sites/default/files/2016-10/Publicising%20your%20project%202014-2020%20IW%20%282%29.pdf  They have been developed to help maximise publicity opportunities and highlight the contribution the EU funds are making through the programme, and to ensure sponsors, partners and beneficiaries comply with EC regulations.  The guidelines include EC requirements and best practice in delivering communications activities and materials including use of logos, commemorative plaques, press notices, posters, websites, social media, case studies and informing beneficiaries of the support from the ERDF.  PR and Project announcements  Following the approval of two Ireland Wales projects - Dŵr Uisce and CALIN,  press notices were issued to the media to mark  these milestones. Both announcements were also promoted on the Welsh Government, WEFO and Ireland Wales websites.  As more projects are approved we will identify opportunities to publicise their achievements and milestones, including encouraging sponsors to share with us their good news stories and case studies for use on the Ireland Wales website/Twitter channel to further raise the profile and achievements of the programme. In addition to plaques, WEFO issued posters to all projects following their approval/announcement. WEFO will continue to do this throughout the programming period as further projects are approved.  During 2016, we ensured that key messages on the Ireland Wales programme were included within our publicity activities for our regional Structural Funds programmes. In many cases Ireland Wales messages were embedded into strategic press notices, Ministerial speeches and at events covering other EU funding programmes, including those EC programmes managed directly by the EC. For example, the Ireland Wales programme was referenced in the Welsh Government's Ministerial statements relating to UK Government’s guarantee of EU funds, at our annual information event held in October 2016, and at Horizon 2020 information workshops and events.  Twitter was used to promote the programme by highlighting the meeting in Dublin with Irish Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe and Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government, Mark Drakeford, during which they discussed the progress and importance of the Ireland-Wales Cooperation programme.  Within our publicity materials, and through PR opportunities, we will continue to promote key messages underpinning the programme, working closely with the Irish Government press office and the Southern Regional Assembly. For example, press notices include lines which reinforce the aim of the programme – strengthening economic links and stimulating cross-border collaboration in areas including innovation, climate change, cultural and natural resources, heritage and tourism. |

# 11. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE ADDED DEPENDING ON THE CONTENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COOPERATION PROGRAMME (Article 14(4), subparagraph 2 (a), (b), (c) and (f), of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013)

## 11.1 Progress in implementation of the integrated approach to territorial development, including sustainable urban development, and community-led local development under the cooperation programme

|  |
| --- |
| No actions applicable to the Co-operation Programme have been implemented during the reporting period. |

## 11.2 Progress in implementation of actions to reinforce the capacity of authorities and beneficiaries to administer and to use the ERDF

|  |
| --- |
| During 2016, early interest in Ireland Wales generally came from organisations in the cross-border region which had participated in previous programmes, however this is not exclusively the case. The Ireland Wales Operations Officers are working on their respective territories to promote and raise awareness of the programme and the new website and promotion via social media are other mechanisms being utilised to attract  a wider range of organisations including newcomers. It is anticipated that a wider interest in developing proposals will emerge as programme implementation gathers pace. |

## 11.3 Contribution to macro-regional and sea basin strategies (where appropriate)

As stipulated by the Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, recital 19, article 8(3)(d) on the "Content, adoption and amendment of cooperation programmes" and article 14(4) 2nd subparagraph (c) "Implementation reports", this programme contributes to MRS(s) and/or SBS:

|  |
| --- |
| All three operational Priorities have some alignment with the Atlantic Strategy and its Action Plan although clearly the geographical reach of the cross-border programme covers only part of the Sea Basin territory.  All three operations approved in 2016 can be considered as aligning to the Strategy and its Priorities  concerning promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation and protecting, securing and developing the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment  The Programme’s selection process requires an assessment of the extent that  joint operations fit with each of its  nine selection criteria.  These are split into three core criteria analysed at a Gateway 1 stage and a further six selection criteria analysed at Gateway 2 – detailed business planning stage.   One of the three core criteria addresses strategic fit including an assessment of the alignment of the cross-border operation with the Atlantic Strategy, where this is relevant. |

🞎 EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

🞎 EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

🞎 EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)

🞎 EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

🗹 Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy (ATLSBS)

**ATLSBS**

**Priority(s) and objective(s) that the programme is relevant to:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Priority** | **Objective** |
| 🗹 | 1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation | 1.1 - Sharing knowledge between higher education organisations, companies and research centers |
| 🗹 | 1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation | 1.2 - Enhancement of competitiveness and innovation capacities in the maritime economy of the Atlantic area |
| 🞎 | 1 - Promote entrepreneurship and innovation | 1.3 - Fostering adaptation and diversification of economic activities by promoting the potential of the Atlantic area |
| 🞎 | 2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment | 2.1 - Improving maritime safety and security |
| 🗹 | 2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment | 2.2 - Exploring and protecting marine waters and coastal zones |
| 🗹 | 2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment | 2.3 - Sustainable management of marine resources |
| 🗹 | 2 - Protect, secure and develop the potential of the Atlantic marine and coastal environment | 2.4 - Exploitation of the renewable energy potential of the Atlantic area's marine and coastal environment |
| 🞎 | 3 - Improve accessibility and connectivity | 3.1 - Promoting cooperation between ports |
| 🞎 | 4 - Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development | 4.1 - Fostering better knowledge of social challenges in the Atlantic area |
| 🗹 | 4 - Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development | 4.2 - Preserving and promoting the Atlantic's cultural heritage |

**Actions or mechanisms used to better link the programme with the Atlantic SBS**

**A. Are the Sea Basin Strategic coordinators (mainly National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators or members, and/or Objective coordinators or members) participating in the Monitoring Committee of the programme?**

Yes 🞎 No 🗹

**B. In selection criteria, have extra points been attributed to specific measures supporting the ATLSBS?**

Yes 🞎 No 🗹

**C. Has the programme invested EU funds in the ATLSBS?**

Yes 🞎 No 🗹

Does your programme plan to invest in the EUSAIR in the future? Please elaborate (1 specific sentence)

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|  |

**D. Obtained results in relation to the ATLSBS (n.a. for 2016)**

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| --- |
| n.a. for 2016 |

## 11.4 Progress in the implementation of actions in the field of social innovation

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| No actions applicable to the Co-operation Programme have been implemented during the reporting period. |

# 13. SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Information and assessment of the programme contribution to achieving the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

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| This section is not applicable to the 2016 AIR. |

# 14. ISSUES AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PROGRAMME AND MEASURES TAKEN — PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK (Article 50(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Where the assessment of progress made with regard to the milestones and targets set out in the performance framework demonstrates that certain milestones and targets have not been achieved, Member States should outline the underlying reasons for failure to achieve these milestones in the report of 2019 (for milestones) and in the final implementation report (for targets).

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| --- |
| This section is not applicable to the 2016 AIR. |