



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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

2018 Annual Implementation Report - Summary



UNDEB EWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION



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Welsh Government

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

Introduction

The €100m Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme is part of the 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.

Programme Progress

Overview

By the end of 2018, €50m of EU funds had been invested in 15 projects, driving a total investment of €63m in the cross-border region.

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

This included a key meeting between the Welsh Government Finance Secretary, Mark Drakeford and Irish Minister for Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe in February.

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

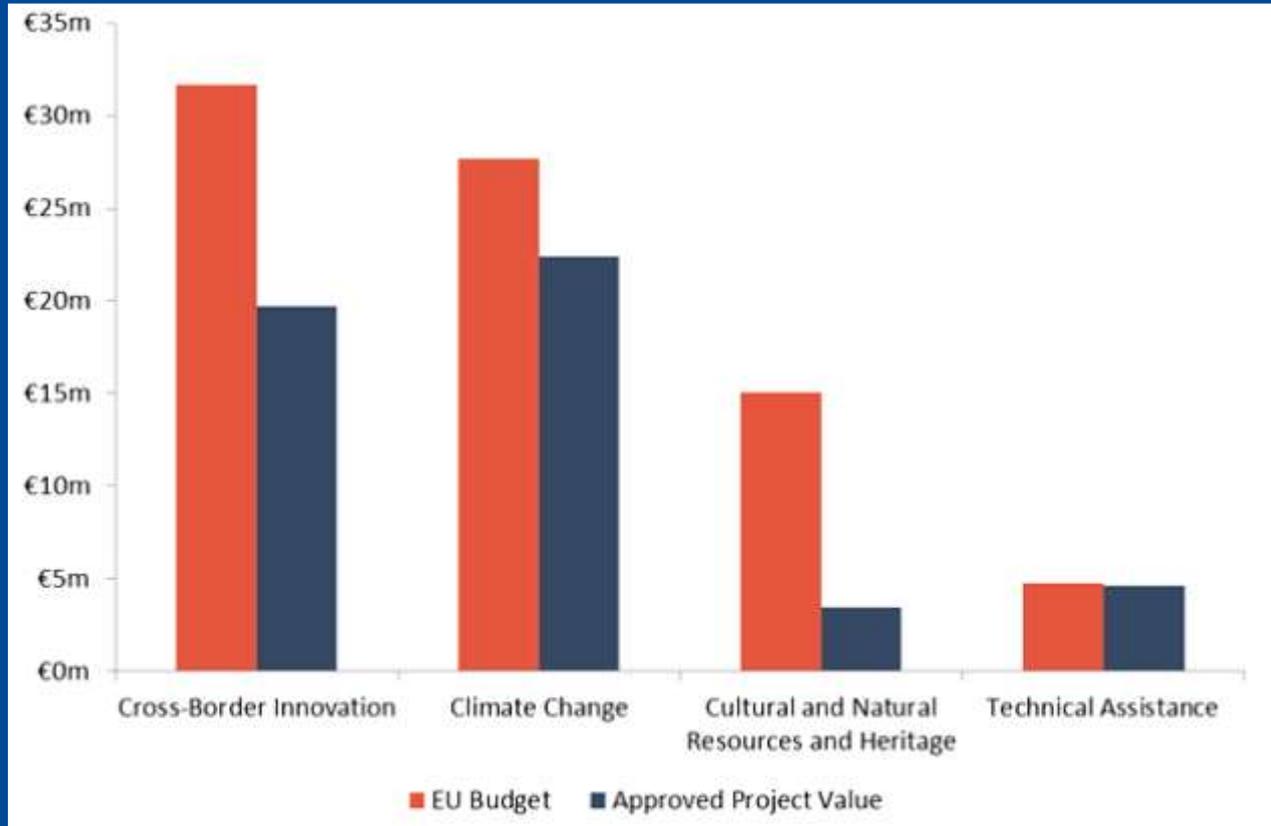
- Projects under this priority are utilising the potential of natural, cultural and heritage assets to increase visitor numbers to coastal communities.

Priority 4: Technical Assistance

- This priority provides financial support to assist 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 2018.



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.



Progress by priority

Cross-border Innovation

By the end of 2018, 62% of EU funds available under this priority had been invested in seven projects.

In March, €1.3m of EU funds was announced for the **Catalyst** project, which is driving innovation in Irish and Welsh businesses in the life science and food and drink sectors.

The project is working with businesses to develop new specialist products, access new markets, and ensure packaging of products are sustainably sourced and minimised.

The University of Wales Trinity St David is leading the scheme alongside WRAP Cymru, the Institute of Technology Carlow, Tipperary County Council and Carlow County Council.

Irish Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D. said: “I am delighted to see the launch of another project under the Ireland Wales programme. The Catalyst project is a great example of how EU funding is being used to promote innovation and support research and development in the SME sector on a cross border basis.”



Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

By the end of 2018, 81% of EU funds available under this priority had been invested in five projects.

In September, €4.3 million of EU funds was announced for the **STREAM** (Sensor Technologies for Remote Environmental Aquatic Monitoring) project.

The project brings together research organisations to develop advanced marine monitoring systems in the Irish Sea to allow better understanding of the impacts of climate change.

STREAM is led by the Waterford Institute of Technology in partnership with Swansea University and Cork Institute of Technology.

Irish Minister for Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe T.D. said: “The continuing co-operation between our two nations in areas such as scientific research yields benefits on all sides.

“Climate change is a shared challenge, which serves to highlight the importance of cross-border co-operation through projects like STREAM. By furthering our understanding of the impact of climate change in this way we will be better placed to combat it in the future, improving the quality of our seas for the years to come.”

Progress by priority

Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

By the end of 2018, 23% of EU funds available under this priority had been invested in two projects.



In March, €1.6m of EU funds was announced for the new **Celtic Routes** project, which is encouraging visitors to explore new areas of Wales and Ireland en route to their final tourist destination.

Led by Carmarthenshire County Council, the project is focussing on the areas of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion in Wales and Waterford, Wicklow and Wexford in Ireland.

Welsh Government Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, said: “Celtic Routes is a great example of EU funds being used to benefit cross border areas in Ireland and Wales by encouraging visitors to explore the local scenery, hospitality and culture of wider regions, and not just tourist hot spots. By helping to increase visitor numbers, the project will stimulate economic growth and both create and safeguard jobs in the cultural, heritage and tourism sectors.”



Case Study

Bathing water quality up on North Wales coast



Acclimatize is a project involving University College Dublin and Aberystwyth University that is helping improve the quality of bathing water in coastal communities of Ireland and Wales.

As part of the project a range of technologies are being developed to monitor water quality and understand the effects of climate change through altered weather patterns, affecting rainfall, temperature and tides which impact on coastal areas.

In November, Cemaes Bay in North Wales achieved the EU bathing water quality directive for the first time in three years.

Cemaes Bay was the first site sampled by the Acclimatize team in Wales and the team's efforts have resulted in a new predictive model that provides an accurate prediction of bathing water quality.

Significantly, the high bacterial counts responsible for beaches failing Directive

standards are correctly predicted by the new modelling system provided by the Acclimatize project. This allows such 'at-risk' bathing waters, with a history of non-compliance, to be more resilient to natural causes of poor water quality such as rainfall events.



Case Study

Walking Football the winner at Aviva Stadium



More than a Club is a project involving the Football Association of Ireland and Welsh social enterprise, Vi-Ability which is working with local professional football clubs to set up stand-alone social enterprises and deliver innovative social programmes centred on health, education and social inclusion.

The Walking Football programme is a social initiative designed for older football lovers keen to keep fit and retain an interest in playing football. The unique rules are aimed at avoiding injuries and facilitating the sport for those who are physically disadvantaged. It helps participants maintain an active lifestyle.

Walking football is on the increase in Ireland and Wales and is a valuable social outlet for older people who may be experiencing social isolation or who may just want to stay involved in the game they've loved for decades.

Players from the 'More than a Club' Walking Football programmes were on hand to display some skills and entertain the crowd at the UEFA Nations League game between Wales and Ireland in Dublin on 16 October.

Participants of both teams thoroughly enjoyed the Aviva experience playing in front of almost 40,000 fans with a keenly contested game ending in a draw.





	
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