



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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

## 2017 Annual Implementation Report - Summary



UNDEB EWROPEAIDD  
EUROPEAN UNION



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Welsh Government

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

# 1. Introduction

**This is the third Annual Implementation Report for the Ireland / Wales Co-operation Programme, covering the reporting year of 2017.**

The €100m Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme is funded through the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Programme is supporting projects with partners based in both Ireland and Wales, focussing on activities across three key priority areas which will go some way to providing solutions to common challenges. The Irish Sea is a central focus for the Programme given the maritime nature of the border between Ireland and Wales and the significant benefits which can be derived from this important resource.

## IRELAND/WALES CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME (2014-2020)



## About the Programme

The Programme was designed on the basis of identifying those common challenges where intervention can provide the greatest added value. The Programme's vision is to provide the framework for organisations in the cross-border area to actively cooperate to address challenges and shared priorities of common interest on both sides of the Irish Sea – thereby contributing and adding value to the economic and sustainable development priorities of Wales and Ireland.

The Programme has a clear focus on the Irish Sea with further opportunities for harnessing the talents of the internationally renowned scientific expertise in the Programme area to increase capacity and knowledge of climate change. Opportunities to link the FE institutions and SMEs in the Programme area through co-operation targeting our shared smart specialisation strategies will stimulate joint innovation activity in food and drink, life sciences and marine and environmental sciences (including renewable energy). The Programme will also seek to utilise the shared culture, resources and heritage to increase visitor numbers to the cross-border region.

## The Programme is split into four priority areas:

### Priority 1: Cross-Border Innovation

- Increase the intensity of knowledge transfer collaborations involving research organisations and SMEs in line with the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies.

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

- Increase capacity and knowledge of climate change adaptation for the Irish Sea and coastal communities.

### Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

- Sustainably realise the potential of natural and cultural assets in increasing visitor numbers to coastal communities in the Programme area.

### Priority 4: Technical Assistance

- Ensure the efficient and effective management of the Programme.

## Budget available under each of the Programme's Priorities:

| Priority  | EU Budget   | Total Budget <sup>1</sup> |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|
| Priority 1: Cross Border Innovation   | €32m        | €40m                      |
| Priority 2: Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change | €28m        | €35m                      |
| Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage                           | €15m        | €19m                      |
| Priority 4: Technical Assistance  | €5m         | €6m                       |
| <b>Total available under the Programme</b>  | <b>€79m</b> | <b>€99m</b>               |

<sup>1</sup> The amount from the EU Budget combined with match funding

The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) is the Managing Authority for the Programme and will build on tri-lateral design and development of the Programme with its operational partners, the Southern Regional Assembly (SRA) in Waterford, and government partners the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in Dublin to deliver the Programme.

More information about the Programme can be found on the Ireland / Wales Co-operation Programme website at <http://irelandwales.eu/>

## 2. Programme Progress

### Overview

By the end of 2017, €42.5m of EU funds invested in twelve projects, driving a total investment of €53m in the cross-border area.

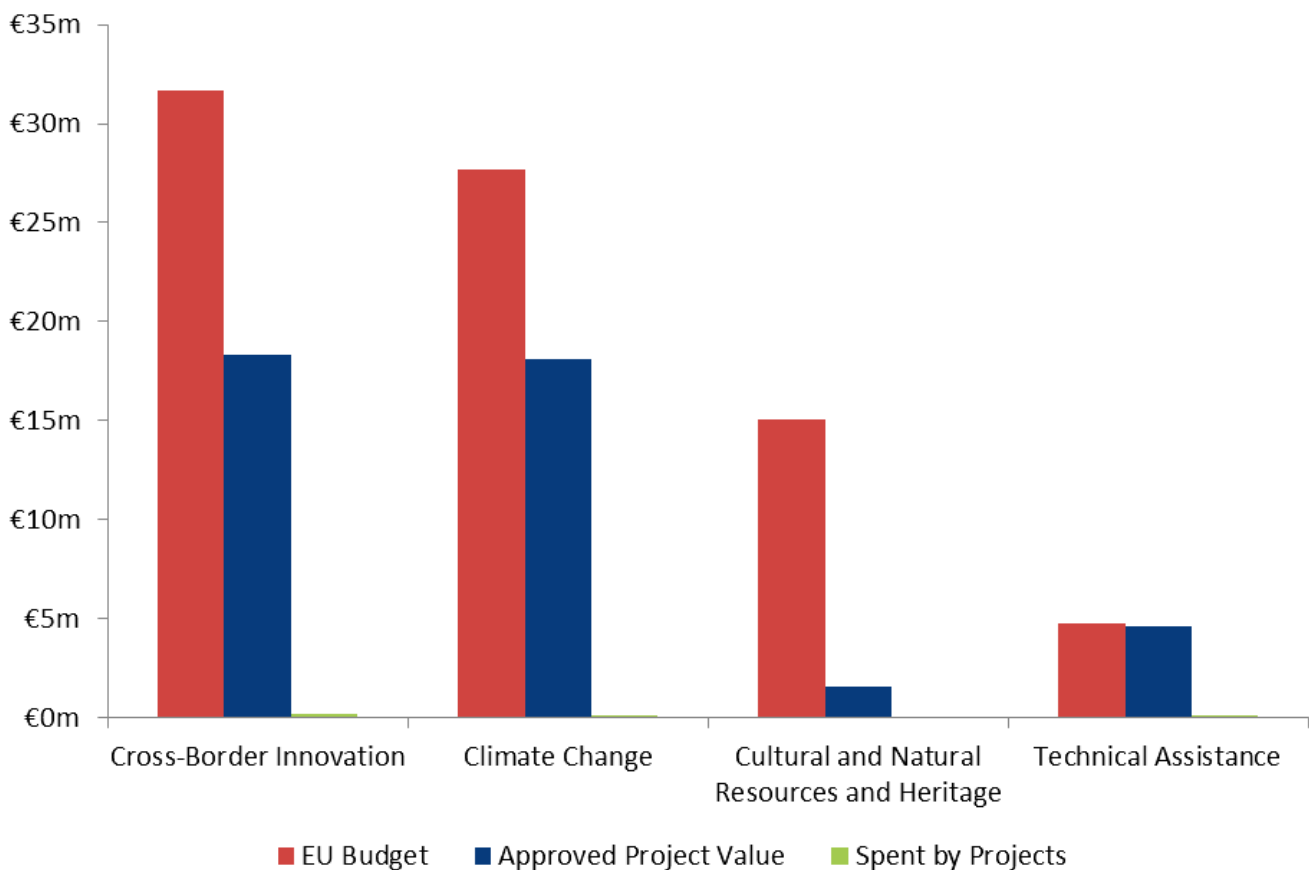
During 2017, the Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat took a number of steps to raise the profile of and re-invigorate interest in the Programme, including a twitter campaign in March 2017, greater promotional activity in Ireland, and the opening of a specific call launched for Priority 3 in May 2017.

The Ireland Wales website <http://irelandwales.eu>, launched in May 2016, continues to attract interest and it, along with the @IrelandWales twitter account continues to raise the profile and increase interest in the Programme.

## Financial Progress

The following chart shows, at Priority level, the total allocation of EU funds, how much has been invested in projects, and how much has been spent by projects.

Chart 1: EU Funds: Budget, Approved and Spent



## 3. Progress by Priority

### Priority 1: Cross-Border Innovation

**Co-operation between the HE and FE institutions in the cross border region and its SMEs and the transfer of knowledge to the region's SMEs to jointly improve innovation performance and expertise focussing on the shared priorities of the smart specialisation strategies.**

By the end of 2017 around 58% of the EU Funds available under this Priority had been invested in six projects, including four approved in 2017. These were: 'pISCES', smart grid technologies; 'Irish Sea Portal', a pilot designed to test the concept of a link between HEIs and Research Institutions with the SMEs operating in the Irish Sea; 'Bucanier', a project to develop open innovation, resulting in focused clusters and networks in renewable energy, food and drink and life science sectors; and 'More than a Club', a pilot designed to test an approach using sports clubs as hubs and develop four social enterprises.

### Case Study: CALIN

The €12m project is backed by €9m of EU funds. The project delivers a pan-Ireland-Wales platform for industry driven innovation in the area of Nanohealth (the application of nanotechnology to healthcare).

A cross-border cluster is being established comprising world-leading HEIs including Swansea, Cardiff and Bangor universities in Wales and UCD, UCC (Tyndall) and Galway in Ireland working in partnership with healthcare providers, local and multinational industries, to deliver technical and economic advances in Nanohealth.

To date, CALIN staff, researchers and academics have provided over 800 hours of assistance and are engaged with 141 SMEs across Ireland and Wales. CALIN research staff are currently running 20 R&D projects with SMEs and are working with a further 11 SMEs to develop R&D projects that will support company growth

One such company is Lumo Liquids who are working with the CALIN project to address public health and the increased use of e-cigarettes which has driven demand world-wide for flavoured syrups that are presently unregulated and for which there is little published data regarding their impact on human health.

In anticipation of The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and EU adopting

regulations to address this issue, Lumo Liquids required a holistic understanding of the chemical make-up of e-cigarette flavour syrups to ensure they are safe for human use, and to inform future product development.

Working as part of the cross border partnership between Swansea University and drawing on expertise within the Biological and nano interactions at University College Dublin, a systematic review was undertaken of chemicals used to manufacture e-cigarette flavour syrups, producing an overview of the biological impact of each chemical used. Subsequent research will assess the stability of e-cigarette flavour syrups providing an understanding of product shelf-life and any health impacts associated with chemical degradation during product ageing.

This project solves a developmental challenge for Lumo Liquids as well as providing data that will inform public health and establish a standardised, human health-focused approach to the manufacture of e-cigarette flavour syrups.

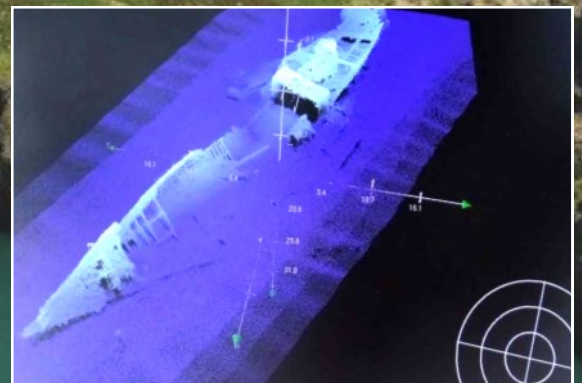
In addition to a new process for the company and data that informs product development, the project has also led to the launch of a new product range to the market and £45K further R&D investment to continue the research.



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

**Increasing the knowledge and awareness of climate change adaptation for the Irish Sea and coastal communities. Investing in projects aimed at reducing knowledge gaps, the transfer of that knowledge amongst key stakeholders and the wider dissemination to the communities affected.**

By the end of 2017 around of the 65% of the EU Funds available under this Priority had been invested in four projects, including three approved in 2017. These were: 'Acclimatize', a project to identify the main pollution pressures on bathing waters, develop assessment tools to evaluate the impact of climate change and develop management tools to limit the impact of that change on the bathing waters; 'Bluefish', a project to develop guidelines and best practice for environmental and economic sustainability of commercially important marine organisms in the Irish Sea and 'Eco-structures', a project 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 and maximising potential secondary ecological and socio-economic benefit.





## Case Study: CHERISH

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

Backed by €4.1m of EU funds through the Programme, CHERISH is targeting knowledge gaps, employing innovative techniques to discover, assess, map and monitor heritage assets on land and sea. It will raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on heritage, train the citizen scientist and widely disseminate the results. It will also develop best practice and guidance, making recommendations for future adaptation.

Following its launch in March 2017 the project has received media interest, including a piece on BBC Wales TV news.

The survey team has been out and about selecting sites and study areas for survey and investigation over the next five years. Baseline data has been gathered at a number of locations, documenting

the current state of known monuments but also discovering new ones. This includes capturing 3D geomatic data from six Welsh islands, carrying out a drone survey of Dunbeg Fort in the Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry, to create an accurate 3D model of the site and on land making reconnaissance visits to potential sites for palaeoenvironmental research.

CHERISH survey teams were out on the ground in the days following the storms of October 2017 to assess the aftermath across study areas in County Wexford and Pembrokeshire. Here the benefit of baseline monitoring from earlier in 2017 became apparent. Aerial photographs taken during Irish baseline surveys in late September showed the sand bar and breach at the southern end of Lady's Island Lake before the storms. Subsequent drone aerial photos taken by the Discovery Programme on 18 October recorded changes to the sand bar, and at other points along this vulnerable coast. Such long-term monitoring will continue during the five-year project.





## Priority 3: Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

**To increase visitor numbers and enhance sustainable economic growth through cross-border co-operative actions which support, maintain, preserve and promote the unique cultural and natural heritage and assets of the Programme's coastal communities.**

By the end of 2017 around of the 11% of the EU Funds available under this Priority had been invested in one project. This was 'Celtic Routes', a pilot to test the feasibility of a series of newly created cross border tourism trails that combine natural, cultural and heritage assets in Ireland and Wales. Interest from stakeholders in developing potential projects grew during 2017, with eleven proposals for projects in the pipeline.

## Priority 4: Technical Assistance

**Technical Assistance is an essential resource, utilised by the Managing Authority and other partners, for supporting the effective delivery of the Programme.**

By the end of 2017 around of the 97% of the EU Funds available under this Priority had been invested in one project. This was the operation to enable WEFO and the Southern Regional Assembly to manage the delivery of the Programme.







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