

ENVIRONMENT – MANAGE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS & SPECIES

1. Summary of call

The INTERREG VA Programme is making a call for applications under the specific objective: Manage Marine Protected Areas & Species, objective 2.2.

To develop cross-border capacity for the monitoring and management of marine protected areas and species.

The total value of call is €5.5 million ERDF

Opening Date: 18 May 2017

Closing Date: **9th June 2017 (15:00)**

Steering Committee: 26th June 2017

The result indicator:

Cross-border capacity for monitoring and management of marine protected areas and species. The current baseline is a little collaboration with the target for 2023 being a lot of collaboration.

The output indicators:

- **4 models developed to support conservation of habitats and species**
- **6 marine management plans for designated areas**

Applicants will need to demonstrate their ability to achieve against all of the outputs listed above.

2. Essential information

This call for applications should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Cooperation Programme, and associated Citizens' Summary;
- The Programme Rules;
- Guide for Applicants.

Please consult these documents before completing the application form as they contain essential information to assist you in making the best application possible.

Applicants may also find it useful to consult 'Impact Assessment Toolkit for Cross-Border Cooperation'. This toolkit has been developed by the Centre for Cross-Border Studies, as part of an INTERREG IVA funded project and is intended to be a practical guide to assist with planning cross-border projects. A copy of the toolkit can be downloaded from our website.

3. Project Selection Criteria.

The following selection criteria will be used:

- a. Contribution of the project to the defined results and outputs of the programme.
 - i. Contribution to protected areas and species;
 - ii. Knowledge sharing of research data and outputs;
- b. Quality of the project design and in particular;
- c. Quality of project team and implementation arrangements;
- d. Value for money;
- e. Quality of cross-border co-operation with demonstrable added value;
- f. Contribution towards sustainable development; and
- g. Contribution towards equality.

4. Background to INTERREG Programme

The INTERREG VA 2014-2020 Programme is one of approximately 60 programmes across the European Union designed to promote greater levels of cross-border cooperation.

Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland share a number of common features with other border areas across Europe where developmental problems are exacerbated by the existence of borders. Borders can distort infrastructure and communication networks resulting in reduced economic development and different policy approaches which hinder joined-up service delivery.

The INTERREG VA Programme has been designed to address many of these issues in order to promote greater economic, social and territorial cohesion across the region.

5. Eligible Region

The eligible area for the INTERREG VA Programme is:

- Northern Ireland;
- The Border Counties of Ireland (Monaghan, Leitrim, Cavan, Louth, Sligo and Donegal); and
- Western Scotland (Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire mainland; South Ayrshire; Lochaber, Skye & Lochalsh, Arran & Cumbrae and Argyll & Bute and Eilean Siar/Western Isles).

Projects must comply with the cross-border requirements of Article 12 of 1299/2013 as detailed in the Programme rules.

6. What is the theme “Manage Marine Protected Areas & Species” going to achieve?

The EU Atlantic Strategy advocates the sustainable development of the Atlantic region’s natural resources and has an overriding objective of creating sustainable jobs and growth. One of the key challenges for Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland, and Western Scotland is addressing environmental issues associated with development in the marine environment while achieving the EU Biodiversity Strategy’s overall aim to halt biodiversity loss by 2020.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive requires EU Member States to co-operate in the management of regional seas with the objective of meeting Good Environmental Status by

2020. Increased co-operation in this area can mitigate against climate change impact. The need for a coherent approach across the region is particularly relevant in this area because of the shared waters. Maintaining biodiversity is a requirement to achieve Good Environmental Status and an inherent part of the delivery of MSFD is to develop an ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas across Europe. With the marine environment coming under increasing pressure from human activity, such a network will ensure that biodiversity is safeguarded.

Studies illustrate that the marine environment shared by Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland is regarded as having one of the greatest renewable energy resources in Europe, with the capacity to support economically viable wind, wave and tidal energy projects. Within the confines of a network of marine protected areas, developments need to be managed and mitigated in a manner which will promote, sustain and conserve the marine environment. This investment by the programme will be aimed at increasing the capacity for integrated planning and management of marine resources and increasing the effectiveness of cross-border marine management strategies. New cross-border cooperation strategies will be developed on the basis of existing and newly acquired data. This will lead to an increase in compliance with the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

This investment by the programme will lead to an increased understanding of and ability to capitalise on the marine resources in the region. This will include an increase in the availability of comprehensive mapping programmes; the development and growth of a regional “blue economy” based on the maritime resource; and the alignment of regional activities with the EU Atlantic strategy.

7. Anticipated Actions

It is anticipated that the programme will fund the following types of actions;

- Development and implementation of cross-border management plans for marine protected areas and species;
- Mapping of marine/seabed environment;
- Creation of a network of marine protected areas;
- Research and development in the marine environment; including the impact of climate change;
- Marine skills initiatives;

- Co-ordinated research programme of direct relevance to the management challenges of the eligible area;
- Knowledge and data sharing;

8. Budget and co-financing rate

€5.5m million ERDF is available under this call. Successful projects will be offered a grant in Euro.

The maximum intervention rate that can be applied is 85%. This means that applicants are required to bring a minimum of 15% match funding to the eligible project costs over the lifetime of the project. Applicants may request 15% match funding from the Member States through the application process. Please see programme rules for further details on match funding.

However, please be aware the intervention rate (grant rate) may decrease depending upon the state aid implications of your project. It is the responsibility of the Lead Partner to ensure that State Aid cover and compliance is in place. The application should clearly outline the process to ensure and demonstrate State Aid compliance.

The level of grant aid may also be adjusted to take due account of anticipated future revenue streams. Please consult the Programme rules for further details.

Grants and payments may take any of the following forms:

- Reimbursement of eligible costs actually incurred and paid;
- Standard scales of unit costs;
- Flat rate financing, available for overhead costs or salary costs.

The above options may be combined only where each option covers different categories of cost or where they are used for different projects forming a part of an operation or for successive phases of an operation. Flat rate financing for overheads is available for this call at a rate of 15% of staff costs.

9. Application process.

A two stage process will be in place for this call as detailed in the Guide for Applicants. Full details of the assessment process, including admissibility criteria are available in the Guide for Applicants.

The stage one application for this call must be submitted to SEUPB using our stage one application template available at http://www.seupb.eu/2014-2020Programmes/INTERREGV_Programme/INTERREGV_FundingCallInfo/Environment_Marine.aspx

For applicants who progress to stage two an application will be submitted on line through the eMS database system.

10. Contact Us

For general enquiries about this call please contact the SEUPB on: Tel: 0044 (0)28 9026 6660

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