

**EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION
DRAFT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME**

ATLANTIC AREA

**TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION
2007-2013**

**SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION
BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**REVISED VERSION FOLLOWING COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM THE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION (M. ORANT'S LETTER DATED 7 MAY 2007)
CCI: 2007 CB 163 PO 029**

29 MAY 2007

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT	4
I. INTRODUCTION	5
I.A. ATLANTIC AREA COOPERATION	5
I.B. GENESIS OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME	6
II. DIAGNOSTIC, CHALLENGES	8
II.A. COOPERATION AREA	8
II.A.1. <i>Eligible regions</i>	9
II.A.2. <i>Key facts</i>	10
II.B. CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS	11
II.B.1. <i>Economic development</i>	11
II.B.1.a. Big disparities between the regions	11
II.B.1.b. The knowledge economy in the Atlantic Area	12
II.B.2. <i>Environment and maritime heritage</i>	14
II.B.2.a. The coastal shift of urbanisation	14
II.B.2.b. The environmental effect of agriculture	15
II.B.2.c. Natural and technological hazards	15
II.B.2.d. The maritime heritage	15
II.B.3. <i>Accessibility and transport</i>	17
II.B.3.a. Land transport	18
II.B.3.b. Air transport	18
II.B.3.c. Maritime transport	19
II.B.3.d. Access to information and communication technologies (ICT)	19
II.B.4. <i>Territorial structure</i>	20
II.B.4.a. Analysis of the territorial structure	20
II.B.4.b. The potential for cooperation networks	21
II.C. TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ATLANTIC AREA	22
II.C.1. <i>Ever-increasing financial and human means</i>	22
II.C.2. <i>The achievements and pertinence of "Atlantic Area" cooperation for the new programming period</i>	22
II.C.3. <i>Expected progress in cooperation</i>	24
II.C.3.a. More ambitious and operational projects	24
II.C.3.b. Consistent, long-term monitoring of the progress achieved	24
II.C.3.c. A diversification of the players and a clarification of their respective roles	25
II.D. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS	26
II.E. CHALLENGES	28
II.E.1. <i>Cohesive development of the knowledge economy</i>	28
II.E.2. <i>Enhancement of the Atlantic maritime heritage</i>	29
II.E.3. <i>Balanced polycentric development</i>	29
II.E.4. <i>More ambitious cooperation</i>	30
III. STRATEGY, PRIORITIES	31
III.A. WHY COOPERATE?	31
III.B. THE PRIME PROGRAMME GOAL	32
III.C. HOW TO MAKE COOPERATION STRONGER?	32
III.C.1. <i>The "open perpetuation" of cooperation structures</i>	32
III.C.2. <i>Tangible project results: more intense cooperation</i>	33
III.D. PRIORITIES	34
III.E. WHY THESE PRIORITIES?	35
III.E.1. <i>Taking up the challenges</i>	35
III.E.2. <i>Consistency with the Community Strategic Guidelines</i>	36
III.E.3. <i>Consistency with the National Strategic Reference Frameworks</i>	37
III.E.4. <i>Findings of the ex ante evaluation</i>	38
III.E.4.a. Key Evaluation Questions	38
III.E.4.b. Relevance	39
III.E.4.c. Internal coherence	39
III.E.4.d. External coherence	40

III.E.4.e.	System of indicators	40
III.E.4.f.	Implementation and management systems	41
III.E.4.g.	Conclusions of the <i>ex ante</i> evaluation	41
III.E.5.	<i>Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment report</i>	42
III.E.5.a.	Introduction	42
III.E.5.b.	Current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area	42
III.E.5.c.	Environmental policy framework	43
III.E.5.d.	Environmental assessment of the Atlantic Area Programme	43
III.E.5.e.	Conclusions of the environmental assessment	45
III.E.5.f.	Suggestions on the project selection and the monitoring procedure	45
III.E.5.g.	Strategic environmental assessment procedure	46
III.E.6.	<i>Compliance with Articles 16 and 17 of General Regulation 1083/2006</i>	48
IV.	OBJECTIVES, RESULTS	50
IV.A.	PRIORITY 1: PROMOTE TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INNOVATION NETWORKS	50
IV.A.1.	<i>Priority 1 and its specific objectives</i>	51
IV.A.2.	<i>Scope of action of Priority 1</i>	51
IV.A.2.a.	Objective 1.1. – Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres	52
IV.A.2.b.	Objective 1.2. – Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence	52
IV.A.2.c.	Objective 1.3. – Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting regional endogenous potential	53
IV.B.	PRIORITY 2: PROTECT, SECURE AND ENHANCE THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABLY	54
IV.B.1.	<i>Priority 2 and its specific objectives</i>	54
IV.B.2.	<i>Scope of action of Priority 2</i>	55
IV.B.2.a.	Objective 2.1. – Improve maritime safety	55
IV.B.2.b.	Objective 2.2. – Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces	55
IV.B.2.c.	Objective 2.3. – Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment	56
IV.B.2.d.	Objective 2.4. – Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones	57
IV.C.	PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND INTERNAL LINKS	58
IV.C.1.	<i>Priority 3 and its specific objectives</i>	58
IV.C.2.	<i>Scope of action of Priority 3</i>	58
IV.C.2.a.	Objective 3.1. – Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality	59
IV.C.2.b.	Objective 3.2. – Promote short sea shipping and cooperation between ports	60
IV.D.	PRIORITY 4: PROMOTE TRANSNATIONAL SYNERGIES IN SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT	60
IV.D.1.	<i>Priority 4 and its specific objectives</i>	61
IV.D.2.	<i>Scope of action of Priority 4</i>	61
IV.D.2.a.	Objective 4.1. – Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development	62
IV.D.2.b.	Objective 4.2. – Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking	62
IV.D.2.c.	Objective 4.3. – Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest	63
IV.E.	COMPLEMENTARITY WITH COMMUNITY POLICIES AND OTHER EU-FUNDED PROGRAMMES OR ACTIONS	63
IV.F.	PROJECT COORDINATION AND THEMATIC GROUPING	66
IV.G.	STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS	66
IV.H.	QUANTIFICATION OF THE PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES	67
V.	FINANCING	69
V.A.	ALLOCATION OF FUNDS BY YEAR	69
V.B.	ALLOCATION OF FUNDS BY PRIORITY	69
V.C.	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	71

VI.	IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT.....	72
VI.A.	THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE	72
VI.A.1.	<i>Monitoring Committee</i>	73
VI.A.1.a.	Composition and functioning of the Monitoring Committee.....	73
VI.A.1.b.	Remit of the Monitoring Committee.....	73
VI.A.2.	<i>Managing Authority</i>	75
VI.A.3.	<i>Certifying Authority</i>	77
VI.A.4.	<i>Audit Authority</i>	79
VI.A.5.	<i>Joint Technical Secretariat</i>	81
VI.A.5.a.	JTS staff and operation	81
VI.A.5.b.	Tasks and responsibilities of the JTS	81
VI.A.6.	<i>National Correspondents</i>	82
VI.B.	PROJECTS: FROM GENERATION TO SELECTION	82
VI.B.1.	<i>Generating projects</i>	83
VI.B.2.	<i>Presenting projects</i>	83
VI.B.2.a.	Project partnerships	83
VI.B.2.b.	Types of possible project partners	83
VI.B.2.c.	Location of lead beneficiaries and other beneficiaries eligible for ERDF support ..	84
VI.B.2.d.	Project application procedure	84
VI.B.3.	<i>Assessing and selecting project applications</i>	85
VI.C.	MONITORING SYSTEM.....	85
VI.D.	EVALUATION	86
VI.D.1.a.	<i>Ex ante</i> evaluation.....	86
VI.D.1.b.	Evaluation during the Programme period	86
VI.E.	MOBILISATION, CIRCULATION AND CONTROL OF FINANCIAL FLOWS	87
VI.E.1.	<i>Programme single account</i>	87
VI.E.2.	<i>ERDF contribution</i>	88
VI.E.3.	<i>Payments to beneficiaries</i>	88
VI.E.4.	<i>Controls and audits</i>	88
VI.E.4.a.	Liability	88
VI.E.4.b.	Validation of project expenditure	89
VI.E.4.c.	Audits.....	89
VI.E.5.	<i>Irregularities and financial corrections</i>	89
VI.F.	COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY STRATEGY	89
VI.G.	EXCHANGE OF COMPUTERISED DATA WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION.....	90
APPENDICES	91
APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY		92
APPENDIX 2 – DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES		95
APPENDIX 3 – OVERVIEW OF EU PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES WITH CONNECTION TO THE		
PRIORITIES OF THE PROGRAMME		98
Priority 1		98
Priority 2		98
Priority 3		99
Priority 4		99
APPENDIX 4 – QUANTIFICATION OF PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCES		100
APPENDIX 5 – INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY IN THE		
OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME.....		107
APPENDIX 6 - KEY-FIGURES		112
A. Demography / Surface area		112
B. Gross Domestic Product and Employment.....		114
APPENDIX 7 – MAPS		116
SEPARATE VOLUMES.....		126

ACRONYMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

ASDP	Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective
ATN	Atlantic Transnational Network (of economic and social partners)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCDR Norte	"Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte" (Managing Authority of the Programme)
CPMR	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CSG	Community Strategic Guidelines
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EFF	European Fisheries Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIF	European Investment Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESF	European Social Fund
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observation Network
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPRD	Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (of the European Union)
(FP6)	(Sixth Framework Programme)
(FP7)	(Seventh Framework Programme)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEIZ	Global Economic Integration Zone
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IDABC	Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens
IFDR	"Instituto Financeiro para o Desenvolvimento Regional" (Certifying Authority of the Programme)
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units (EUROSTAT - French acronym: "nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques")
PIMH	Programme Implementation and Management Handbook
RDI	Relative Development Index (proposed in the ASDP)
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SME(s)	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)
SSS	Short-Sea Shipping
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
WG 2007-2013	Working Group 2007-2013

I. Introduction

(1) The territorial cohesion of the European Union is attracting growing interest. This should come as no surprise considering the increasing interdependence between towns, regions and nations, even those that are not neighbours. Globalisation is largely responsible, along with European integration and the intensification of a series of Community policies with territorial influence (CAP, environment, major networks, etc.)

(2) The debate engaged when the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)¹ was drawn up soon underlined the need for a strategic approach in order to integrate the effects of these sector-based European Union policies. The challenge to be taken up is huge, such is the tendency towards the partitioning of sector-based policies at every level of power. However, this approach proposed by the ESDP was reiterated by the European Commission in its 2nd and 3rd reports on economic and social cohesion and, more recently, in the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG.)

(3) Given its territorial implications, the recently re-launched strategy defined in 2000 and 2001 by the Lisbon and Gothenburg European Councils is of great importance to the CSG. It is even placed at the heart of cohesion policy. As if to confirm this, the draft document succeeding the ESDP, presented to the relevant ministers in Leipzig on 24 and 25 May 2007, was entitled *"Territorial Agenda of the European Union: Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions"*.²

(4) From the outset, the participants in this debate have always recognised the essential role that cross-border and transnational cooperation are called upon to play in strengthening the territorial cohesion of the Union. In order to go further than merely abstract intentions, it was necessary to experiment in the field. In this respect, the INTERREG II and III Initiatives significantly raised awareness of territorial cohesion issues. The new "European Territorial Cooperation" Objective is to continue the work commenced, by improving further the achievements of INTERREG.

I.A. ATLANTIC AREA COOPERATION

(5) Cooperation in the Atlantic Area has largely contributed to these achievements. It was even a pioneer in the 1989-1993 programming period of the European structural funds. At the time, the ATLANTIS pilot project,³ although given very modest means, successfully launched the very first transnational cooperation projects financed by the ERDF.

(6) This first experiment inspired the launch of the transnational strand of the INTERREG II initiative. Thirteen INTERREG IIC transnational cooperation programmes were launched, including the new "Atlantic Area" programme. A great many more structured projects were to emerge in 1998 and 1999.

¹ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (1999)

² See document "The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union" on the site <http://www.bmvbs.de/territorial-agenda>

³ Known as the "ERDF Article 10 pilot project"

(7) During the period 2000-2006, a very significant increase in the budget allocated to transnational cooperation allowed the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area programme to make decisive headway in terms of the ambition and quality of projects, while acquiring remarkable management and cooperation skills.

(8) What should also be emphasised is the constant desire to make this field action part of a specific strategic perspective. The close links forged during the ATLANTIS pilot project with the Atlantic Arc Commission of the CPMR obviously helped progress in this direction. The process culminated in the recent elaboration of the Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective (ASDP), a document which has largely inspired this Operational Programme.

I.B. GENESIS OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

(9) In early March 2006, the five member states of the Atlantic Area decided to entrust the "Working Group 2007-2013" (WG 2007-13) with the task of drawing up this Operational Programme.

(10) This group was made up of five national delegations, each including a representative of the State and a representative of the regional level. The following also took part in the meetings:

- Representatives of CCDR Norte (Portugal), the Managing Authority of the European Territorial Cooperation "Atlantic Area" Programme (hereinafter referred to as "the Programme")
- Representatives of IFDR (Portugal) and Inspeção Geral de Finanças, respectively Certifying and Audit Authorities of the Programme
- Representatives of Conseil Régional Poitou-Charentes (France), Managing Authority of the INTERREG IIIB "Atlantic Area" Programme
- Representatives of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the INTERREG IIIB "Atlantic Area" Programme
- A representative of the economic and social partners: the Atlantic Transnational Network
- Specialists invited according to the topics to be addressed.

(11) In accordance with the mandate conferred upon it, the WG 2007-13 had authority and final responsibility for the decisions to be taken regarding the Programme, including the *ex ante* evaluation.

(12) The WG 2007-2013 met on six occasions. The main steps of the joint programming process were:

- First meeting on 17 May 2006 in Porto: process launch and framing;
- Second meeting on 7 July 2006 in Poitiers: transition INTERREG IIIB/European Territorial Cooperation, appointment of consultants⁴;

⁴ Following a call for tenders, two contracts were signed by CR Poitou-Charentes acting on behalf of the WG 2007-2013: one for the drafting of the Operational Programme [contractor: Géphyres-ITG Consultant (Roubaix) assisted by CEDRU (Lisbon), EPRC (Glasgow) and Quasar Consultores (Madrid)], the other for the *ex ante* evaluation and the SEA [contractor: ECOTEC Research and Consulting].

- Third meeting on 27 July 2006 in Lisbon: detailed methodology and procedures;
- Fourth meeting on 28 September 2006 in Cardiff: discussion on the first draft Operational Programme (Chapters I to IV);
- Fifth meeting on 29-30 November 2006 in Seville: Programme priorities (thematic focus, strategic frameworks, etc.), financing, implementation and management system;
- Sixth meeting on 15 February 2007 in Porto: discussion on the second draft Operational Programme.

(13) An *ex ante* evaluation including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the draft Operational Programme was organised in parallel (cf. Section III.E.4 below).

(14) Various consultations were organised to inform this programming process. National delegations to the WG 2007-2013 submitted a draft version of the Programme to various administrations, including those responsible for regional policy, and other bodies in their respective country. Several key players and field experts of the five countries of the cooperation area were interviewed by the team of consultants entrusted with drafting the Operational Programme to discuss the relevance of the strategy and operations proposed. A public consultation was also organised in compliance with Article 6 of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC.

(15) In conclusion, the content of this Operational Programme results from a broad dialogue and intense consultations involving national, regional and local authorities as well as non-governmental bodies. The joint programming process was perfectly in line with the partnership principle laid down in Article 11 of General Regulation 1083/2006.

II. Diagnostic, challenges

(16) In any strategic programming exercise, the definition of pertinent, consistent priorities and objectives must be based on a prior analysis of the existing situation and the trends underway. Article 12-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 on the content of operational programmes prescribes “an analysis of the situation in the area of cooperation in terms of strengths and weaknesses”.

(17) After a presentation of the cooperation area, this chapter gives a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Atlantic Area as things stand today, as well as the opportunities to be seized and the threats to be averted in order to optimise its future. This analysis is supplemented by a brief report on the strong and weak points of transnational cooperation. The results are summarised in the “SWOT - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats” table in section II.D.

(18) Just a few years ago, a SWOT analysis would have come up against a dearth of available studies. Today the opposite is true. The volume and wealth of publications could overwhelm the researcher. This is the case, for example, of the work carried out by the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network (ESPON), to name but one.

(19) With regard to the Atlantic Area, there are two major sources that cannot be ignored: the “Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective” (ASDP) and the series of three studies conducted by the “Atlantic Transnational Network” (ATN).⁵ These publications are recent and address the key issues that confront the Atlantic Area as a whole. They are the result of in-depth analysis of the best available sources and wide-ranging consultation of the main players involved. These studies were financed by the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme with the 2007-2013 programming period in mind. This explains why they have greatly inspired this chapter⁶.

(20) Nonetheless, the guidelines proposed in the ASDP and the studies by the ATN are not only relevant to transnational cooperation. Many of them can be applied within the regional, national or cross-border framework. Some of them also concern regions which are no longer included in the area of cooperation. The task was thus to pinpoint, in section II.E, the challenges that the Programme is specifically called upon to face.

II.A. COOPERATION AREA

(21) This section provides a snapshot picture of the programme cooperation area, i.e. the list of regions eligible for ERDF support and a sample of key-facts.

⁵ Cf. APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK (May 2005 and two studies dated April 2006) and CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE (November 2005)

⁶ To avoid making the text of Chapter II unwieldy, the ASDP and the ATN studies have not been referred to systematically whenever the content of their conclusions or recommendations is summarised in the following sections.

II.A.1. Eligible regions

(22) The area of cooperation (cf. Appendix 7, MAP 1) chosen for the implementation of the Programme for the 2007-2013 period includes the following regions (preceded by their NUTS code):

- **Spain:**

ES11 Galicia
ES12 Principado de Asturias
ES13 Cantabria
ES21 País Vasco
ES22 Comunidad Foral de Navarra
ES61 Andalucía: only the following NUTS3 regions:
 ES612 Cádiz
 ES615 Huelva
 ES618 Sevilla

- **France:**

FR23 Haute-Normandie
FR25 Basse-Normandie
FR51 Pays de la Loire
FR52 Bretagne
FR53 Poitou-Charentes
FR61 Aquitaine

- **Ireland:** the entire national territory, i.e.:

IE01 Border, Midland and Western
IE02 Southern and Eastern

- **Portugal:** the continental part of the territory, i.e.:

PT11 Norte
PT15 Algarve
PT16 Centro
PT17 Lisboa
PT18 Alentejo

- **United Kingdom:**

UKD1 Cumbria
UKD2 Cheshire
UKD3 Greater Manchester
UKD4 Lancashire
UKD5 Merseyside
UKK1 Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset
UKK2 Dorset and Somerset
UKK3 Cornwall and Isles of Scilly
UKK4 Devon
UKL1 West Wales and The Valleys
UKL2 East Wales
UKM3 South Western Scotland
UKM4 Highlands and Islands
UKN0 Northern Ireland

(23) This cooperation area is less extensive than that of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area programme. The regions below, which were previously eligible, have not been included in the new area:

- in Spain: La Rioja, Castilla y León, Canarias;
- in France: Limousin, Centre, Midi-Pyrénées;
- in Portugal: Açores, Madeira;
- in the United Kingdom: Worcestershire and Warwickshire, Avon, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, West Midlands.

(24) It is worth noting that organisations based outside this new cooperation area, in duly justified cases, may join project partnerships of the Programme. Article 21-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 provides some flexibility in this respect. According to Article 21-3), some eligible expenditure may also be incurred outside the EU territory. In both cases, a benefit for regions in the cooperation area must be demonstrated. The Programme may make use of this flexibility as appropriate, on conditions presented in Section VI.B.2.c below.

II.A.2. Key facts

(25) The summary table below displays aggregate figures relating to the size and demography of the programme cooperation area and national groupings of eligible regions. Detailed figures (NUTS 2 or 3 regions) are provided in Appendix 6-A

	Population			Pop. change	Size	Density
	1995	2000	2005	1995- 2005 %	[km ²]	2003 [inh/km ²]
Spanish regions	10 139 994	10 190 006	10 362 400	2,2	94 729	108,5
French regions	13 640 791	13 962 723	14 258 600	4,5	156 314	90,3
Ireland	3 654 711	3 777 763	4 109 173	12,4	69 797	56,5
Portugal (continent)	9 528 600	9 717 347	10 043 763	5,4	88 968	111,1
UK regions	19 083 241	19 194 160	18 998 326	-1,0	184 553	103,5
TOTAL PROGRAMME	56 047 337	56 841 999	57 772 262	3,1	594 361	96,4

(26) Detailed figures relating to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Employment in the programme cooperation area are provided in Appendix 6-B.

II.B. CURRENT SITUATION AND TRENDS

(27) Article 6-2] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 provides that transnational cooperation shall focus on four priority topics: innovation, environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development. It was therefore deemed appropriate to examine the following categories of issues in this section:

- Economic development
- Environment and maritime heritage
- Accessibility
- Territorial structure.

II.B.1. Economic development

II.B.1.a. Big disparities between the regions

(28) MAP 2 (cf. Appendix 7) gives a summary illustration of the differences in terms of development between the NUTS 3 Atlantic regions. Their performances are measured by a Relative Development Index (RDI) which aggregates eight socio-economic variables. 1999-2002 is the reference period for the first seven variables, namely: population density, agricultural specialisation rate (considered in decreasing order), tertiary specialisation rate, labour productivity, unemployment rate, number of company headquarters and GDP/capita in PPP 2001. The eighth variable is the average annual increase in GDP over the period 1991-2001. The choice and weighting of variables of this type obviously entail an arbitrary element. Nevertheless, the resulting image has the advantage of giving an overview of the situation⁷.

(29) The first category of regions, with a “very high” RDI, is concentrated in a few metropolitan zones of the United Kingdom including Liverpool-Manchester, Cardiff-Swansea-Newport, Glasgow and Belfast, the south of Ireland, and Grande Lisboa.

(30) The following category, with an RDI qualified as “high”, covers the rest of the western United Kingdom and Ireland, thirteen “départements” in France (Seine maritime, Eure, Calvados, Sarthe, Finistère, Morbihan, Ille-et-Vilaine, Loire atlantique, Deux-Sèvres, Vienne, Gironde, Landes, Pyrénées atlantiques), País Vasco and Comunidad Foral de Navarra in Spain, along with Grande Porto and the Setúbal Peninsula in Portugal, for a total of 48% of the area studied.

(31) The regions with a “medium” RDI cover 24.5% of the area. This group of regions includes the other French “départements” (Manche, Orne, Côtes-d’Armor, Mayenne, Marne et Loire, Vendée, Charente maritime, Charente, Dordogne, Lot-et-Garonne), Asturias, Cantabria and part of Andalucía (Sevilla province) in Spain, Alentejo Central and virtually all the coastal districts (except Minho-Lima and Alentejo Litoral) in Portugal.

(32) The remaining 12.5% where the RDI is “low” are all regions on the Iberian Peninsula: the other Portuguese districts along with Galicia and the rest of Andalucía in Spain.

⁷ More detailed data is presented in the ASDP, page 106. See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references

(33) As measured by the RDI, the difference between the regions in the extreme categories is considerable. The Atlantic Area is thus characterised by unequal development and territorial divides. Broadly speaking, the RDI diminishes from north to south, with much higher values in the British Isles than in the western part of the Iberian Peninsula and medium values in the regions of France and northern Spain. The RDI gradient is relatively regular, but it would be reductive to measure it based solely on the north-south axis; the “degree of urban concentration” factor is just as relevant, since the metropolitan areas - including Grande Lisboa - feature at the top of the rankings.

(34) The RDI takes into account the farming and tertiary-sector specialisation rate. This important question of the sector-based specialisation of the regions is well worth looking into. MAP 3A and MAP 3B (cf. Appendix 7) highlight the over-specialisation of the poorer regions, often in sectors with low added value, while diversified economies combining high-level services and state-of-the-art industries remain the privilege of the prosperous regions.

II.B.1.b. The knowledge economy in the Atlantic Area

(35) The advent of the information society is the major challenge of contemporary regional development. A refusal to take it up is a guarantee of ending up on the losing side. It is no accident that the European Union has placed the Lisbon strategy at the heart of its concerns, and that it has recently decided to re-launch this strategy after initially disappointing results.

(36) The development of the knowledge economy cannot be conceived without full awareness by all those concerned of the radical shift in the geographical dimensions of their professional world: the world market is asserting itself constantly over national markets, as highlighted by the inter-dependence between regions from different countries, their companies and their research centres.

(37) This is why international cooperation is a fundamental aspect of the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy. This cooperation involves strengthening European research, to which the new means of the 7th FPRD will contribute significantly. But the European structural funds will be active too. Regarding the transnational strand of the “European Territorial Cooperation” objective in particular, ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 provides backing for innovation via *“the creation and development of scientific and technological networks, and the improvement of regional capacities in terms of RTD and innovation”* (Article 6, 2-a).

(38) Where does the Atlantic Area stand in this respect? It has sometimes been suggested that the peripheral regions of the Atlantic seaboard would be condemned to marginalisation in the face of the more central, prosperous European regions. This view should definitely be qualified. The Atlantic Area boasts centres that transmit development and that are able to extend their influence to neighbouring territories, as well as a rich fabric of SMEs. Many regions are reacting to the risk of the Atlantic Area becoming marginalized; a sort of “rejection of the announced decline” has emerged. This is demonstrated notably by the set-up of coordinated measures in terms of innovation and technology transfer.

(39) There are, however, real difficulties that cannot be underestimated. Out of total employment figures, the proportion of R&D jobs in most Atlantic regions is far lower than the European average. In addition, the Atlantic Area suffers because of its great heterogeneity. In particular, there are differences in the strategic contents of development and in legal structures and cultures (empiricism and management by objectives in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, management of structures in the “Roman” tradition). The efforts that have been accomplished are mainly the result of initiatives taken on the national or regional levels, with cooperation between entities from different countries remaining the exception rather than the rule.

(40) Other factors of a more general nature hinder technology transfer between research centres and the business sector. During the consultations undertaken for the elaboration of this operational programme, several interviewees pointed to the reluctance of many SMEs to join cooperation networks. First, for reasons that can be easily understood, companies competing on the same market are not inclined to exchange information. In principle however, cooperation within transnational industrial clusters can be envisaged, provided that partners are linked by a relation of mutual complementarity. Nonetheless, even when such conditions can be met, SMEs may have other reasons not to participate. For example, serious fears may be expressed over the capacity of many SMEs to get access to European funds in order to finance their innovation. The trend towards thematic concentration in successive FRDPs may lead to only SMEs that are specialised in the technological and scientific sectors being involved, and among those, only the ones that can overcome the heavy administrative paperwork and various other obstacles.

(41) Besides, more is at stake than technology transfer. As the Information Society radically reshapes the business environment, developing innovation and the knowledge economy also entails disseminating a wealth of new techniques and methods in areas such as business management, economic intelligence, marketing, etc. According to the experience of several field practitioners consulted, much remains to be done in this area in many regions of the Atlantic Area.

(42) Another critical challenge of the Information Society is globalisation of the economy. The survival of many industries depends on their international opening. In this respect as well, companies in prosperous areas and those based in regions that are overspecialised in low value-added sectors are not on a level playing field: the former are in a better position to weave international ties with various partners around the world than the latter. Yet smart growth of the global economy could also represent a real opportunity for the Atlantic regions with a low RDI, provided that they succeed in finding new outlets for specific products of their regional economy, probably the best way to exploit its endogenous potential. What is more, all the regions of the Atlantic Area could take advantage of an asset that not every European country has the privilege of sharing: they speak international languages, which should favour a further deepening of their relationships with partners from their former colonial empires.

(43) MAP 4 (cf. Appendix 7) is an extract from the final report of the ESPON 2.4.2 project entitled *"Integrated analysis of Transnational and National Territories Based on ESPON Results"*. It presents the value achieved by various European regions on an indicator called the "Lisbon performance". This aggregate indicator reflects the degree of integration into the knowledge economy using five basic indicators respectively measuring productivity, employment rate, R&D expenditure, personnel working in the R&D sector, and the proportion of the schooled population to have completed higher education studies. Once again, this sort of aggregate indicator should be used with prudence given the arbitrary element in the choice and weighting of the individual indicators, not to mention the choice of the years under consideration (2001, 2002 or 2003.)

(44) Nonetheless, the configuration of the results obtained by the Atlantic regions is not very far from that observed on Map 2: high performances from the British Isles, weaker ones from the western Iberian Peninsula, intermediate ones in France and the nearby Spanish regions. This seems to confirm the thesis of the decisive contribution of investments in the knowledge economy to economic development as a whole.

II.B.2. Environment and maritime heritage

(45) Thanks to its diversity and quality, the environment of the Atlantic regions gives them their appeal. They have many natural resources which have perhaps been damaged less than in other regions of the continent, but this environment represents more than that: all the activities that it has generated represent a precious heritage and a crucial factor in common identity, one to be protected and promoted. In this light, a set of questions need to be addressed.

II.B.2.a. The coastal shift of urbanisation

(46) As things stand at present, the Atlantic coastline seems less saturated than the Mediterranean coast, a factor which may represent an opportunity in terms of social and economic development, providing nature is suitably protected.

(47) In the areas where natural zones dominate - Scotland, most of the Irish coast⁸, northern England, Wales, Aquitaine and a large part of the Spanish coastline - global urban pressure remains moderate. However, many other regions have borne the brunt of the recent urbanisation in the Atlantic Area. In these regions, or even locally in other, less urbanised areas, the construction of large real-estate complexes on the seashore, for example in Andalusia or south-western France, damages the natural spaces and their biodiversity. The same is true of urban sprawl, which is very marked in other Atlantic regions such as South-West England, most of the French coastline, or the Cantabrian coast.

(48) In many localities, this damage due to urbanisation is compounded by tourist pressure, which is more concentrated in space and time but no less aggressive for that. The often deficient treatment of road traffic, waste and wastewater increases pressure on the natural environment and threatens economic activities such as aquaculture. Coastal erosion, caused by climate change but also human intervention on the coastline, is another matter of concern. The quality of swimming water is uneven, although globally quite good.

(49) The quality of the Atlantic air and marine waters is, on average, one of the best in Europe. But here too, there are serious problems locally, notably in estuaries and zones with high industrial concentration.

(50) De-industrialisation has brought with it a large number of urban wastelands, often with contaminated soils. However, many cities (Bristol, Cardiff, Nantes, Bilbao, Lisbon, etc.) have recently distinguished themselves with emblematic urban redevelopment operations.

(51) Lastly, the great amplitude of the Atlantic Ocean tides has led to the formation of vast wetlands which are remarkable for their ecosystems and exceptional biodiversity. The reinforced protection of these natural areas is a major issue of particular relevance for transnational cooperation. As illustrated by MAP 5 (cf. Appendix 7)⁹, the density of protected sites may greatly vary from one member state to another, and seems to be sizeably lower in France. To explain this, the report of the ESPON project dedicated to *"Territorial Trends of the Management of the Natural Heritage"* points to historical factors, but also indicates that the protection of French natural sites has gathered pace over the last twenty years¹⁰.

⁸ However, rapid investment is taking place in commercial and residential development throughout coastal urban areas in Ireland (e.g. Sligo, Galway, Limerick, Waterford)

⁹ ASDP, page 90. See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE (November 2005)

¹⁰ ESPON 1.3.2. Project Report, page 120. See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EURONET, ROYAL HASKONING, ECNC

II.B.2.b. The environmental effect of agriculture

(52) In several regions of the Atlantic Area, the CAP and national policies have encouraged the extension of farmland and intensification of crop farming and livestock production. This process has its price in terms of standardisation of the landscape, drying-out of wetlands and other effects of intensification of farming.

(53) Intensive farming poses serious problems of water supply: the level of the water tables is dangerously low in South-West France and water stress has taken on massive proportions in Spain. Organic pollution from intensive farms particularly affects Wales, Ireland, South-West England, Brittany and Galicia. The quality of groundwater and surface water is under serious threat. There are also concerns about the consequences of the intensification of fishing: alteration of the sea-beds and reduction of halieutic resources.

II.B.2.c. Natural and technological hazards

(54) The ESPON 1.3.1 project¹¹ provides a differentiated picture of natural and technological hazards in Europe. Certain threats are significantly greater in certain regions than others.

(55) Among the natural hazards, we should highlight flooding in the English regions and North-West France, and forest fires in South-West France and the Iberian Peninsula. The trend towards climate instability seems to be aggravating these risks. The risk of earthquakes is not negligible in the Pyrenees and in Portugal.

(56) Among the technological hazards, those related to petroleum facilities and transport cannot be ignored on the Atlantic seaboard. The critical issue of maritime safety is of particular relevance to transnational cooperation. Certain regions are particularly exposed - in Great Britain, North-West France (particularly Normandy), the Charente and Aquitaine coastlines, the Cantabrian coast, western Galicia, and Lisbon and Alentejo. These risks obviously concern the maritime traffic caused by the presence of petroleum terminals. The Erika and Prestige catastrophes have heightened awareness considerably. Aside from this traffic, the presence of refineries and other facilities for the extraction or processing of oil cannot be neglected. The prevention of these risks, crisis management in the event of an accident, and the questions of responsibility and compensation all pose serious problems. Existing prevention measures include ship inspection, maritime traffic surveillance, the tackling of illegal discharges, ballast dumping and waste treatment, the identification of places of refuge, the action undertaken by classification societies, the promotion of double-hulled ships, as well as personnel qualification and training¹².

II.B.2.d. The maritime heritage

(57) The ocean has profoundly shaped the history of the Atlantic regions. It was from its ports that four huge colonial empires were built. Although maritime navigation has lost ground since the advent of aviation, the Atlantic Area in many respects remains at the heart of the major intercontinental shipping routes. Globalisation and rising energy costs have merely served to strengthen the strategic importance of shipping lines.

¹¹ *"The Spatial Effects and Management of Natural and Technological Hazards in Europe"*
See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, GEOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS (GTK)

¹² For further detail about these prevention measures and crisis management, see
APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, INTERREG IIB FACT-FINDING MISSION ON
MARITIME SAFETY (2004).

(58) The maritime heritage of the Atlantic Area regions represents a common identity. Ports and navigation (addressed in section II.B.3.c) are not the only features concerned; there is also a whole set of shared activities and centres of interest related to the proximity of the sea.

Fishing

(59) Fishing has forged the Atlantic culture. Entire communities still depend on it, especially in the less privileged regions. It is an integral part of Portuguese social life. The independent deep-sea fishing sector remains pre-eminent, but a few industrial centres based on long-range fishing also exist (Vigo, Berméo, Huelva, Concarneau, Lorient, Aveiro, Killybegs, etc.) Processing activities exist but it is catching fish that dominates. It is marked by bitter conflicts owing to the increasing difficulties of access to resources. We should also note the importance of aquaculture (for example, mussels in Galicia, oysters in Poitou-Charentes and Lower Normandy, salmon in Scotland and Ireland.)

(60) The importance of fisheries in the economy remains low (1% of GNP in Portugal, for example.) The number of fishermen and fish-farmers is falling everywhere. This is the effect of resources becoming rarer, an issue that decisions made at the European and international level are attempting to curb. Community policy on fishing is continuing to reduce capacities. Despite this, the green paper on the future of fishing, published in 2001 by the European Commission, emphasised the current failure of a policy of sustainable exploitation of resources. This key issue thus makes fishing a highly vulnerable activity.

Tourism

(61) Quite the opposite is true of trends in the tourism sector, the relative importance of which in the economy has grown spectacularly everywhere. The national statistics of the two countries that are entirely included in the cooperation area are eloquent: 8% of total employment in Portugal, with the direct part evaluated at 5% of GNP in 2003, and the total part (taking into account knock-on effects in other sectors) at 10%, 12 million tourists per year; and in Ireland, tourism-related revenue increased by 86% between 1993 and 1999.

(62) In the United Kingdom the most popular destination is London. Scotland is in second place, but the British coastline is not the main draw for tourists. However, areas such as the Lake District are remarkably attractive. The importance of national parks and other protected landscapes in the UK should be seen in the context of growing interest and participation in environmentally-based tourism and outdoor activities. These represent significant growth sectors and opportunities for many regions in the Atlantic Area. The nature of Irish tourism is changing: as a result of cheaper air fares, City Breaks are preferred now to the traditional rural get-away holidays. In France, Atlantic tourism is constantly growing. It damages the environment - including landscapes - less than Mediterranean tourism, although the exponential growth of holiday homes is a problem in this respect.

(63) Atlantic tourism is essentially family-oriented. It is highly seasonal and is characterised by a shortage of foreign clients, a growing spatial concentration of accommodation capacity, and a polarisation of tourist resorts, particularly in France and Portugal.

(64) There are almost 300 yachting and water sports facilities. This sector is experiencing remarkable growth but poses serious problems regarding coastal development.

(65) New products are being developed: thalassotherapy, balneotherapy and golf. Popular enthusiasm for such cultural highlights as Mont Saint Michel or Santiago de Compostela, to name but two, is far from waning. The transnational promotion of elements inherited from shared history, such as Celtic culture or the

great discoveries of Vasco da Gama and his successors in other countries, offers good potential for cultural tourism.

Shipbuilding and the nautical industry

(66) European shipbuilding is facing very aggressive competition from the Asian shipyards, which have managed to monopolise some 70% of worldwide orders, with Europe having to settle for 20%.

(67) It seems that the Atlantic Area must focus on market segments with high added value, such as ocean liners. Europe's leading shipbuilding centre is Nantes-Saint-Nazaire. This activity is being restructured in Portugal, where smaller units are replacing the big national shipyards.

(68) The production of yachts has attracted world leaders in the sector to the Atlantic Area, where this extremely dynamic, promising sector has created over 14,000 jobs in more than 1,500 companies.

Renewable energy sources

(69) By its oceanic characteristics, the Atlantic Area is home to major resources in the field of renewable energy: wind turbines, and energy from the tides, marine currents and waves. Vast farming areas also offer interesting potential in the domains of biomethanation, biofuels and biomass. Apart from this potential for energy production, the renewable energy industry presents very promising opportunities for the development of new technologies and techniques and should therefore become a growth sector for high-technology companies.

(70) The Kyoto Protocol recommends renewed efforts to make use of this potential, the appeal of which is strengthened by the rapid rise in the cost of fossil fuels. The promotion of renewable energy is also put forward by the Lisbon strategy, which has set a target: by 2010, 21% of EU electricity should be generated from renewable sources. The CSG document expands on this in a dedicated section¹³. According to the Green Paper on Maritime Policy, Commission projections are that wind power could generate 70,000 MW by 2010, including 14,000 MW offshore¹⁴.

Research

(71) Marine research in the European Union ranks second in the world, after the USA. It uses remarkable state-of-the-art equipment and techniques. However, like many other research sectors, it faces various challenges, particularly the need for integrated, multidiscipline programmes and the absolute need to concentrate means. Many specialised centres (oceanography, marine biology, development of fishing techniques and marine cultures, protection and promotion of the marine environment, management of maritime traffic), in universities or otherwise, are based on the Atlantic seaboard. However, much remains to be done to promote the potential synergies between these institutions on the transnational and European levels.

II.B.3. Accessibility and transport

(72) MAP 6 (cf. Appendix 7) is taken from the ESPON 2.4.2. project report *"Integrated analysis of Transnational and National Territories Based on ESPON Results"*. This map confirms - if confirmation were needed - the big differences in accessibility between the regions in the heart of Europe and those on its

¹³ Heading 1.1.3 *'Address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources'* See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (13 July 2006)

¹⁴ pp. 15-16, see APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006)

periphery¹⁵. Several regions in the Atlantic Area suffer from a clear accessibility deficit, particularly in Portugal and the Highlands, but also in Spain and Ireland. Various regions of the Atlantic Area also contain islands inhabited by communities for which inter-island and island-mainland accessibility remains a strong concern.

(73) Another major aspect is noted by the ASDP: the predominance of national links, often focused on the capital, to the detriment of inter-regional links inside the Atlantic Area.

(74) These aspects obviously call for a more refined analysis, by transport mode.

II.B.3.a. Land transport

(75) The situation regarding road transport is not homogenous in the Atlantic Area. An analysis of the road connections of the main towns (measured by the travelling time between towns that are accessible in less than three hours) highlights (cf. MAP 7, Appendix 7) four geographical areas with strong internal connections: the southern half of the British Isles, the Loire Valley and centre-west of France, the Basque-Pyrenean border region, and the western coastline of the Iberian Peninsula. The interstitial areas separating these zones all show much higher travelling times between towns.

(76) Rail networks are organised according to an essentially national logic: privileged relations with the capital in the centre of a radial system. The break at the Franco-Spanish border represents a big handicap. Note, however, the access to Brussels and London from the major French cities via the TGV network, and the Vigo-Porto-Lisbon high-speed link project.

(77) The volume of rail freight has remained stable or diminished slightly in the Atlantic Area regions. This actually represents a large reduction in market share of goods transport. Congestion problems are frequent and goods traffic suffers because of the priority given to passengers. The network sometimes has problems related to out-of-date facilities. For example, the absence of an appropriate storage track at destinations prevents the use of certain lines in Wales and in France. The Essen priority projects were reviewed in 2001 and 2004.¹⁶ In the United Kingdom, the deadline for completion of the West Coast line modernisation has recently been set for 2007-2008. On the Sines-Algeciras-Madrid-Paris rail freight axis, completion of the Sines-Badajoz and Algeciras-Bobadilla links is planned for 2010. However, no deadline has been set for the trans-Pyrenean large-capacity axis, completion of which was initially planned for 2020. Consequently, it will be a long time before the Atlantic Area has a rail axis capable of competing with road transport between the Iberian Peninsula and northern Europe.

II.B.3.b. Air transport

(78) Air transport offers little in the way of links inside the Atlantic Area. Relations with the major European or American hubs are given priority. Yet the Atlantic seaboard boasts a large number of airports including several which, without claiming to be “hubs”, feature high in the European rankings. But some regions are greatly disadvantaged with regard to air links: the Highlands, the south of Portugal and the northern coast of Spain.

(79) Nevertheless, the provision of further interregional air links within the cooperation area can be anticipated in the coming years thanks to the

¹⁵ Note that accessibility by air only appears in one of the five aggregate indicators, with road and rail sharing the rest. ESPON justifies this choice by its desire to reflect accessibility as experienced by the average European citizen, whose living territory rarely extends to the continental scale.

¹⁶ Decisions 1346/2001/EC and 884/2004/EC

development of low cost airlines, which could help to boost new sites. A more serious cause for concern is the poor accessibility of most regional airports, in terms of both interconnection with other transport networks and public transport to the city served by the airport.

II.B.3.c. Maritime transport

(80) There are a great many ports on the Atlantic seaboard, evenly distributed along the coastline, but of modest size. More than sixty ports represent total traffic of more than 664 million tonnes. Over the past decade, several of them have seen their traffic diminish (see MAP 8 in Appendix 7). The tonnages handled by the biggest ports are much lower than those of the big Mediterranean ports and particularly the ports of the North Sea (respectively more than 300 and 130 million tonnes for the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp), which has taken the Atlantic seaboard's former title of gateway to the European continent.

(81) However, the Atlantic ports still have very genuine, although insufficiently exploited, potential. This is all the more true in that the remarkable growth of maritime traffic in recent years is likely to continue. The recent rise in fuel prices should strengthen the appeal of the sector compared with other transport means with lower energy efficiency per unit transported. Furthermore, the other European maritime basins are starting to become saturated.

(82) From this point of view, the development of "motorways of the sea" and Short Sea Shipping (SSS) represents a major opportunity. The potential has already been partially exploited, particularly in the English Channel and the Irish Sea, as well as between Lisbon and Porto, as MAP 9 shows (cf. Appendix 7). But traffic levels remain low between the north and south of the Atlantic seaboard.

(83) Highly diverse problems are posed depending on the nature of the traffic (containers, roll-on/roll-off freight, bulk) and regional specificities which are too lengthy to detail here. Suffice it to mention here: high port costs, distance from the market, and its diffuse nature (relatively long distances between ports, and smaller populations served)¹⁷.

(84) These factors must be kept in mind in the development of the "Motorway of the Sea of Western Europe", one of the four corridors designated by the European Union (leading from Portugal and Spain via the Atlantic Arc to the North Sea and the Irish Sea) without any mention made of specific ports. It is up to the professionals in the sector, in dialogue with the responsible authorities, to conceive viable projects. The concept of the motorway of the sea does not only include seaways, but also intermodal supply chains to link these seaways to high-quality land networks. Logistics platforms thus take on strategic importance. Funding from the Marco Polo programme is available for projects which espouse this intermodal approach and satisfy certain quality criteria. Even though competition between the Atlantic ports is to be feared, cooperation is more than ever on the agenda. The modest size of the ports should encourage synergies in order to achieve a critical mass of means.

II.B.3.d. Access to information and communication technologies (ICT)

(85) In the 21st century it is just as important to have access to information as to transport networks. From this point of view, the availability of telecommunications infrastructures and services and of digital technologies has become an imperative. The results of the ESPON 1.2.2 project¹⁸ devoted to

¹⁷ Main issues highlighted in the ATN study on sea freight; see APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK (May 2005)

¹⁸ *"Telecommunication Services and Networks: Territorial Trends and Basic Supply of Infrastructure for Territorial Cohesion"* See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, CENTRE FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

telecommunications networks and services highlight a “digital divide” within the Atlantic Area. To illustrate this, two maps out of many others have been extracted from the final report of this project and reproduced in Appendix 7.

(86) MAP 10 provides a picture of the dissemination of broadband technologies among households. In 2002, the percentage of households with broadband Internet access was more than 6.5% in only three regions of the Atlantic Area: Northern Ireland, Asturias and Navara. This percentage was below 3% in a majority of the other regions of the cooperation area, a significantly lower score than those attained in the Benelux and Scandinavian countries. On average however, many other regions of the former EU15 did not perform better than the Atlantic Area.

(87) The contrast illustrated by MAP 11 is more striking. In terms of the proportion of firms having developed their own web-site in 2003, France, Spain and Portugal are clearly lagging behind in the area of e-commerce, whereas the British Isles perform significantly better.

(88) Regrettably, more recent data is apparently lacking, which makes it difficult to analyse recent trends in this very fast-changing sector. However, the existence of a digital divide seems to be confirmed in the Atlantic Area, with the English Channel representing a clear dividing line in the e-commerce sector.

II.B.4. Territorial structure

(89) The public debate about EU territorial cohesion initiated by the ESDP has put forward the ideal of “balanced polycentric territorial development”. Such development can be thought of on various geographical scales. It was and remains the focus of regional and national territorial planning policies, but an interesting feature of the current debate is precisely the ambition to address the issue at the supranational level. The promotion of a balanced, reasonably decentralised system of cities is clearly on the European agenda, on the transnational and continental levels alike. The ESDP and a considerable number of subsequent publications, including ESPON studies, have highlighted the overwhelming influence of one global economic integration zone (GEIZ), the so-called “core pentagon” area of the EU, defined by the metropolises of London, Paris, Milan, Munich and Hamburg. It has been suggested that a more balanced territorial development of the continent could be favoured by developing counter-weight GEIZs in more peripheral sub-parts of the EU territory.

II.B.4.a. Analysis of the territorial structure

(90) In its analysis of Atlantic Area territorial structure, the ASDP raises the issue of the best way of addressing the question of polycentric development. The heterogeneity and disparities in development which characterise the Atlantic Area do not encourage the idea that it could one day be one of the alternative GEIZs advocated by the ESDP. Therefore the ASDP addresses the question of Atlantic polycentric development on lower geographical levels.

(91) The territorial structure of the Atlantic Area leads to work on various sub-areas, which appear on MAP 12 (cf. Appendix 7). The ASDP distinguishes two main categories:

- the more dynamic powerhouse sub-areas¹⁹, with solid assets: they include cities or groups of towns with strong influence, are attractive to investors, have a diversified economy, higher-level services and a high knowledge potential, and enjoy good internal and external accessibility;

¹⁹ named “motor sub-areas” in the ASDP

- the integration sub-areas, polarised by cities with low influence (when they exist) or by medium-sized towns with a less dynamic, less diversified economy; they are not so well connected, remain distanced from the main trade flows and depend on external control centres or on an exogenous higher service offering; this category is divided into two distinct types:
 - high-potential integration sub-areas that could start a process of catching up and integration with the powerhouse areas providing the necessary measures are taken: diversification of the economy, improvement of access to the transport networks, investment in large-scale facilities;
 - more isolated "weak integration sub-areas" that are becoming marginalised following demographic and economic decline: these essentially unstructured, rural areas with very low density, little in the way of facilities and difficult access have fallen prey to a virtually irremediable depopulation process, sometimes tempered by the set-up of recreational and residential activities.

II.B.4.b. The potential for cooperation networks

(92) The ASDP strategy considers grouping the above sub-areas into "project areas" consisting of one or more powerhouse areas and other sub-areas whose vocation is to join them. Five such project areas have been identified: the British Atlantic Area (UK/IE), the French North-West Area (FR), the French-Spanish Area (FR/ES), the Western Iberian Area (ES/PT) and the Southern Iberian Area (ES/PT). These groupings are meant to associate cities and regions at an intermediate territorial level between the local echelon and the overall Atlantic Area. This approach cannot, and indeed does not aim to provide a comprehensive framework to direct transnational cooperation. The ASDP insists that the role of these sub-areas of development is not to replace the Atlantic Area in its global context, which obviously remains a relevant area for European-scale cooperation.

(93) Acknowledging the considerable potential for enhanced cooperation and exploitation of synergies within existing or new transnational project partnerships, the ASDP recommends in particular that all appropriate steps be taken to stimulate an intense networking process between cities and medium-sized towns all over the Atlantic Area. In this framework, cooperation could address a wide variety of issues, including several aspects of sustainable urban development policies, of course.

(94) Moreover, this type of initiative may contribute to improving international visibility significantly and branding the image of the cities and regions participating in the Atlantic Area cooperation. In the current context of globalisation, this is an important point. Many cities are competing to raise their profile, portraying themselves as attractive places to invest. In this respect, mixed results have apparently been achieved so far by Atlantic cities. In the area of urban marketing, competition between cities could prove to be a zero-sum game, and transnational cooperation a positive-sum one.

II.C. TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ATLANTIC AREA

(95) As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Atlantic cooperation is nothing new. Over many years it has experimented with its methods and developed genuine know-how in the successive frameworks of the ATLANTIS, INTERREG IIC and INTERREG IIIB programmes.

(96) More recent developments came under closer scrutiny in the mid-term evaluation of the INTERREG IIIB programme, including its update in November 2005. The ASDP completed this exercise via a critical report on cooperation. This included a qualitative analysis of the projects, based on fourteen case studies.

II.C.1. Ever-increasing financial and human means

(97) The table below highlights the considerable progression of means allocated to Atlantic cooperation over the last two programming periods of the EU Structural Funds. A dramatic increase can also be observed in terms of number and size of the projects, in terms of both budget and partnership. There is no doubt about the growing interest aroused by transnational cooperation.

	INTERREG IIC	INTERREG IIIB
Programming period	1994-1999	2000-2006
Number of approved projects	48	84
Number of partners, of which	128	643
<i>Ireland</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>France</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>184</i>
<i>Spain</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>Portugal</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>132</i>
Average size of project partnership	2.7	7.65
Total programme budget	€24m.	€220m.
Total projects budget	€15m	€194m.
Average project budget	€0.31m	€2.3m.

(98) The thematic distribution of the INTERREG IIIB projects is characterised by the popularity of Priority “A. *Polycentric structuring of the area and development of Centres of Excellence*” with 24 projects against 16 to 18 projects for the other three priorities (“B. *Developing efficient and sustainable transport systems and improving access to the information society*”, “C. *Promoting the environment and sustainable management of economic activities and natural resources*”, “D. *Strengthening and promoting the Atlantic area identity in a context of globalisation*”). The average budget for a project was respectively €1.7m., €3.6m., €2.5m. and €2.0m. for Priorities A, B, C and D. The higher average budget for Priority B reflects a certain level of investment, while the other priorities, especially A, tended to be confined to studies, research and exchanges of experience, with a regrettably low operational content.

II.C.2. The achievements and pertinence of “Atlantic Area” cooperation for the new programming period

(99) The final update report of the INTERREG IIIB programme mid-term evaluation notes that

- The INTERREG IIB Atlantic Area programme has facilitated and encouraged cooperation; its results show its efficiency and demonstrate a positive evolution compared to INTERREG IIC;
- This cooperation benefits from good political dynamics on the regional level;
- It represents an essential instrument for the application of the ESDP;
- The main issues confronting it are to be found in the priority themes planned for the transnational strand of the new "European territorial cooperation" objective;²⁰
- The projects underway on these themes can help in to define new strategic orientations and structuring projects, and can constitute the basis for consolidated, lasting cooperation;

(100) This same report also states:

These advantages show the relevance of the "Atlantic Area" as a territorial cooperation area for the period 2007 - 2013. It is precisely the evolution of its performance, its management capacities, the pertinence of thematic priorities for its strategy, its potential for the development of structural projects, the political weight of its polycentric development potential, its geographical identity, that give the Atlantic Area the capacity to remain an important space for structuring and rebalancing the European territory and where cohesion policy is a privileged instrument.

(101) The ASDP completes this analysis by listing other positive aspects of the experience acquired:

- Dynamic, varied cooperation: large number of themes; the issues addressed are often complex (such as integrated management of coastal areas) or sensitive (such as the definition of viable SSS lines)
- The great effect of this cooperation for the long term, given the often vital nature of the themes addressed; it now calls for a perpetuation of the networks, or even the creation of fixed cooperation structures
- A large-scale mobilisation of economic and political players on "maritime issues"
- The influence and growing credibility of the cooperation partners in their region or State, and the possibility of giving their projects a "European ambition".

²⁰ Since confirmed with the adoption of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 - see article 6. 2°

II.C.3. Expected progress in cooperation

(102) Atlantic transnational cooperation must persevere in its quest for progress. Its recent advances call for others, on points which still need to be improved.

II.C.3.a. More ambitious and operational projects

(103) To date, most of the projects have been devoted to studies and research. Some of them have been accompanied by pilot projects, but many others do not include any operational section. The update report of the mid-term evaluation and the ASDP both conclude that:

It will be necessary to move on from the study phase to a second, constructive stage, and to an "official" perpetuation of certain networks.

(104) It therefore seems vital to ensure that future projects lead to tangible results targeting the priorities earmarked for the present programme. Advantage should be taken of the specific value-added of transnational cooperation, by pooling a critical mass of means and giving priority to issues of real transnational relevance. Projects should achieve results that would have been out of reach had partners worked in isolation. A positive impact on the long term future of the cooperation area also needs to be pursued.

(105) Certain networks formed by the projects remain incomplete, for example on the important theme of integrated management of coastal areas. This may be explained by the applicants' fear of having to deal with the red tape specific to management of very wide partnerships. It may not be indispensable, or even desirable, to want to extend project partnerships at all costs. However, it is necessary to encourage a wide-ranging, geographically balanced mobilisation of those concerned by the same theme. An adequate answer may be found in another ASDP proposal: to improve coordination of projects, and even have projects working in symbiosis on common themes. Much remains to be done in this respect, as the projects are generally unknown to each other.

II.C.3.b. Consistent, long-term monitoring of the progress achieved

(106) For the moment, the progress accomplished from one programme to the next is lacking in legibility. This is largely due to the absence of adequate monitoring techniques. In the case of a transnational cooperation programme, the definition and implementation of a pertinent monitoring system pose huge problems. The Atlantic Area is not the only one to have come up against the issue. Simply applying the methods used in the Objective 1 and 2 programmes would be a mistake. The INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area programme mid-term evaluation report recommended drawing up a set of appropriate indicators. This recommendation is the only one that the update report noted had not been carried out. This is no accident. Despite the difficulty of the exercise, the present programme presents, in its Chapter IV (cf. Section IV.H), a new set of indicators specifically designed to measure progress in cooperation.

(107) It is also important to guarantee correct understanding and use of the set of indicators. Over and above the technical considerations, it is even more important to bear in mind that these indicators are merely a means to a more fundamental end: ensuring the long-term legibility of the progress accomplished by cooperation. Without this legibility, the indispensable public debate on these issues cannot validly be held.

(108) In this perspective, the importance of a strategic approach that is both qualitative and quantitative should be borne in mind. This approach entails mobilising all the players concerned, including the competent authorities of the Programme and the project partners, as well as the regions that the projects contribute to developing.

(109) This brings us back to the imperatives of perpetuation of partnerships and coordination of projects indicated in section II.C.3.a., without which this strategic approach would seem to be illusory. However, the perpetuation of partnerships should not lead to cooperation only among the experienced. In order to progress, the Atlantic Area programme should continue to involve an increasing number of new actors, showing itself to be open to the arrival of new blood.

II.C.3.c. A diversification of the players and a clarification of their respective roles

(110) The mid-term evaluation update report is in favour of the involvement of a wider range of actors by working on several levels.

- On the level of the projects, the participation of actors that are less institutional (from the private sector and the organised civil society, for example) should be sought. This involvement can be envisaged without their participation as formal partners to a project. The report also underlines the importance of the participation - formal this time - of players with genuine decision-making power in the matters addressed by the projects. This is a key factor in project efficiency, in a transnational framework that has been fatally marked by the great heterogeneity of the legal systems and administrative traditions.
- On the level of the Programme, strengthening of the ability and the training of national actors has turned out to be necessary.

II.D. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS

N.B. Several points listed here only apply to part of the Atlantic Area

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
ECONOMY	<p>Many attractive, dynamic regions (FDI, diversified economy, higher-level service offering)</p> <p>Knowledge potential (university and research centres), particularly in the maritime economy</p> <p>Enterprise culture in most regions, rich fabric of SMEs</p>	<p>Uneven development, segmentation, big disparities between the regions</p> <p>Several regions over-specialised in activities with low added value</p> <p>Low integration of these regions in the knowledge economy, with low percentage of R&D jobs and insufficient international opening</p> <p>Reluctance of the business sector to engage in technology transfer and other forms of cooperation with academic and research centres</p>
ENVIRONMENT, MARITIME HERITAGE	<p>Excellence of marine research institutions</p> <p>Environmental quality and diversity, resources specific to the oceanic area</p> <p>Air and sea water quality among the best in Europe</p> <p>Common identity based on the maritime heritage</p> <p>Vast wetlands with remarkable ecosystems and great biodiversity</p> <p>Diversity and wealth of cultural heritage, cultural highlights</p>	<p>Decline in shipbuilding</p> <p>Industrial and urban derelict areas</p> <p>Urban development and tourist-based pressure in coastal areas</p> <p>Insufficient level of protection / conservation / sustainable management of natural resources and cultural heritage</p> <p>Deficient treatment of road traffic, waste, wastewater</p> <p>Damaged environment of estuaries and industrial regions</p> <p>Overfishing, marine pollution</p>
ACCESSIBILITY	<p>Good links to the national capitals</p> <p>Numerous sea- and airports, well distributed</p>	<p>Mediocre accessibility for many regions (including islands), especially internationally</p> <p>Insufficient interconnection of networks</p> <p>Poor access to regional airports</p> <p>Problems of continuity and interoperability of the networks, notably the Franco-Spanish break</p> <p>Poor performance of rail freight</p> <p>High port costs, port services market distant and diffuse</p> <p>Digital divide</p>
TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE	<p>Five dynamic and attractive “powerhouse areas”</p> <p>Experienced city networks</p>	<p>Low international influence of many regional cities and medium-sized towns.</p> <p>Fragile zones in decline, with low integration potential</p>
COOPERATION	<p>Accumulated experience: ATLANTIS, INTERREG IIC and IIIB</p> <p>Constant progress in quantity and quality from one programme to the next</p> <p>Political will of the regions to cooperate</p> <p>Strong mobilisation of the economic and political players on the theme of “maritime character”</p>	<p>Too many projects devoted to study and research without tangible operational results</p> <p>Poor development of permanent cooperation structures</p> <p>Lack of coordination between projects</p> <p>Lack of consistent, long-term monitoring, lack of legibility</p>

	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
ECONOMY	<p>Intensification of exchanges stimulated by globalisation, particularly in the former colonial empires</p> <p>Endogenous competitive potential in certain sectors</p> <p>Desire to “reject the announced decline”</p> <p>Dynamics inspired by the re-launch of the Lisbon Strategy</p>	<p>Disparities sharpened by globalisation, with high-performance companies developing their relations with the more dynamic centres</p>
ENVIRONMENT, MARITIME HERITAGE	<p>Growing awareness of the need for sustainable development</p> <p>Increase in the cost of oil, and Kyoto Protocol: more attractive renewable energies in sectors of interest to the Atlantic Area</p> <p>Tourism potential in transnational cultural features</p> <p>Niches of excellence in high added value industries of the maritime economy</p>	<p>Degradation of sea- and freshwater resources owing to the urbanisation of coasts</p> <p>Water stress, exhaustion and pollution of water tables, standardisation of the landscape, drying-out of the wetlands, pollutions by intensive farming</p> <p>Erosion and other forms of coastal change</p> <p>Degradation of the marine environment, exhaustion of halieutic resources</p> <p>Accidents in petroleum facilities, shipwrecks, oil spills</p> <p>Loss in biodiversity</p>
ACCESSIBILITY	<p>World-wide growth in maritime shipping</p> <p>Great potential of SSS, enhanced by the rise in energy costs</p> <p>“Motorway of the Sea of Western Europe” project</p> <p>Saturation of the big European ports</p>	<p>Congestion of road freight and marginalisation of ports owing to lack of development of rail freight and insufficient intermodality</p>
TERRITORIAL STRUCTURE	<p>Potential synergy between “powerhouse sub-areas” and other sub-areas</p> <p>Potential for strengthened cooperation and exploitation of synergies within existing or new transnational project partnerships</p>	<p>Some regions gaining (mainly metropolitan), others increasingly marginalised</p> <p>Depopulation of the “fragile integration areas”</p> <p>Useless competition between cities to brand their international image</p>
COOPERATION	<p>Growing interest aroused by Atlantic transnational cooperation</p> <p>Pertinence of this cooperation for the objectives of the 2007-2013 programming period + its ability to contribute to rebalancing the European territory</p> <p>Potential of the results already obtained for long-term cooperation, prospect of perpetuating networks</p>	<p>Cooperation transformed into a closed circle of insiders in case of misinterpretation of the objective of perpetuating partnerships</p> <p>Lack of efficiency of projects if the partnership does not have actors with real decision-making power in the issues addressed by the projects</p>

II.E. CHALLENGES

(111) According to the SWOT tables above, there are many challenges to be faced in the Atlantic Area. However, the Programme cannot address all of them. To avoid dispersing means, it is necessary to focus transnational cooperation on the issues that cannot validly be dealt with without it. As the ASDP rightly points out, several strategic options that it defines fall under local cooperation which is inter-regional, cross-border or within the same country, or under national or regional policies. Furthermore, the 2007-2013 cooperation area no longer corresponds to the reference area of the ASDP. Several options are now addressed more advantageously by other programmes. This will be the case, for example of the problems specific to the inland regions of the Iberian Peninsula and France, such as desertification and forest fires: although very real, these problems can be dealt with better in the framework of "European South West" cooperation.

(112) To pinpoint the challenges to be taken up specifically by the Programme, the conclusions of the SWOT analysis were scrutinised. The only questions selected were those:

- which cannot receive appropriate answers merely in the regional, national or cross-border context;
- which specifically concern the Programme eligible regions, and which cannot be properly dealt with by the two other major cooperation areas overlapping the Atlantic Area (North West Europe and European South West);
- relating to the intensification of cooperation already underway in the Atlantic Area and to improving its results.

(113) This does not mean that the other questions addressed in the SWOT analysis have no interest for the projects of the present programme. On the contrary, it must be kept in mind that everything has its place in the overall strategy proposed by the ASDP. The actors in different levels of action must be made aware of the fact that they are "playing the same game". Simply, the questions addressed in this section correspond to the specific role of transnational cooperation in the overall strategy.

(114) Four main challenges have been listed, with comments on them below.

II.E.1. Cohesive development of the knowledge economy

(115) The uneven economic development of the Atlantic Area, particularly the north-south gradient observable on Maps 2 (RDI), 3B (sector specialisation) and 4 (degree of achievement of the Lisbon strategy)²¹ is unacceptable.

(116) The trend towards raising pre-eminence of the central European pentagon is, however, far from ineluctable. Many Atlantic cities and regions, rejecting their "announced decline", are banking on their genuine endogenous potential. But this potential cannot be realised in an isolated way. In the era of globalisation and the knowledge economy, the future of the less prosperous regions is conditioned by their international opening and the diversification of their economy. They cannot be integrated into the Lisbon strategy in any other way.

²¹ cf. Appendix 7

(117) This implies forging close, sustainable economic cooperation links with the more dynamic regions with an innovative and diversified economy. These latter regions have everything to gain by this mutually beneficial cooperation, especially in the Atlantic Area where history has given the nations solid cultural and commercial ties with the rest of the world.

II.E.2. Enhancement of the Atlantic maritime heritage

(118) The oceanic culture has shaped the common identity of the Atlantic regions. Today as in the past, their populations can benefit greatly from their complicity with the sea, but cannot ignore its dangers.

(119) Although oil spills have left their mark on public consciousness, much remains to be done, via indispensable transnational action, to prevent them more effectively. Other threats with less media coverage are just as real: degradation of marine environments, exhaustion of fish resources, loss of biodiversity in vast wetlands, water stress and degradation of sea- and fresh water quality, erosion and denaturing of the coastlines. All these issues call for concerted answers and a reinforcement of know-how on the transnational level.

(120) Modern research and techniques can provide many answers to these problems while contributing to the development of the Atlantic Area, which has many niche markets of excellence in the marine economy. It is notably in this domain that the economic cooperation addressed in section II.E.1 must be achieved.

(121) The richness of natural resources and cultural heritage gives the Atlantic landscapes their unique character. This must be conserved in the perspective of the well-being and cultural openness of current and future generations. The subordinate objective of promoting tourism potential can largely contribute to this prime goal. The development of sustainable tourism instead of destructive tourism offers great potential for transnational cooperation given the many - transnational - components of the Atlantic maritime heritage and the possibility of generalising a series of good practices.

II.E.3. Balanced polycentric development

(122) Very strong traditions of national centralism have polarised the Atlantic regions around their respective capital cities. As highlighted in the SWOT analysis, this has resulted in a number of weaknesses and threats facing the Atlantic Area: mediocre accessibility and low international influence of many regions, which are running the risk of being marginalized and embarking on pointless competition. However, a real potential for enhanced cooperation and exploitation of synergies between cities and regions has also been pointed out. To restore the balance of territorial development in the programme cooperation area, appropriate responses may be expected of transnational cooperation, which should give priority to two lines of action: improving accessibility, and intensifying inter-regional exchanges.

(123) For the first line, that of accessibility, the improvement of interconnections between transport networks, especially the development of multimodality, represents a key issue. It concerns air, land and sea links and the transport of both passengers and goods. The networks also suffer from a lack of continuity and of interoperability. Rail freight, despite its contribution to sustainable development, has not managed to assert itself. Lastly, the development of shipping, and in particular SSS, is more crucial than ever before. The uneven development of telecommunication infrastructures and facilities seemingly remains a real issue, but the answers are more a matter of investment in the regions than cooperation. On the other hand, the reduction of the digital divide requires a profound change in habits and mentalities, in which education can

contribute to creating an open approach to the outside world. The strengthening of international cooperation practice may play a very positive role in this respect.

(124) This brings us to the second line of action, that of intensifying inter-regional exchanges in the Atlantic Area. This line is the indispensable complement of the first one. Indeed, the improvement of accessibility alone is not sufficient to promote balanced polycentrism: the regions, and notably the urban centres, must increase and intensify their mutual relationships. In this respect, an intense networking process should take place between cities and medium-sized towns all over the Atlantic Area, addressing a wide variety of issues, in particular sustainable urban development policies and the promotion of the international influence and attractiveness of the regions.

II.E.4. More ambitious cooperation

(125) Transnational cooperation has a solid base in terms of strategic vision, results already obtained by projects, and management ability.

(126) The growing interest that it has aroused means that it cannot disappoint in the implementation of the Programme. In this light, two major challenges must be taken up:

- Open perpetuation: consolidate the existing cooperation structures in order to reduce their dependence on subsidies whilst bringing in new partners. Transnational cooperation in the Atlantic Area should continue to widen its audience by mobilising more and more key players. Open perpetuation also involves coordinating projects that address similar issues and cross-fertilisation in ad hoc groups, which is often preferable to excessive extension of project partnerships.
- Tangible operational results. At present too many projects have been limited to studies or exchanges of information. Concrete achievements are indispensable to guarantee the visibility of cooperation. This visibility also involves improving the techniques for monitoring the progress accomplished over a programming period and between two successive periods.

III. Strategy, priorities

(127) To take up the challenges outlined in Section II.E, the action of transnational cooperation partners in the Atlantic Area needs to focus on implementing a consistent common territorial strategy. This chapter sets out and explains the major axes of this strategy.

III.A. WHY COOPERATE?

(128) The regions of Europe, and of the Atlantic Area in particular, have a great many reasons to cooperate. Territorial cooperation is vital because globalisation and European integration are making the regions, even those that are not neighbours, increasingly interdependent.

(129) The regions cannot guide their destiny without taking into account and attempting to influence steps being taken and decisions being made in places that are sometimes very far from their own territory. For example, easing traffic congestion on major European road routes implies the promotion of SSS on lines located hundreds of kilometres from these routes. The future of the ports depends on decisions made by carriers and authorities in countries other than their own. Many ecological threats are of worldwide origin and affect transnational, notably marine, spaces. Many other issues of this type could be evoked here. Let us call "transnational issues" any matter that cannot be properly dealt with solely in the national, regional or local frameworks or by cooperation between neighbouring entities on either side of a common national border.²²

(130) Furthermore, the regions are not on an equal footing when it comes to globalisation of the economy and the opening up of European markets. Some have advantages related to their central geographical position, making them more competitive and attractive to investors. This is why the objective of balanced polycentric development of the European territory has been placed at the heart of the ESDP and reiterated by the CSG. Transnational cooperation can contribute to this objective by encouraging partners to improve their competitive position by pooling resources. By reaching a critical mass of means, the member regions of the partnership can achieve results that none of them could have obtained through their own isolated action or even by cooperating within a national framework. For example, a transnational grouping of resource centres promoting synergies between research centres and innovative SMEs from different countries benefits from an obvious leverage effect.

(131) The INTERREG Community Initiatives gave rise to decisive breakthroughs in the area of territorial cooperation. Its new inclusion in the three mainstream objectives of Union cohesion policy reveals the high level of political importance attached to it. However, the action undertaken by the European Union through its other specific competences already promotes, organises and finances transnational cooperation on highly diverse themes. It is therefore important that European territorial cooperation complements - without duplicating - the other types of cooperation. Its specific contribution is that of the integrated approach. It strives to ensure consistency of the field action of a series of actors and policies, bearing in mind the particular problems resulting from the geographical position of the regions. This approach, strongly advocated by the ESDP and the Green

²² The "cross-border" cooperation referred to in Article 6, 1] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006

Paper on Maritime Policy²³, contains two components: vertical integration (between the various levels of intervention: local, regional, national and EC) and horizontal integration (between the sector-based policies with territorial impact: environment, transport, economic development, etc.). It is to express the specific contribution of this demanding, complex approach to the classical interventions of economic and social cohesion policy that the concept of "territorial cohesion" has recently emerged. The CSG emphasise its great importance.

III.B. THE PRIME PROGRAMME GOAL

(132) Although defined in a selective manner, the challenges presented in Section II.E address a wide range of varied issues. To take up these challenges, the bodies involved in the Programme, project partnerships in particular, should further intensify the cooperation initiated in the past programming periods while concentrating on thematic priorities. Measures to strengthen cooperation as well as thematic priorities have been identified and presented in detail in the sections that follow.

(133) The overall strategy of the Programme can, however, be summarised as follows:

To achieve significant and tangible progress in transnational cooperation geared towards cohesive, sustainable and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic Area and its maritime heritage.

III.C. HOW TO MAKE COOPERATION STRONGER?

(134) Of the major challenges highlighted in Section II.E, the fourth one, that of more ambitious cooperation, is overarching in nature. Cooperation partners shall make it their common concern at all times. As already indicated in the same section, cooperation should be strengthened by pursuing a twofold objective: "open perpetuation" of existing cooperation structures combined with tangible and operational project results.

III.C.1. The "open perpetuation" of cooperation structures

(135) Many cooperation structures have been created in the Atlantic Area over the past programming periods. Securing their "open perpetuation" means consolidating them whilst bringing in new partners.

(136) All appropriate steps shall be taken by the authorities in charge of programme implementation to promote a long-term strategic approach, making the progress made by cooperation over successive programming periods more visible. This entails running an appropriate monitoring system, but also assisting project partnerships in widening the time horizon of their action and clarifying its specific contribution to overall programme strategy. For this purpose, it will be essential to favour close coordination, synergy and cross-fertilisation between projects that address similar issues. This will be achieved through appropriate project grouping.

(137) A widening of the programme audience is also needed. More diverse actors should be involved, including the private sector and the organised civil society. Early, proactive mobilisation of key-players shall also be pursued. By

²³ See Appendix APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006)

"key-players" are meant bodies which are particularly likely to contribute to one or more of the programme objectives owing to their field of activity and responsibilities, regardless of their degree of familiarity with, or involvement in, previous cooperation programmes.

(138) In some cases, this proactive mobilisation of key-players could also concentrate on operations of high relevance for successful implementation of the programme strategy and pursuing long-term objectives. For this purpose, the authorities of the Programme could decide to make use of innovative "territorial engineering" techniques. For example, integrated "strategic frameworks" (cf. Section IV.G) could be initiated to generate and implement a small number of coordinated and carefully defined projects, geared towards a single central aim. This could favour more efficient use of budget resources while improving the strategic impact and visibility of the Programme activities.

III.C.2. Tangible project results: more intense cooperation

(139) Depending on the type of project achievements, the intensity of cooperation within a project partnership may vary to a very large extent. In the four-step scale below, project achievements have been categorised following an ascending order of cooperation intensity. A single project action plan can of course combine more than one of these four categories, possibly even all of them.

1. Exchange of experience

Project partners compare their respective practices. A classic example is a benchmarking exercise. The activities remain rather academic in nature: joint studies and publications, good practice guides, seminars, etc. This involves sharing data and information, promoting mutual understanding between partners and raising awareness among them of the diversity of their approaches and cultures. In practical terms, however, these positive results do not alter the state of things in their respective regions, at least during the project lifespan.

2. Transfer of know-how

While learning from each other, project partners take concrete steps to reform their respective practices by importing know-how from one region to another. Specific actions (such as tests, application measures, new policy steps, etc.) are explicitly included in the project action plan to secure a tangible transfer of know-how between partners and the resulting change in their respective regions.

3. Pooling of a critical mass of means

Project partners put human, technical, financial and other resources in common to increase their efficiency and to achieve joint tangible results that would have remained out of reach on an individual basis. For example, a joint transnational body provides expert advice and assistance on a specific question of common interest. The resulting benefit for the whole partnership exceeds what could have been expected of individual agencies, had partners worked in isolation, thanks to the leverage effect of cross-cultural exchange and the significant level of resource pooling.

4. Tackling transnational issues

Project partners cooperate to identify and implement joint responses to transnational issues, i.e. those which, by their very nature, cannot be addressed correctly without transnational cooperation, for example short-sea shipping, maritime safety, interoperability of transport networks, protection of halieutic resources or migratory species.

(140) As highlighted in Section II.C.3.a of the SWOT analysis, too many projects in past programming periods were dedicated to relatively academic activities such as studies, research, etc. To a large extent, a majority of operations consisted in an "exchange of experience", as understood in the above four-step scale. The positive outcome of such activities should not be overlooked, and their inclusion in project action plans definitely remains justified. However, operations limited to an exchange of experience should be avoided in future. Put otherwise, projects should produce or prepare for tangible results of common benefit to the whole partnership. Project partnerships of the Programme shall therefore be asked to incorporate at least one of the other three types of achievements in their work plan, namely transfer of know-how, pooling of a critical mass of means, or tackling of a transnational issue.

(141) As a consequence, projects consisting in a study only should be avoided in principle. However, projects consisting in a joint feasibility or market study prior to investments of transnational interest may be accepted, as well as projects paving the way to tangible achievements of transnational relevance.

(142) One last important objective that should be pursued by projects of the Programme is a contribution to European territorial cohesion. As explained above [see paragraph (131)], one of the most positive features of the INTERREG cooperation has been promotion of the integrated approach associated with the territorial cohesion ideal. Future projects should take this further. This implies striving to ensure consistency between the field action of a series of actors and policies and, where applicable, complementing, without duplicating, the other types of EU-funded transnational cooperation.

III.D. PRIORITIES

(143) Article 6 - 2] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 assigns four key thematic fields of intervention to the transnational strand of the European territorial cooperation objective: innovation, environment, accessibility and sustainable urban development.

(144) In each case, the regulation emphasises the need to finance only operations with a transnational impact. Even the networks and actions addressing the theme of sustainable urban development must aim at *"strengthening polycentric development at transnational, national and regional level, with a clear transnational impact."*

(145) The first three challenges (cohesive development of the knowledge economy, enhancement of the maritime heritage and balanced polycentric development) can be viewed in the light of the thematic fields set out in the ERDF Regulation and to which the four strategic priorities of the Programme correspond:

- Priority 1: Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks
- Priority 2: Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably
- Priority 3: Improve accessibility and internal links
- Priority 4: Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development

III.E. WHY THESE PRIORITIES?

(146) These priorities were chosen to reflect the will to take up the challenges mentioned above. These challenges are derived from the SWOT analysis which in turn was inspired to a great extent by the ASDP. It can therefore be stated that the strategy of the Programme is the fruit of intense deliberation and consultation conducted on the transnational level and capitalising on the valuable legacy of the long years of cooperation.

(147) Moreover, in compliance with Article 12 - 3] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, these priorities are consistent with the CSG and the relevant National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) and due attention has been paid to the findings of the *ex ante* evaluation when elaborating the final version of the programme strategy.

(148) Compliance of the programme priorities with stipulations of a more general nature set out in General Regulation 1083/2006 has also been checked.

(149) The aforementioned questions are addressed in the next sections.

III.E.1. Taking up the challenges

(150) Priorities 1 and 2 will contribute mainly to "cohesive development of the knowledge economy" and "enhancement of maritime heritage".

(151) Priorities 3 and 4 refer to the first and second lines of action (accessibility improvement and intensification of inter-regional exchanges respectively) of the "balanced polycentric development" challenge.

PRIORITY / CHALLENGE MATRIX

Theme in Regulation 1080/2006:	<i>Challenge:</i> Priority:	<i>1. Cohesive development of the knowledge economy</i>	<i>2. Enhancement of the Atlantic maritime heritage</i>	<i>3. Balanced polycentric development</i>
innovation	Priority 1: Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks	<i>main challenge targeted</i>	<i>economic dimension of the challenge</i>	
environment	Priority 2: Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably		<i>environmental dimension of the challenge</i>	
accessibility	Priority 3: Improve accessibility and internal links			<i>"accessibility" action line of the challenge</i>
sustainable urban development	Priority 4: Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development		<i>"cultural heritage" dimension of the challenge</i>	<i>"intensification of inter-regional exchanges" action line of the challenge</i>

(152) The matrix above illustrates the challenges addressed by the various priorities more precisely. This will be presented in greater detail, priority by priority, in Chapter IV. Two points are worth making straight away, however, about cultural heritage and ICT.

(153) Aspects relating to cultural heritage have been included in Priority 4, as Regulation 1080/2006 associates them with the theme of sustainable urban development. The economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of the maritime heritage therefore fall within the scope of Priorities 1, 2 and 4 respectively.

(154) To take up the challenge of balanced polycentric development, the digital divide in the Atlantic Area needs to be tackled. In many operational programmes, this issue, equated to the need to improve "virtual accessibility", is therefore associated with transport and mobility issues within the priority dedicated to accessibility. This was the case, for example, of Priority B, "Accessibility and the information society" of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme²⁴. As already pointed out [cf. paragraph (123)], telecommunication infrastructures and facilities are more a matter of investment in the regions, whereas the reduction of the digital divide requires a profound change in habits and mentalities. For this reason, it has been deemed more appropriate to regard the improvement of virtual accessibility as a cross-cutting theme of the Programme. By its very nature, transnational cooperation represents an ideal testing ground of the new opportunities offered by ICT, which each project of the Programme should intensively exploit. This approach can greatly contribute to raising awareness of these opportunities in those regions of the Atlantic Area where development of the Information Society is lagging behind.

III.E.2. Consistency with the Community Strategic Guidelines

(155) The first part of the CSG recommends that operations financed by cohesion policy for the 2007-2013 period should fit in with the *"integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the renewed Lisbon Agenda"*. To this effect, the document distinguishes between three basic guidelines:

1. *"making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work;*
2. *improving knowledge and innovation for growth;*
3. *more and better jobs"*.

(156) The last of these guidelines would seem to concern mainly, although not exclusively, ESF interventions. Detailed examination of the other two guidelines reveals that the priorities selected for the Programme contribute to the strategy proposed by the CSG, as shown in the following table:

	CSG	Priority of the OP (cf. specific objectives in Chapter IV)
1.	making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work	
1.1.	expand and improve transport infrastructures	3
1.2.	strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth	1 and 2
1.3.	address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources	2
2.	improving knowledge and innovation for growth	
2.1.	increase and better target investment in RTD	1
2.2.	facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship	1
2.3.	promote the information society for all	1

²⁴ Actually, several projects approved under Priority B dealt with other issues by making an intense use of ITC.

(157) For each of these guidelines, various actions are recommended and highlighted in the text of the CSG. In the detailed presentation of the priorities in Chapter IV of this Programme, reference is made to those actions that are of particular interest to Atlantic Area cooperation.

(158) The second part of the CSG is dedicated to the territorial dimension of cohesion policy. Of course, the content of this part converges even more closely with that of the priorities of the Programme, given that they both share the theme of territorial cohesion. Many issues addressed by the CSG (balanced, polycentric and sustainable urban development, rehabilitation of the physical environment, economic diversification, company clusters etc.) also feature prominently in the present Programme, insofar as they are of transnational interest.

(159) Section 2.5 of the CSG dedicated to transnational cooperation asserts the need to *"increase cooperation across Member States on matters of strategic importance"*. As most of the themes and actions proposed in this section are reiterated in Article 6 - 2] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, their content appears in the priorities of the present Programme *ipso facto*. It should also be pointed out that the boundaries of Atlantic Area cooperation have been redefined in line with the principles set out in the last clause of the said Section 2.5.

III.E.3. Consistency with the National Strategic Reference Frameworks

(160) The National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs) contain the national strategic priorities for cohesion over the 2007-2013 programming period, and were prepared by the national authorities of the Member States involved in the Programme on the basis of the CSG for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013.

(161) In compliance with Article 12-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 the programme priorities have to be justified having regard to the NSRF where the Member State has chosen to include actions financed under the European territorial cooperation objective. Neither the Irish nor the UK NSRF includes such actions. The Irish and the UK governments remain firmly committed to territorial co-operation but consider that relevant priorities should be developed in close consultation with the other member states participating in territorial cooperation programmes with Irish/UK involvement.

(162) The section of the *"Marco Estratégico Nacional de Referencia (MENR) de España 2007-2013"* dedicated to territorial cooperation stresses the need to strengthen cooperation by capitalising on good practice initiated in the framework of INTERREG programmes. With regard to transnational cooperation, the document advocates a sharper thematic focus and the avoidance of overlap between cooperation areas. However no more specific topics than those reviewed in Article 6-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 are explicitly mentioned. The cooperation of the Atlantic Area Programme shall concentrate on maritime issues while taking place in a shrunk cooperation area limited to coastal regions. This is well in line with the MENR approach.

(163) The French "Cadre de Référence Stratégique National - CRSN" also recommends capitalising on the experience acquired in previous cooperation programmes while favouring a better thematic and geographical focus. As far as cooperation methods and modalities are concerned, the CRSN makes a plea for a quantum leap in the area of "territorial engineering". This entails structuring the project generation process through early and proactive mobilisation of key-players on a limited number of strategic projects characterised by a strong territorial impact and a significant "European added value". The need for better coordination between various actors is also stressed. The CRSN confirms the commitment of

France to contribute to the four thematic priorities of transnational cooperation defined in Article 6-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006. Groupings of maritime regions such as the Atlantic Area are asked to place particular emphasis on maritime safety and the protection of coastlines. The Programme clearly echoes the CRSN recommendations, including the call for a better "territorial engineering" (cf. Sections IV.G, Strategic frameworks and VI.B.1 Generating projects in particular)

(164) The Portuguese "*Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional (QREN) 2007-2013*" puts forward some key principles applying to all operations benefiting from EU structural funding, in particular the concentration, selectivity and financial sustainability principles. Applied to territorial cooperation projects, "concentration" means reducing the number of thematic priorities of each operational programme to raise the relevance of projects. "Selectivity" means favouring two types of operations: first, projects of a tangible nature consisting in small infrastructures and facilities; second, projects of an intangible nature, namely the creation and running of networks, exchanges of experience and the preparation (studies, etc.) of investments funded by other programmes. "Financial sustainability" refers to the promotion of long-lasting projects, whose lifetime should exceed the duration of the ERDF support. The QREN also recommends maximising the impact of operations by reaching a critical mass of means, improving the visibility and recognition of cooperation, and promoting complementarity between different types of programmes. Lastly, the QREN advocates a certain degree of thematic concentration for the Portuguese participation in four programmes²⁵ of the transnational cooperation strand. As far as the Atlantic Area is concerned, maritime issues, development of coastal zones and Atlantic cities are identified as thematic priorities. These principles and recommendations clearly match those of the Programme.

(165) In conclusion, three out of five participating Member States have addressed the European territorial cooperation objective in their NSRF, namely Spain, France and Portugal. There is no incompatibility between the content of the Programme and the recommendations included in the NSRF of these Member States, whereas various policy options and key-principles put forward by the Spanish, French and Portuguese authorities are particularly well taken into account in the priorities of the Programme strategy.

III.E.4. Findings of the *ex ante* evaluation

(166) The elaboration of the programme strategy was an iterative process whereby recommendations of the Ex-Ante Evaluator were taken into account by the WG 2007-2013 in the successive drafts of various parts of the operational programme. The purpose of the *ex ante* evaluation was to optimise the allocation of resources and to improve the quality of programming. The Ex-Ante Evaluator also conducted the Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure, the final report of which is summarised in section III.E.5 below. This process was of great help to improve the quality of programming.

(167) The *ex ante* evaluation report is attached (Separate volume A.)

III.E.4.a. Key Evaluation Questions

(168) The key questions of the *ex ante* evaluation were the following:

- does the programme represent an appropriate strategy to meet the challenges facing the Atlantic Area? (RELEVANCE - cf. section III.E.4.b)

²⁵ South-West Europe, Macaronesian Area, Mediterranean Area and Atlantic Area

- is the strategy well defined with clear objectives and priorities and can these objectives be realistically achieved with the financial resources allocated to the different priorities? (INTERNAL COHERENCE - cf. section III.E.4.c)
- is the strategy coherent with policies at regional, national and Community level? How will the strategy contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon strategy for Jobs and Growth? (EXTERNAL COHERENCE - cf. section III.E.4.d)
- are appropriate indicators identified for the objectives and can these indicators and their targets form the basis for future monitoring and evaluation of performance? (MONITORING SYSTEM AND INDICATORS - cf. section III.E.4.e)
- are implementation systems appropriate to deliver the objectives of the programme? (IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS - cf. section III.E.4.f)

III.E.4.b. Relevance

(169) The Operational Programme for the Atlantic Area 2007-2013 represents an appropriate strategy to meet the challenges facing this specific geographic space in the European Union.

(170) The socio-economic analysis included in the OP and the resulting needs analysis for the Programme portrays the Atlantic Area in a satisfactory manner and illustrate the main needs that can be tackled within the competences of the Programme.

(171) The evaluator has appreciated an effort to concentrate the analysis only on those issues that are within the competence of the Programme, i.e. of relevance for transnational cooperation. The evaluator has also appreciated that the selection of these issues was based on a thorough revision of the ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the experience acquired in the previous INTERREG IIIB Programme, including fact-finding studies, and the mid-term evaluations carried out in 2003 and 2005.

(172) Sections II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3 and II.B.4 contain a selection of sophisticated and in-depth analyses on specific issues relating to economic development, environment and maritime heritage, accessibility and transport and territorial structure. Overall, a strong correlation between the SWOT analysis (needs and challenges for the Atlantic Area) and the programme objectives exists and only a few possible improvements were pointed out, such as the need to pay better attention to ICTs.

III.E.4.c. Internal coherence

(173) The various components of the Programme are structured in four Priorities and twelve specific objectives, which proved to be mutually consistent. These specific objectives have been selected with a strong component of thematic concentration, particularly on the maritime dimension of the Atlantic Area.

(174) Using the inter-relationships highlighted in the objective tree as a basis of the *ex ante* evaluation report, the evaluator has appreciated a strong relation between the Programme prime goal, (*"to achieve significant and **tangible** progress in transnational cooperation geared towards cohesive, **sustainable and balanced territorial development** of the Atlantic Area and its **maritime heritage**"*) and its specific objectives.

(175) A key-feature of the programming process has been the emphasis placed on securing the delivery of **tangible results** of transnational relevance by the actors of the Atlantic Area. Therefore, issues that can better be tackled through transnational cooperation take precedence, in the specific objectives, over specifically local or regional initiatives.

(176) All the specific objectives are also meant to contribute to a more cohesive, **sustainable and balanced territorial development**. The process of pulling together resources and partners of the Atlantic Area will itself bring about long term beneficial externalities and positive side effects for a sustainable and balanced territorial development. In any case, the results expected of projects addressing Priority 1 specific objectives on entrepreneurship and innovation networks as well as those of Priority 3 on accessibility and internal links will contribute significantly to this dimension of the Programme prime goal.

(177) As to the **maritime heritage** dimension of this goal, practically one full Priority is dedicated to it, whereas specific efforts will concentrate on the promotion of the Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest.

III.E.4.d. External coherence

(178) A conclusion of the *ex ante* evaluation report is that the strategy outlined by the Atlantic Area Programme for the 2007-2013 programming period will contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs.

(179) Through the implementation of transnational cooperation projects, the Programme can help to improve transport infrastructures, to strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth, address energy issues and facilitate, from a transnational perspective, innovation and entrepreneurship.

(180) If a minus has to be found beside this strong and valid contribution of the Programme anticipated by the evaluators, it is the lack of clear and explicit link between the Programme strategy and the Lisbon objective of promoting the information society for all: no specific objective will be supporting projects on this subject. Nevertheless, the importance of information and communication technologies is stressed in many sections of the operational programme, and projects promoting the use of ICTs fall within the scope of various specific objectives.

III.E.4.e. System of indicators

(181) The operational programme includes an initial system of indicators that will provide the necessary basis for developing a compact, straightforward and user-friendly set. This will allow project participants and bodies responsible for programme management to carry out a quantified and accurate monitoring of programme performances.

(182) The evaluation process has confirmed the difficulty of elaborating a monitoring system tailored to the specific needs of transnational cooperation programmes, but significant efforts have been made to find an acceptable a solution.

(183) The complete set of indicators, related targets and baseline information will be included and commented upon in the Programme Implementation and Management Handbook (PIMH), to be produced at an early stage of the programme implementation. The exact interpretation of each indicator should be then clarified, and regularly improved with insights provided by the practical experience of data collection.

III.E.4.f. Implementation and management systems

(184) The Programme provisions relating to the allocation of duties between the different management bodies are sufficient for their purpose, and following the evaluators' perception, quite comprehensive.

(185) They follow, and comply with, General Regulation 1083/2006 for what concerns management, monitoring and financial rules (article 58 and following); and Regulation 1080/2006, with particular regard to provisions specifically applying to European territorial cooperation (articles 12 to 21)

(186) Therefore the proposed management structure appears to be sufficiently described in the operational programme and its full compliance with the relevant EU regulations is confirmed.

(187) The managing authority of the previous INTERREG IIB Atlantic Area Programme was Poitou-Charentes Regional Council in France acting on behalf of all the Member States and assisted by a JTS based in Poitiers. Joint monitoring and management committees as well as a single paying authority were also established, ensuring smooth transnational running of the programme.

(188) The evaluator acknowledged the good collaboration relationship established between the INTERREG IIB managing authority / JTS and the new 2007-2013 managing authority, despite the latter being located in Region Norte (Portugal). This relationship was instrumental in transferring previous experience and ensuring appropriate running of the Programme from its very beginning.

III.E.4.g. Conclusions of the *ex ante* evaluation

(189) The purpose of the *ex ante* evaluation is to provide inputs to improve the coherence and quality of the operational programme at various stages of its elaboration process. At the end of this interactive process, the final *ex ante* evaluation report draws together the work undertaken and is forwarded to the Commission with the final draft operational programme. It therefore provides important insights for the understanding of the strategy and the allocation of financial resources, which will be the subject of negotiations with the Commission.

(190) As this operational programme was being finalised in view of its submission for consideration by the Commission, the findings of the *ex ante* evaluation process were brought together in a final evaluation report. The standard content of European territorial cooperation operational programmes has been set out in Article 12 of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006. The evaluation acknowledges that all the information required is included in the operational programme.

(191) A total of fifty recommendations and suggestions were elaborated during the whole evaluation process. All of them have been included in one of the synthesis tables (recommendation trackers) in the relevant sections of the report.

(192) Each recommendation tracker reviews recommendations, their rationale, specifies what decision (adoption or rejection) was made by the WG 2007-13 and the reasons for this decision as appropriate.

(193) The set of recommendations and suggestions covers the various parts of the report, i.e. the sections dedicated to the relevance, the internal and external coherence of the Programme, the proposed system of indicators, and the implementation system.

(194) Out of these recommendations, 31 were adopted and taken into account in the operational programme during the drafting and preparation period, 8 were partially adopted and 11 were not considered for adoption in the final draft Programme.

(195) Most recommendations concerning relevance and internal and external coherence were adopted. A lower proportion of suggestions about the system of indicators and the programme implementation were taken into account: several were rejected or partially adopted. It is worth stressing that some of them are likely to be considered in the elaboration of the Programme Implementation and Management Handbook (PIMH) during the programme inception phase.

III.E.5. Summary of the Strategic Environmental Assessment report

(196) Pursuant to EU Directive 2001/42/EC ("SEA Directive"), an environmental assessment of the Programme has been carried out. ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd prepared the environmental report on the basis of the second draft Operational Programme. The consultation of the public and the environmental authorities took place in the five participating Member States.

(197) The Strategic Environmental Assessment report is attached (Separate volume B.)

III.E.5.a. Introduction

(198) The environmental assessment was carried out according to the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the evaluation of the effect of certain plans and programmes on the environment: the SEA Directive (Strategic Environmental Assessment).

(199) The purpose of the SEA Directive is to "provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development".

(200) The Atlantic Area Programme sets a framework for transnational cooperation projects of a "soft" nature (not infrastructure) and with a small budget within the Atlantic Area. First of all, it has to be said that environmental considerations with a view to promoting sustainable development are very present in the Atlantic Area Programme. Furthermore, the Atlantic Area Programme is considered to be coherent with EU environmental policies and goals.

(201) Since the Atlantic Area Programme is a policy and financing framework for potential projects but in itself does not include physical projects, the description of effects and measures was done at a strategic and generalised level.

III.E.5.b. Current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area

(202) Thanks to its diversity and quality, the environment of the Atlantic regions gives them their appeal. They have many natural resources which have been damaged less than in other regions of the continent, but this environment represents more than that. In particular, the physical maritime environment of the Atlantic Area, but also all the activities that it has generated, represent a precious heritage and a crucial factor of common identity, one to be protected and promoted.

(203) The description of the current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area contained in the report is based on the Operational Programme 2000-2006, on the Europe's Third Environmental Assessment Report (the so-called Kiev Report, 2003) and on information stemming from projects co-financed by the Atlantic Area Operational Programme 2000-2006.

(204) The description was divided between:

- The economic development and related pressures on the environment: energy, transport, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, maritime heritage, research and the coastal shift of urbanization; and
- Environmental developments: Climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, air pollution, waste, water, technological and natural hazards and biodiversity.

III.E.5.c. Environmental policy framework

(205) The environmental policy framework that was used as a reference to evaluate the consistency of the Atlantic Area Programme consists of:

- The **Sixth Community Environment Action Programme 2002-2012 (EAP6)**²⁶. This programme addresses the key environmental objectives and priorities based on an assessment of the state of the environment and of prevailing trends including emerging issues that require a lead from the Community. The Programme should promote the integration of environmental concerns in all Community policies and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development throughout the Community.
- The **Thematic Strategies** that have been prepared by the European Commission in accordance with the requirements of EAP6.

III.E.5.d. Environmental assessment of the Atlantic Area Programme

(206) The Strategic Environmental Assessment contained in the Environmental Assessment Report consists of two parts:

- An analysis of the consistency of the Atlantic Area Programme with, and relevance to, the general European environmental policy, embodied by the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (the 4 Priorities and the 7 Thematic Strategies);
- A description of the expected/potential environmental effects of the objectives and actions of the Programme, divided by theme.

(207) In this summary, only the general assessment per priority and objective is presented in the following table:

²⁶ Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002, OJ L 242 10.09.02

Priorities and objectives	General assessment
<i>Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks</i>	
Obj 1.1: Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres	No significant environmental impact
Obj 1.2: Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence	No significant environmental impact
Obj 1.3: Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting the regional endogenous potential	No significant environmental impact
<i>Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably</i>	
Obj 2.1: Improve maritime safety	Positive indirect marginal contribution
Obj 2.2: Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces	Positive direct marginal contribution
Obj 2.3: Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment	Positive indirect marginal contribution
Obj 2.4: Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones	Positive direct marginal contribution
<i>Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links</i>	
Obj 3.1: Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality	No significant environmental impact
Obj 3.2: Promote short-sea shipping and cooperation between ports	The projects financed under this priority will not have significant environmental effects themselves due to their “soft” nature. However, projects specifically aiming to promote short-sea shipping should be required to consider the possible environmental effects that this short-sea shipping activity would have if implemented. The studies financed by the previous Atlantic Area Programmes have certainly included environmental considerations in their assessment of the viability of short-sea shipping routes. For this reason, the evaluator is confident that environmental considerations will remain a core factor within the projects under this priority.
<i>Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development</i>	
Obj 4.1: Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development	Positive direct marginal contribution
Obj 4.2: Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking	No significant environmental impact
Obj 4.3: Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest	No significant environmental impact

III.E.5.e. Conclusions of the environmental assessment

(208) Basically, the Atlantic Area Programme will not have significant environmental impacts due to its broad geographical scope and the type of activities to be co-financed: “soft” projects with small budget (actions are likely to involve large information exchange, sharing of experiences, etc.).

(209) The aim and the objectives of the Programme emphasise sustainable development as an intrinsic part of the Programme’s objectives. This indicates that the Programme in principle is drafted under due consideration to the possible environmental impacts flowing from the proposed Programme initiatives. Furthermore, Priority 2 has explicit environmental objectives, which means there is a strong likelihood that this will lead to positive environmental effects.

(210) Concerning the potential environmental impact of each of the four priorities of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme:

- **Priority 1** - No significant environmental impact.
- **Priority 2** - Positive direct marginal contribution to the environment.
- **Priority 3** - No significant environmental impact.
- **Priority 4** - No significant environmental impact.

(211) The potential environmental impact of the Atlantic Area Programme as a whole largely depends in addition on its total **budget** (104.051.233 Euro of ERDF funding) and on the distribution of the financial means among the four priorities and the specific objectives.

(212) It should be emphasised that on a European scale, projects with budgets of this size can only cause a very limited overall economical, social and thus also environmental impact. An internal shift of financial means will not change this fact in a significant way. Furthermore, large parts of the budget, even for projects with clear environmental purposes, will be spent on setting up transnational structures, drawing up of action plans etc., and only partly on the implementation of concrete environmental measures. This of course does not diminish the intrinsic value of the Atlantic Area Programme’s objectives or the individual projects.

III.E.5.f. Suggestions on the project selection and the monitoring procedure

Project selection

(213) The implementation structure described in the Operational Programme will normally ensure a sufficiently thorough selection of project applications, in order for them to meet the priorities and objectives of the Atlantic Area Programme, including its environmental goals and positive environmental (side) effects. The procedure allows to steer project applications with enough potential towards a more effective contribution to achieving the objectives.

(214) However, and in order to ensure adequate emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability, the bodies involved in the project selection procedure should count with an appropriate number of environmental experts (i.e. representatives of the Member State environmental agencies). Membership of a transnational advisory working group, or - better - a specific advisory working group dedicated to environmental issues, should be a minimal requirement. But since these working groups have a strictly advisory role and are not involved in the project selection itself, it would furthermore be appropriate if the Monitoring Committee would include at least one environmental expert.

(215) Also, and with a view to smoothen the assessment procedure, each project application should include a **brief note** about the environmental aspects of the project²⁷. The content of this note will depend on the type of project:

- for geographically defined projects - dealing with a specific (trans-boundary) area (e.g. a river basin or a coastal area) or with multiple non-adjacent areas with comparable issues (e.g. cities in different member states) - this note should include a brief description of the environmental situation of the project area(s), with emphasis on the environmental aspects that will be specifically addressed by the project (e.g. water quality, flood risk,...);
- for non-geographically defined projects - e.g. projects concerning the implementation of certain innovative techniques in industrial plants - the note should contain a description of the environmental improvements envisaged by the project and its potential (negative) side effects.

(216) Because of the wide potential variety of proposed projects, it is both impossible and not desirable to define strict assessment criteria for each environmental topic. Expert judgment will be the prime assessment factor. There should, however, be some minimal quality requirements and standardisation in the environmental notes prepared by the applicants. Logically, these standards should be set by the proposed advisory working group on environmental issues, which also makes the expert judgement of the project proposals. Of course, all this information is also passed on to the Monitoring Committee and Joint Technical Secretariat.

(217) If these suggestions are followed, the selection procedure as described in the Operational Programme should guarantee that all selected projects not only fit within the priorities and objectives of the Atlantic Area Programme, but to some degree also contribute to environmental objectives that are not specifically addressed by the Programme.

Monitoring

(218) Because of their size and nature, a few of the the selected projects might be, during their execution phase, required to become object of an environmental assessment: a SEA in the case of e.g. a regional development plan; an EIA in the case of e.g. a concrete infrastructure project. Such a SEA or EIA will provide the necessary monitoring instruments. But also projects that are "free" from a formal environmental assessment should be monitored on their environmental (side) effects. In all cases, the environmental note, to be included in the application, can act as reference document.

(219) The environmental aspects to be monitored and the way the monitoring should be performed, largely depend on the kind of project. No general monitoring criteria can be established at this point, but should be determined by the Monitoring Committee, supported on this issue by the advisory working group on environmental issues.

III.E.5.g. Strategic environmental assessment procedure

(220) In accordance to the stipulations of the SEA directive, a Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure was organised following a number of different phases.

(221) The SEA procedures were agreed by the Working Group and undertaken by Portugal, in its quality of host Member State and Managing Authority of the Programme and thus under Directive 2001/42/EC, which is the legal framework in Portugal.

²⁷ The format of this note should be agreed and should form part of the application form

Screening phase

(Cardiff decision - WG 4)

(222) Member states environmental administrations were contacted in an active way and in an early stage during the process concerning the scope and procedures of the SEA asking every MS whether or not a "full" SEA would be needed. A screening note was forwarded to every Member State participating in the Atlantic Area Programme on 16 October 2006.

(223) The outcome was that Spain reacted affirming that under Spanish SEA procedures, a full SEA would be required.

(224) The formal communication from Portugal on this procedure to undertake a "full SEA" was made to all the Member States on 22 November 2006.

Decision to launch the SEA

(Seville decision - WG 5)

(225) The decision was to launch the SEA according to Portuguese law (Directive 2001/42/EC) and on the basis on its article 7 on transboundary consultations.

(226) On that basis, and in order to keep the timing of the elaboration of the Atlantic Area Programme in order, a common timeframe was decided. Also it was decided that the scoping of the Environmental Report would be done by the Portuguese authorities, since Portugal is the first Member State responsible for the whole SEA procedure implementation. All other Member States agreed to the procedure.

Scoping phase

(227) Portugal launched a consultation procedure on the scope of the Environmental Report to the relevant Portuguese Agencies following the procedures agreed in Seville under article 7 of Directive 2001/42/EC, whose results were forwarded to the ex-ante evaluators.

Consultation on the SEA report and the draft Operational Programme

(228) A common public consultation of the SEA report and the draft Operational Programme was launched on 29 January 2007. The environmental report and the draft OP were put on the internet site of the Atlantic Area Programme on 29 January 2007 and on the internet sites of Member States and some participating regions as it is shown in the table below.

<i>MEMBER STATE</i>	<i>Launch date</i>	<i>Completion date</i>	<i>Number of comments received</i>	<i>Internet site of SEA announcement</i>
France	01-Feb-07	28-Feb-07	5	www.pays-de-la-loire.pref.gouv.fr/coopatlantique
Ireland	1-Feb-07	28-Feb-07		www.bmwassembly.ie
Portugal	29-Jan-07	28-Feb-07	3	www.qca.pt
Spain	31-Jan-07	01-Mar-07	1	www.dgfc.spgg.meh.es
United Kingdom	29-Jan-07	01-Mar-07	10	www.wefo.wales.gov.uk

(229) There was an analysis of the results from the 19 responses that were received, and all of them were carefully assessed. A number of comments and remarks were taken into consideration, by integrating them and amending accordingly the final version of the OP.

(230) A detailed description and analysis of each of the 19 responses and their impact on the 2007-2013 Atlantic Operational Programme is contained as Annex 2 in the attached Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (Separate Volume B).

(231) In any case, the responses are listed in the table below:

MS	Nº	Comment by
FR	1	DRAC (Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles) Bretagne
FR	2	EMC2 (Ensembles Métalliques et Composites Complexes)
FR	3	CEPRI (European Center for Flood Prevention)
FR	4	CR Pêches maritimes & élevages marins
FR	5	Espace métropolitain Loire Bretagne
PT	6	CCDR Norte (Comissao de Coordenação e Desemvolvimento Regional)
PT	7	Instituto do Ambiente
PT	8	Portuguese citizen (Paulo Alexandre)
UK	9	Argyll and Bute Council
UK	10	West of Scotland European Consortium
UK	11	Countryside Council for Wales
UK	12	Natural England
UK	13	Countryside Council for Wales
UK	14	Environment Agency Wales
UK	15	Environment Agency
UK	16	COMET Interreg Partnership
UK	17	Council for Nature conserv. & Countryside
ES	18	Instituto de Salud Carlos III
UK	19	North West Regional European Partnership (NWREP – England)

(232) As stated in section "III.E.5.e Conclusions of the environmental assessment", the Programme will not have significant environmental impacts due to its broad geographical scope and the type of activities to be co-financed. In any case, all the responses to the consultation have been carefully analysed and many of them have been integrated into the final version of the Operational Programme. A detailed description of all the received responses, the analysis that was done and a justification on how they have been taken into consideration can be found in Annex 2 referred to in paragraph (230).

III.E.6. Compliance with Articles 16 and 17 of General Regulation 1083/2006

(233) Article 16 of General Regulation 1083/2006 provides that equality between men and women and the integration of the gender perspective shall be promoted, and that any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation must be prevented during the various stages of implementation of the Structural Funds. Nothing in the content of the programme strategy leads to express concern in this respect. The rules applying to Programme management shall comply with the non-discrimination principle. In particular, the staff of the Programme Joint Technical Secretariat shall be recruited strictly on merit [cf. paragraph (369)]. Moreover, compliance with Article 16 ranks explicitly among the project admissibility conditions [cf. paragraph (398) below].

(234) Article 17 of General Regulation 1083/2006 provides that the objectives of Structural Fund Programmes shall be pursued in the framework of sustainable development and Community promotion of the goal of protecting and improving the environment as set out in Article 6 of the Treaty. In many respects, the

implementation of the programme strategy will favour better protection of the environment and promote sustainability. This is particularly the case of Priorities 2 and 4, but Priority 3 should also contribute to a modal shift in favour of sustainable means of transport. The environmental impact of the Programme has been assessed in the framework of the SEA procedure. Moreover, compliance with Article 17 ranks explicitly among the project admissibility conditions [cf. paragraph (398) below].

IV. Objectives, results

(235) This chapter provides detailed comments on the four selected priorities. The specific objectives and the scope of action of each priority are reviewed in the first four sections. The fifth section is dedicated to recommendations to achieve the best possible complementarity between the operations of the Programme on the one hand and Community policies or other EU-funded programmes or actions on the other. To clarify long-term cooperation prospects and to perpetuate the partnerships (cf. the "open perpetuation" commented upon in Section III.C.1), project groupings and "strategic frameworks" are presented in Sections IV.F and IV.G respectively. Finally, the quantification of the programme objectives is addressed in Section IV.H.

(236) In practice, it may occur that activities scheduled in a project action plan are relevant to more than one and the same priority. This is all the more likely as horizontal integration between sector-based policies should be favoured as a component of the integrated approach put forward in Section III.A. For example, a transnational innovation network aiming to implement a research programme on transport technologies tackling interoperability-related issues could arguably apply under both Priorities 1 and 3. Similarly, a potential for projects developing links between tourism, ICT and heritage sectors has been reported by key-players consulted for the preparation of the Programme. In such instances, it will simply be up to the applicants to consider which of the relevant priorities best matches the main purpose of their project and to apply under that priority only. Considering the need for an integrated approach in project activities, the four main priorities of the programme should in no way be regarded as water-tight compartments.

(237) In the following sections, themes and types of action of particular relevance for the specific objectives of each Programme priority are reviewed. The resulting lists of possible projects are non-exclusive. Their sole purpose is to provide project applicants with a better insight into the type of initiatives they may consider including in their application. It must be clear that tackling one or more issues addressed in these lists does not represent in itself a sufficient criteria to guarantee the approval of a project application. The selection of projects will be based on a set of admissibility conditions and selection criteria referred to in paragraph (397).

IV.A. PRIORITY 1: PROMOTE TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INNOVATION NETWORKS

(238) The SWOT analysis in Chapter II highlighted the clearly uneven nature of economic development in the Atlantic Area, along with a tendency towards excessive specialisation of the less privileged regions in low value added activities. It also noted the existence of genuine endogenous potential in certain sectors and a rich fabric of SMEs.

(239) It also stressed that the development of the less prosperous regions depended on them opening up internationally and diversifying their economies, as well as on their ability to take their place in the knowledge economy promoted by the Lisbon Agenda.

(240) As well as this, the major contribution that modern research and technology could make to the promotion of the maritime heritage pointed to the need to intensify economic cooperation in this field, too.

(241) Finally, there is a clear need to overcome the reluctance of the business sector to engage in technology transfer and other forms of cooperation with academic and research centres.

IV.A.1. Priority 1 and its specific objectives

(242) In the light of these conclusions, Priority 1, "Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks", was selected in response

- to the challenge of "fair development of the knowledge economy";
- to the economic aspect of the challenge to "promote maritime heritage".

(243) Its aim is to promote close, sustainable economic collaboration between the stakeholders concerned in the various regions of the Atlantic Area. This cooperation should take the form of a positive-sum game. Many Atlantic regions and economies are small individually but jointly possess a mass that can make the Atlantic Area a global player. To achieve this, transnational networking among key-players is essential. Of particular importance is the involvement of SMEs, which need assistance in their international activities. Priority 1 also counts on the possibility of exploiting complementarities between the different categories of regions, notably their cultural diversity and the benefit that can be drawn from it in the context of globalisation.

(244) Priority 1 seeks in particular to achieve three specific objectives:

- Objective 1.1. - Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres;
- Objective 1.2. - Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence;
- Objective 1.3. - Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting regional endogenous potential.

IV.A.2. Scope of action of Priority 1

(245) As its title suggests, this priority focuses on promoting innovation. Not only scientific and technical innovation (including eco-innovation) is targeted, but also other features of the contemporary knowledge economy such as new types of business services or innovative marketing techniques, with particular regard to the transnational dimension of these practices.

(246) Special care should be taken to target the corporate world, SMEs in particular. The direct involvement of SMEs in project activities, in particular the participation of profit-distributing companies as project partners, is subject to compliance with conditions set by EU and national law and regulations on state aid and public procurements. Organisations playing a pivotal interface role, for example resource centres, vocational training institutions or SME incubators, can also be associated in an effort to involve the private sector.

(247) At the same time, projects should link their activities to regional development instead of merely focusing on networking within their specific scientific/business sector. In particular, cooperation partnerships of a purely academic nature, between research institutions only, are advised to submit an

application in the framework of other programmes seemingly better suited to this purpose²⁸.

IV.A.2.a. Objective 1.1. – Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres

(248) Despite some positive trends observed recently, raising awareness of the importance of economic and technological innovation in corporate circles, especially among SMEs, remains a crucial challenge of the Lisbon agenda. In this respect, considerable progress can still be made in the Atlantic Area through a wide array of possible activities. Such activities can already be carried out in the regional context, but their implementation within transnational networks - the aim of Objective 1.1 - should yield a significant leverage effect.

(249) In a business environment characterised by steadily growing competition, companies may have good reasons to refrain from getting involved, even indirectly, in cooperation schemes, especially when this could lead to inappropriate unveiling of sensitive information. Project applicants should take particular care to provide an appropriate framework to overcome this type of difficulty.

(250) The promotion of knowledge transfers on all kinds of economic and technological innovation should be pursued under Objective 1.1. Priority should be given to projects which impact positively on regional economic development.

(251) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 1.1 include

- Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research centres of different countries;
- Promotion of transnational resource centres to collect and disseminate information relating to innovation (new patents, etc.) and technology transfers and act as an interface between SMEs and research centres working on questions of common interest;
- Pooling expertise in transnational technical assistance networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes;
- Pooling results of technology-watch systems and training on economic intelligence techniques within transnational partnerships;
- Improving the access to innovation financing, e.g. making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up transnational innovation trusts;
- Developing transnational partnerships around European centres of excellence specialised in sectors with high technology contents.

IV.A.2.b. Objective 1.2. – Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence

(252) Economic development should be catalysed in some sectors of the maritime economy which offer a great potential for the future of the Atlantic Area. Among these, Objective 1.2 concentrates on niches of excellence, where the level and quality of RTD investments are such that the strengthening of a globally

²⁸ For example the 7th FPRD (FP7) or the interregional strand of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.

competitive position can reasonably be expected. Without claiming exhaustiveness, the list of relevant sectors includes yacht building, high-value added segments of the shipbuilding industry, and the wide domain of marine research: oceanography, marine biology and biotechnologies, nutraceuticals²⁹ based on sea products, development of fishing techniques and marine cultures, protection and promotion of the marine environment. As highlighted in section II.B.2.d, these sectors currently face the crucial challenge of an absolute need to concentrate means, and transnational cooperation provides significant opportunities to take it up. In this respect, projects under Objective 1.2 could deliver a significant contribution to the economic policy agenda of the Commission Green Paper on Maritime Policy, with particular regard to the promotion of "maritime clusters" advocated in this document³⁰.

(253) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 1.2 include

- Facilitating the formation or consolidation of transnational networks of industrial clusters of the maritime economy;
- Transnational transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge between research centres and enterprises, SMEs in particular, of the maritime economy;
- Elaboration of joint financial engineering instruments to support innovation in the maritime economy;
- Transnational pooling of resources to improve the innovation environment of the maritime economy e.g. provision of joint business services, assistance to workforce mobility, joint scientific and vocational training;

IV.A.2.c. Objective 1.3. – Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting regional endogenous potential

(254) Many Atlantic regions are facing economic decline and/or over-specialisation in sectors of low added value. To redirect their economy, they strive to exploit their endogenous potential. However, as stressed in Section II.E.1, this potential cannot be fulfilled in isolation. International opening and diversification of the economy is needed. Objective 1.3 aims to support this move by seizing opportunities offered specifically by transnational cooperation. Among these, the cultural complementarity between the four language areas of the Atlantic Area seems worth considering in the current globalisation context, owing to the international status of the four languages concerned.

(255) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 1.3 include

- Exploiting the potential of new ICT to favour development of international trade circuits for regional products.
- Transnational teams specialised in measures to enhance innovation capacities, to pool and benchmark the experience gained in the various national frameworks and experiment on transferring it to regions undergoing an economic conversion process;
- Stimulating the emergence of regional clusters

²⁹ neologism: foods or components of foods that appear to have drug-like action, usually processed and / or concentrated into a pill, capsule or powder form

³⁰ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006)

- Joint marketing of various types of innovative sustainable tourism, e.g. ecotourism, regional gastronomy, submarine tourism;
- Transnational transfer of know-how acquired in the field of innovative environmentally friendly agriculture;

IV.B. PRIORITY 2: PROTECT, SECURE AND ENHANCE THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABLY

(256) According to the SWOT analysis in Chapter II, the environment of the Atlantic Area faces a large number of threats: oil spills, degradation of marine habitats, exhaustion of halieutic resources, loss of biodiversity, various types of pollution, degradation of natural spaces and landscapes, erosion and damage to coasts, deterioration in water quality. Particular causes are a lack of coordination in shipwreck prevention measures, over-fishing, insufficient coverage of the territory by Natura 2000 sites, pressure from urban development and tourism, inadequate handling of road traffic, waste and wastewater, and intensive agriculture.

(257) However, this environment is better conserved in relative terms than that in other European regions and remains rich in natural sites and resources of great quality, notably certain coastal sites and vast wetland zones. It also boasts great potential for renewable energies.

IV.B.1. Priority 2 and its specific objectives

(258) Priority 2, "Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably" focuses on the environmental dimension of the challenge of "Enhancement of the Atlantic maritime heritage". Many issues of transnational interest can be addressed in this framework. Again, the Commission Green Paper on Maritime Policy³¹ should be a major inspiration for project development.

(259) A first key aim will be to prevent catastrophes such as shipwrecks and oil spills by coordinated transnational action. Next, sustainable management and promotion of the resources of marine spaces, notably fisheries resources, should be secured. A third important objective will consist in exploiting the largely untapped potential of renewable energies. Finally, water resources, the biodiversity and integrity of the major natural areas and coastal zones need to be adequately protected, and also promoted, for example by encouraging sustainable tourism models. ICZM experiments should be carried on and taken into greater depth.

(260) In brief, Priority 2 will contribute to the following four specific objectives:

- Objective 2.1. - Improve maritime safety;
- Objective 2.2. - Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces;
- Objective 2.3. - Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment;
- Objective 2.4. - Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones.

³¹ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006)

IV.B.2. Scope of action of Priority 2

(261) Many issues that are transnational by nature (maritime safety, protection of the ocean floor, etc.) can be addressed under this priority. Preference should be given to them by applicants.

(262) However, certain aspects of the marine and coastal environment, even when they concern transnational areas such as coasts, can be tackled through local action. Project partnerships in which the members are involved in such local experiences (such as coastal cleaning operations or ICZM) should secure a genuine transnational transfer of know-how and strive to pool a critical mass of resources and expertise in order to guarantee an increase in the means placed at the disposal of each of them, cross-fertilisation of experiments and concrete reform of current field practice.

IV.B.2.a. Objective 2.1. – Improve maritime safety

(263) The considerable public reaction triggered by the Erika and Prestige catastrophes contributed to raising awareness of the need for, and great legitimacy of, proactive intervention at the EU and transnational levels in the area of maritime safety. In this respect, action was already taken in the framework of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme. In particular, a "Fact-finding mission on maritime safety"³² was conducted to analyse the existing situation and identify priority projects for future transnational cooperation. A major conclusion of the resulting report is that priority should be given to operational-type projects over study and observation projects. The improvement of responsiveness should be regarded as a key-element of Objective 2.1.

(264) The following examples of activities relevant to Objective 2.1 are a selection of priority projects proposed by the mission on maritime safety:

- Identifying, evaluating and planning safe havens for ships in distress;
- Identifying needs and increasing the capacity of available tug boats³³;
- Improving response capabilities, tools, action plans and awareness at all levels (e.g. better communication systems amongst networks of coastal partners: lifeboat institutions, coastguards, etc.);
- Training personnel of the local authorities, fishermen, and merchant navy staff;
- Strengthening of, and resource pooling between, operational oceanographic services to monitor pollution at sea and evaluate its seriousness.

IV.B.2.b. Objective 2.2. – Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces

(265) Even though various resources of the Atlantic marine environment have probably been relatively better preserved than in other European maritime basins, proactive steps need to be taken to counteract negative trends representing considerable threats for the future integrity of this environment. Apart from the increasing risks of wreckage and spills addressed by Objective 2.1, other threats need to be tackled, in particular the over-exploitation of halieutic resources and the loss of marine biodiversity. Appropriate responses should also be defined to tackle environmental degradations caused by oil and gas industry, aggregate

³² See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, INTERREG IIIB FACT-FINDING MISSION ON MARITIME SAFETY (2004).

³³ The standard refitting of tug boats should be avoided

extraction, coastal development, renewable energy technologies (cf. paragraph (268) below) and other activities. Objective 2.2 aims to support transnational approaches geared towards more sustainable management and efficient protection of the Atlantic marine resources.

(266) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 2.2 include

- Experimenting joint tools and methods to monitor the evolution and promote sustainable management of halieutic resources and sea-beds, with involvement of professionals, for example in the field of aquaculture (creation of habitat for fish spawning and the migratory fish stocks);
- Defining and testing transnational strategies to protect and restore marine ecosystems (for a single sea basin or for the entire cooperation area), including demonstrations/exploration of the Ecosystem Approach;
- Elaborating a spatial planning system for maritime activities on the waters under the jurisdiction of, or controlled by the Member States of the Atlantic Area, in line with the recommendation of the Green Paper on Maritime Policy³⁴;
- Coordinating and exchanging knowledge between authorities responsible for national management plans foreseen in the EU Marine Strategy Directive³⁵, with joint implementation of transnationally relevant parts of these plans;

IV.B.2.c. Objective 2.3. – Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment

(267) The need to reduce traditional energy dependency through improvements in energy efficiency and renewable energies rank among the key objectives set out in the CSG³⁶. This should provide a very positive contribution to the cohesion policy, but also to the Kyoto protocol and Lisbon agendas. In this respect, the potential of renewable energy offered by the Atlantic Area is immense and largely untapped. Relatively well known technologies such as biomethanation, biofuels, biomass and wind turbines may be exploited, but other technologies of a more experimental nature and specific to the marine environment should be explored, in particular the energy from the tides, marine currents and waves. This is also the case of recent progress in the area of off-shore wind energy. Objective 2.3 aims to raise the profile of the Atlantic regions and the Union in this very topical field by initiating and supporting various kinds of transnational experiments and pilot projects.

(268) Projects contributing to this objective should pay due attention to the possible environmental impact of renewable energy technologies, and demonstrate a holistic approach incorporating the technical, environmental (biodiversity, seascape) and social aspects of any initiative. In this connection, there is a need to maximise learning during the developmental stages of new technology, in demonstration phases for example.

(269) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 2.3 include

³⁴ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006) Heading **"4.2. Spatial Planning for a Growing Maritime Economy"**.

³⁵ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (24 October 2005); at the time of writing, only the Commission proposal has been made available, but the final version of the EU Marine Strategy Directive will of course represent a major reference for project applicants during the programme implementation.

³⁶ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references EUROPEAN COMMISSION (13 July 2006)

- Joint exploration, at the transnational level, of the potential of innovative sources of renewable energy, for example sea current, tidal or wave energy;
- Joint feasibility or financial engineering studies for large investments in off-shore wind energy;
- Transnational pooling of experience, data collection³⁷ and progress monitoring in the sector of marine renewable energies;
- Joint demonstration pilot projects to test experimental types of renewable energy.

IV.B.2.d. Objective 2.4. – Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones

(270) As highlighted in section II.B.2 of the SWOT analysis, the Atlantic Area boasts wide spaces and landscapes of high environmental quality, in particular vast wetlands of exceptional biodiversity. This valuable coastal environment, however, is threatened by various types of pressure, including coastal shift of urbanisation, urban sprawl, second homes, tourism, water sports facilities, intensive agriculture, deficient treatment of road traffic, waste and wastewater, etc. Other causes for concern are sea level rise resulting from climate change, the damaged environment of estuaries and industrial regions, marine waste, the deterioration in sea- and fresh³⁸ water quality as well as erosion and denaturing of the coastlines. The reinforced protection of natural areas is a major issue, which calls for better coverage of many regions by Natura 2000 sites. Other regions however, where the coverage of Natura 2000 seems sufficient, could focus on enhanced protection. It is also essential to further pursue and intensify the integrated policies initiated to reconcile environmental protection and urban/economic development, such as ICZM schemes promoted by EU ICZM Recommendation 2002/413/EC³⁹. The purpose of Objective 2.3 is to support all types of transnational action contributing to nature protection and ICZM in the Atlantic Area.

(271) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 2.4 include

- Extension as appropriate of the coverage of the cooperation area by interconnected Natura 2000 protected sites;
- Transfer of know-how on protected site management (e.g. management frameworks);
- Implementation of a joint conservation strategy of nature reserves, concentrating on transnational aspects, for example the protection of migratory species;
- Development of transnational ICZM expertise, handling transfers of know-how between the experiments in different countries on topics such as the sustainable management of sea- and fresh water resources, estuaries or brown-field sites, integrated environmental strategies, etc.;
- Designing model solutions and testing new methods within transnational partnerships to remedy coastal change

³⁷ For example, mapping the potential power available (perhaps from satellite wave records)

³⁸ Ground and river water

³⁹ Cf. APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (30 May 2002).

- Joint development of new planning techniques to anticipate the impact of climate change on coastal areas.

IV.C. PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND INTERNAL LINKS

(272) The SWOT analysis in Chapter II noted a series of weaknesses in the air, land and maritime transport networks of the Atlantic Area, in particular the lack of transnational services within the area and a lack of interoperability, continuity and interconnection between networks.

(273) Although faced with competition from the North Sea ports, those along the Atlantic seaboard retain great potential. This potential is considerably increased in this period when SSS is seen as being a key response to road traffic congestion problems. However, crucial issues are still to be resolved in this respect, notably that of fitting ports into efficient supply chains and the need to stimulate rail freight services.

IV.C.1. Priority 3 and its specific objectives

(274) Priority 3, "Improve accessibility and internal links" focuses on the "accessibility" action line of the challenge of achieving "balanced polycentric development". The transnational dimension of this priority is obvious.

(275) The external and internal accessibility of the Atlantic Area may be improved through a wide range of possible steps. For example, new interregional connections should be developed, in air and land transport alike. However, owing to the relatively limited size of the programme budget, it has been deemed more appropriate to concentrate cooperation on two strategic issues in the framework of Priority 3. First, a more effective operation of existing transport networks will be favoured by promoting intermodality, interoperability and continuity. Second, the development of maritime transport will be stimulated. This also depends on an intermodal approach, as well as on good cooperation between ports and the ability of all the stakeholders involved to exploit the new potential offered by SSS and motorways of the sea projects.

(276) Priority 3 will therefore pursue the following two specific objectives:

- Objective 3.1. - Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality;
- Objective 3.2. - Promote short sea shipping and cooperation between ports.

IV.C.2. Scope of action of Priority 3

(277) Even in the relatively focused framework of these two specific objectives, the Programme cannot reasonably finance large infrastructure investments. A significant contribution may be expected of the projects, however, in terms of mobilising relevant stakeholders, conducting feasibility studies and programming and coordinating operations that are financed on other budgets. Other projects could achieve immediate results with small scale, demonstration-type investments, as appropriate: rationalising freight traffic (one-stop shops, etc.), work on pricing issues (fair and effective port and road haulage pricing, etc.), cargo tracking, etc.

(278) In any event, priority will be given to projects bringing about or leading to concrete progress of transnational interest, including preliminary and feasibility studies relating to precise operations.

IV.C.2.a. Objective 3.1. – Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality

(279) To secure effective and smooth operation of existing transport infrastructure, difficult problems need to be fixed. Technical differences between rail networks remain a significant hurdle, but not the only one. Effective interconnection between networks is another crucial question. Especially in the freight sector, intermodal links between maritime, road and rail transport⁴⁰ need to be provided by improvements to supply chains and the implementation of coherent strategies to develop multimodal platforms. As far as the transport of passengers is concerned, much remains to be done to favour better coordination of, and complementarity between services supplied by various operators. For example, the local accessibility of many airports remains poor and could be significantly improved by various appropriate steps. For the transport of goods and passengers alike, inter-island and island-mainland accessibility remains a cause for concern. The purpose of Objective 3.2 is to support projects providing appropriate transnational responses to these issues.

(280) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 3.1 include

- Actions favouring better use of transnational rail links: better connection with multimodal platforms, optimisation of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops, engine driver training, experimental launch of rail motorways etc.;
- Transnational partnerships to explore and test appropriate means to improve the efficiency of multi-modal logistic chains (introduction of smart technologies, simplification of administration, etc.);
- Feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses concerning the creation of logistic platforms;
- Testing of possible responses to interoperability problems, for example adaptation of the rolling stock (train length, etc.) to improve the effectiveness of the rail freight service;
- Creation of a research and innovation network focusing on intermodality (new equipment, technological developments, management of logistic chains) involving operators, ports as well as academic and research institutions;
- Design and testing of transnational strategies to improve information about public transport services and optimise international trips of passengers (e.g. integrated ticketing);
- Transfer of know-how and pilot actions to improve the local accessibility and economic development potential of regional airports.

⁴⁰ Possibly even air transport, despite the relatively limited volume of cargo traffic in most airports of the Atlantic Area.

IV.C.2.b. Objective 3.2. – Promote short sea shipping and cooperation between ports

(281) As emphasized in the SWOT analysis (cf. section II.B.3.c) Atlantic seaports, despite their relatively limited size and competitiveness, retain real development potential, magnified by new trends currently shaping the European and global maritime traffic. New opportunities should therefore be seized to exploit this potential, in particular the proactive development of SSS put forward by the EU. There is a very promising outlook for transnational cooperation in this field. The purpose of Objective 3.3 is to support such cooperation between various relevant actors, including seaport authorities.

(282) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 3.2 include

- Contributions to the launch of the first experimental motorway of the sea in Western Europe;
- Joint development of smart technologies to improve the efficiency of SSS, e.g. real time tracking of cargoes;
- Joint experimentation of new solutions in the field of eco-innovation to reduce the shipping pollution;
- Elaboration of a coordinated strategy for infrastructure investments in Atlantic seaports, promoting complementarity between various types of investments (taking account of the specialisation of ports in different market segments) and mobilising various financial instruments;
- Feasibility studies about new inter-island or island-mainland connections between regions of different countries;
- Joint promotional campaigns for maritime transport, raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages;
- Sharing “business intelligence” between ports, for example joint market studies.

IV.D. PRIORITY 4: PROMOTE TRANSNATIONAL SYNERGIES IN SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(283) The conclusions of the SWOT analysis (cf. section II.E.3) have highlighted the need to perpetuate a series of cooperation efforts undertaken between the Atlantic Area regions on widely varying themes. The intensification of interregional exchanges may contribute to more cohesive and balanced territorial development of the Atlantic Area. This will be particularly the case if project partnerships include entities of a complementary nature and give them an opportunity to open up more effectively on the international level.

(284) Therefore the purpose of Priority 4 is to intensify interregional exchanges and cooperation within the programme cooperation area on a series of issues of common interest. The aim is to transfer know how, pool expertise, share other resources and promote complementarity on a vast array of topics relevant to urban and regional sustainable development that are not (or not entirely) covered

by the first three priorities of the Programme⁴¹, including integrated urban development and spatial planning, urban mobility, eco-cities and local Agenda 21 schemes, the tackling of the social and digital divides, city networking, the provision of universal service in sparsely populated areas, sustainable tourism, integrated conservation of the cultural heritage, etc.

IV.D.1. Priority 4 and its specific objectives

(285) Priority 4, "Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development" focuses on

- the "intensifying inter-regional exchanges" action line of the "balanced polycentric development" challenge;
- those aspects of the "enhancing Atlantic maritime heritage" challenge relating to cultural heritage.

(286) Among the countless themes on which the cities and regions could cooperate, those that can be addressed within the framework of Priorities 1 to 3 (innovation networks, ICZM, interregional transport networks, etc.) have not been included here. This is of course not to suggest that cities and regions should refrain from being involved in projects of the first three priorities, to which they can, on the contrary, deliver a major contribution. Simply, Priority 4 addresses many topics that do not fall within the scope of Priorities 1 to 3, and which call for a strong commitment of regional and local authorities, cities in particular. These topics include in particular urban/regional planning and heritage conservation policies, as well as other issues of interest to local or regional entities such as their external relations.

(287) In accordance with the recommendations of Article 6, 2d) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Priority 4 places the emphasis on creating and strengthening networks of cities and urban-rural links, and on preserving and promoting cultural heritage.

(288) Priority 4 will pursue the following three specific objectives:

- Objective 4.1. - Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development;
- Objective 4.2. - Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking;
- Objective 4.3. - Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest.

IV.D.2. Scope of action of Priority 4

(289) Certain Priority 4 projects could extend beyond mere transfers of know-how on issues of local interest. Such will be the case, for example, of a network of cities developing a joint promotion strategy or a joint operation to promote specifically transnational aspects of Atlantic cultural heritage.

(290) Projects limiting their ambition to an international transfer of know-how on issues of more local interest should strive to pool a critical mass of resources and

⁴¹ It is indeed clear that many activities undertaken in the framework of these priorities, e.g. the protection of the marine environment, the promotion of renewable energies, ICZM, or the improvement of the modal split in favour of more sustainable means of transport will also contribute to sustainable development.

expertise ensuring an increase in the means at the disposal of all those involved, cross-fertilisation between experiments and effective reform of current field practice.

IV.D.2.a. Objective 4.1. – Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development

(291) Transnational cooperation in the Atlantic Area can bring about major progress in the field of sustainable urban and rural development. Joint expertise should be developed in a wide spectrum of issues of common interest, such as urban sprawl containment, rehabilitation of urban wasteland, policies tackling the social and digital divides, the depopulation of fragile rural areas (in particular the provision of services of general economic interest) or the consequences of population aging, local transport and mobility policy (as opposed to inter-regional transport, covered by Priority 3). Objective 4.1. will support all kind of transnational projects that pool resources and expertise on this type of issues.

(292) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 4.1 include

- Transfers of know-how acquired in provision of a universal service (mail distribution or internet access, for example) in fragile rural zones;
- Development of joint expertise in the field of sustainable development in the Atlantic Area;
- Joint supply of services of general socio-economic interest through co-operation of cities and regions and wide use of ICT solutions (e.g. health services, education services, employment services);
- Joint distance learning programmes intended for officials of regional and local administrations offering specialised teaching modules on various urban or rural development issues.

IV.D.2.b. Objective 4.2. – Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking

(293) In the context of globalisation, cities and regions compete to raise their international profile and influence. In this respect, there is no level playing field between entities of the Atlantic Area and very large metropolitan areas of the EU core pentagon. In Section IV.A.1 above, it has been stressed that *"many Atlantic regions and economies are small individually but jointly possess a mass that can make the Atlantic Area a global player"*. In Priority 1, this was the starting point to highlight the value-added of cooperation on innovation and knowledge economy-related issues. In the presentation of Objective 1.3 (cf. Section IV.A.2.c), special emphasis was placed on the need to improve the international opening of regions with a view to promoting their economic endogenous potential. A similar reasoning may apply when elaborating strategies on other topics to improve the international image and position of regions and cities or to make them more attractive places to invest. Transnational cooperation projects geared towards this kind of joint promotion of their partner entities will be supported under Objective 4.2.

(294) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 4.2 include

- Joint public communication with the purpose of promoting the brand image of a transnational network of regions sharing a common feature (e.g. pilot eco-cities, pilot Agenda 21 regions);
- Joint strategy to attract FDI in a transnational network of regions (e.g. urban marketing, transnational Chamber of Commerce, commercial attachés abroad);

- Transnational network of Atlantic regions and their NGOs engaged in decentralised cooperation with developing countries.

IV.D.2.c. Objective 4.3. – Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest

(295) The SWOT analysis (see Section II.B.2.d) has highlighted the uniqueness of the Atlantic cultural heritage. The ocean has profoundly contributed to shaping a common identity. The historic legacy of colonial empires is another common thread, despite a relatively low level of mutual connection and cultural exchange. Section II.E.2 stressed that this heritage should be conserved in the perspective of the well-being and cultural openness of current and future generations, while using the resource of sustainable tourism to assist in this process. Objective 4.3 will support various projects contributing to the joint conservation and promotion of the Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest.

(296) Projects should focus on issues relating to tangible components⁴² (landscapes, monuments, sites) of the cultural heritage or places dedicated to promoting it (museums, discovery centres), making sure that the action undertaken contributes to developing the endogenous potential.

(297) Examples of activities within the scope of Objective 4.3 include

- Joint professional training in cultural heritage conservation, specialised in issues of common interest for the Atlantic heritage, for example the restoration of *bocage*⁴³ landscapes or the preservation of Celtic sites;
- Joint promotion of historic places linked by a transnational theme, such as the ports from which the great explorers of different countries set out on their voyages of discovery, in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism;
- Joint labelling and communication strategy within transnational networks of regions hosting prominent sites of European culture and/or included in the UNESCO World Heritage List;
- Transnational pooling of archaeological expertise and research in excavation sites or submarine archaeological sites linked by a common feature of the Atlantic heritage.

IV.E. COMPLEMENTARITY WITH COMMUNITY POLICIES AND OTHER EU-FUNDED PROGRAMMES OR ACTIONS

(298) On 15/16 June 2006, the European Council adopted a "Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy", which sets out an approach to better policy-making based on better regulation and on the principle that sustainable development is to be integrated into policy-making at all levels. This requires all levels of government to support, and to cooperate with, each other, taking into account the different institutional settings, cultures and specific circumstances in Member States. Item 25 of this document reads:

⁴² as opposed to intangible or mobile components of the cultural heritage (languages, concerts, mobile pieces of art, etc.)

⁴³ See definition in APPENDIX 1 - Glossary

"In order to ensure that EU funding is used and channelled in an optimum way to promote sustainable development, Member States and the Commission should co-ordinate to enhance complementarities and synergies between various strands of Community and other cofinancing mechanisms such as cohesion policy, rural development, Life+, Research and Technological Development (RTD), the Competitiveness and Innovation Program (CIP) and the European Fisheries Fund (EFF)."

(299) In line with this approach of the Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy, projects shall endeavour to exploit potential complementarity with other EU programmes or initiatives touching on similar themes to their own. This is particularly the case of EFF and EAFRD operations, referred to in EAFRD Regulation 1698/2005 Article 9, but many other Community policies, as well as EU-funded programmes or actions, may be envisaged to take advantage of this complementarity. For this purpose, Appendix 3 provides an indicative list of EU initiatives, for consideration by project applicants. This list reflects the situation at the time of drafting the Programme, but this situation is likely to evolve significantly in the course of the programming period.

(300) The approach could involve, for example, coordinating - without duplicating - activities and initiatives supported by one or several of these programmes, promoting cross-fertilisation and knowledge transfers between them, or any other action suited to an integrated approach. Any form of double funding of activities must be avoided (cf. paragraph (419) and footnote 85).

(301) Four thematic priority axes have been defined in European Fisheries Fund Regulation 1198/2006⁴⁴ to frame actions eligible for EFF support: (i) adaptation of the Community fishing fleet, (ii) aquaculture, inland fishing, processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products, (iii) measures of common interest, and (iv) sustainable development of fisheries areas. There is considerable scope for complementarity between EFF operations and those of the Programme. This is obviously the case of Priority 2 projects (with particular regard to Objective 2.2 projects contributing to the sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces), but of projects under other priorities as well⁴⁵. Synergy should be promoted between the two types of operations, bearing in mind the specific transnational dimension of the Programme and the content of paragraph (300) above.

(302) Four priority axes are also reviewed in Title IV "Rural Development Support" of EAFRD Regulation 1698/2005⁴⁶, namely (i) improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, (ii) improving the environment and the countryside, (iii) quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy and (iv) "Leader". Many projects contributing to various specific objectives of the Programme, Objectives 1.3, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1 and 4.3 in particular, are likely to address similar topics. These projects should strive to exploit the potential for complementarity and synergy with operations supported by the EAFRD. According to articles 63(b) and 65 of EAFRD Regulation 1698/2005, transnational cooperation operations may also be supported under

⁴⁴ Cf. APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (27 July 2006)

⁴⁵ for example projects contributing to Objective 1.2 (innovation in maritime economy niches of excellence), 1.3 (economic conversion and diversification), and 3.2 (cooperation between ports)

⁴⁶ Cf. APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (20 September 2005)

priority axis "Leader" ⁴⁷. Particular attention shall be paid to avoid duplication of activities carried out by Leader operations and projects of the Programme.

(303) Complementarity and coordination is also recommended between projects of the Programme and those of the "convergence" or "competitiveness and employment" objectives of the Structural Funds. The same remark applies to projects and programmes of the cross-border strand (referred to in Article 6 - 1] of Regulation 1080/2006) whose cooperation area is included in, or overlaps, the programme cooperation area. Some Atlantic Area projects could even focus on such coordination, by fostering, for example, a transfer of know-how between various cross-border programmes or projects, provided of course that the issues addressed fall within the scope of the relevant priority of the Programme.

(304) Special attention shall be paid to services provided by INTERACT II. This EU-wide programme focuses on the promotion of good territorial cooperation governance and provides needs-based support to stakeholders involved in the implementation of European territorial cooperation programmes. Its main target groups are the managing, certifying and audit authorities referred to in General and ERDF Regulations 1083/2006 and 1080/2006, as well as other bodies involved in programme and project implementation. To take full advantage of INTERACT II, the implementing bodies and project partnerships of the Atlantic Area Programme will be encouraged to make extensive use of INTERACT services and documentation and to participate in INTERACT seminars.

(305) The "Regions For Economic Change" initiative has been launched by the European Commission to focus two existing instruments of European regional policy - Interregional Cooperation and the Urban development network programme - on testing best practice for economic modernisation and increased competitiveness. This new initiative will further enhance the contribution of European Cohesion Policy to achieving the goals of the renewed Lisbon agenda. Various EU-wide interregional networks will be supported in this framework. In the communication⁴⁸ issued by the European Commission to present the initiative, reference has only been made to networks involving projects implemented under Objectives 1 and 2 of the EU Structural Funds. However, it may occur that interregional exchange between European territorial cooperation projects can also be envisaged. Alternatively, regions involved simultaneously in a "Regions for Economic Change" network and a transnational Atlantic Area project could take advantage of the experience acquired in the latter to support innovative operations of transnational relevance in the former. This particularly applies to projects approved under Priorities 1 and 4 of the Programme.

(306) In the framework of the Regions for Economic Change initiative the Programme Managing Authority will strive to:

- (a) make the necessary arrangement to welcome into the mainstream programming process innovative operations related to the results of the networks in which the region is involved;
- (b) allow in the Monitoring Committee (or the steering committee referred to in paragraph (344)) the presence of a representative (as an observer) of the network(s) where the Region is involved, to report on the progress of the network's activities;
- (c) include at least once a year an item in the agenda of the Monitoring Committee (or steering committee) to take note of the network's activities and to discuss relevant suggestions for the Programme;

⁴⁷ the purpose of this priority axis is to support "local action groups" expected to take further the experience acquired in the framework of the LEADER Community initiatives of the past programming periods.

⁴⁸ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, EUROPEAN COMMISSION (8 November 2006).

- (d) inform in the Annual Report on the implementation of the regional actions included in the Regions for Economic Change initiative.

(307) Priority 2 projects limited to a mere transposition of environmental directives are not eligible for ERDF support. However, attempts to achieve complementarity and consistency between the measures to be taken in the various national frameworks to implement these directives could be an interesting theme for a project.

(308) The projects of Objective 2.1 should contribute to the work of the "Maritime Safety Umbrella Operation" and seek to coordinate their action with that of the European Maritime Safety Agency as appropriate.

(309) Priority 3 projects should endeavour to coordinate their action with that of the European Rail Agency as appropriate.

IV.F. PROJECT COORDINATION AND THEMATIC GROUPING

(310) To support the process of "open perpetuation" of the experiments in Atlantic Area cooperation (cf. titre II.E.4), these need to be given a timescale that reaches beyond that of a European structural funds programming period. To this effect, the extension and consolidation of project partnerships will be encouraged.

(311) However, it is not always advisable that a particular theme be covered by a single project. This may frequently imply setting up an oversized partnership that would be particularly difficult to manage. Also, even if having two projects with identical purposes should be avoided, the various aspects of a single complex issue will often be tackled more effectively by a set of complementary projects working on a balanced geographical basis. Besides, the development of high quality, sustained exchange of information and knowledge between projects is vital not just to the success of projects themselves but also to the long-term impact of the Programme.

(312) To ensure effective coordination of projects tackling similar questions, thematic project groupings will be established. Projects belonging to a same grouping will be requested to work in symbiosis. In particular, this may involve regular meetings focusing on comparing, monitoring and integrating the results obtained. However, bearing in mind the busy agenda of most project Lead Partners, alternative networking devices, e.g. web-based chat rooms or dedicated forums, should be considered as well to stimulate mutual exchange on an on-going basis. Related expenditure may be incurred as project costs. In some cases, new projects coordinating, or assisting in the coordination of, the action carried out by existing projects dealing with similar issues may be approved.

(313) These project groupings will be set up depending on the evolution of needs, as and when projects addressing similar issues are formally approved following the successive calls for proposals.

(314) Also, project partnerships will be encouraged to take part in initiatives consisting in grouping together and coordinating projects from different programmes.

IV.G. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

(315) To achieve a particular strategic purpose, the Monitoring Committee may approve a "strategic framework" (already commented upon in paragraph (138), Section III.C.1,) i.e. a fully developed plan defining a series of coordinated,

strategically-linked activities, including the proactive generation, preparation and implementation of one or more specific projects.

(316) Specific provisions will generally apply to procedures and projects of a strategic framework, with particular regard to project generation activities (e.g. the mobilisation of key-players), the project application procedure (e.g. targeted call for proposals, possibly a two-step procedure including a pre-application and pre-selection phase), project quality standards (e.g. extra admissibility conditions and selection criteria), monitoring and funding mechanisms. It will often prove appropriate to conduct identification of key projects in the project generation phase, drawing on the framing method initiated by the "Fact-finding mission on maritime safety"⁴⁹.

IV.H. QUANTIFICATION OF THE PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

(317) Pursuant to Article 12-4) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the Programme performances shall be monitored at the Priority and specific objective levels through a set of physical indicators. A baseline value and a target will be set for each indicator⁵⁰. A presentation of the set of indicators is attached (see APPENDIX 4 - Quantification of Programme objectives and performances.)

(318) The emphasis has been placed on monitoring the quality and intensity of cooperation itself rather than achievements specifically linked to the priorities and specific objectives of the programme⁵¹. In other words, programme monitoring will focus on progress made towards strengthening cooperation in the Atlantic Area (as set out in Section III.C above: "open perpetuation" of cooperation structures and greater tangibility of project results.)

(319) As a consequence, the indicators used in each priority and specific objectives of the Programme are the same. Programme achievements have been equated to projects and the aggregation of their outputs and results at the specific objective and priority levels.

(320) The attached set of indicators still needs further elaboration. The baseline information will be included by exploiting the records of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme. Targets will be defined to quantify expected progress vis-à-vis the baseline values.

(321) The Monitoring Committee may also decide to include additional indicators, for example to clarify the performances expected of projects within a strategic framework (cf. Section IV.G.)

(322) The complete set of indicators will be included and commented upon in the Programme Implementation and Management Handbook (PIMH). The exact

⁴⁹ See APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references, INTERREG IIIB FACT-FINDING MISSION ON MARITIME SAFETY (2004).

⁵⁰ Technical terms used to describe the monitoring system are defined in APPENDIX 1 - Glossary.

⁵¹ In cooperation programmes, the heterogeneity of statistical material and other data across the cooperation area, as well as the wide diversity of issues addressed, make it virtually impossible to define a limited number of clear, consistent, relevant and reliable indicators for each of the numerous issues addressed. In the European Commission's view (cf. EUROPEAN COMMISSION (23 January 2006), p.16, in APPENDIX 2 - Documentary references) *"the collection of process-related information, on the development of capacities and competences of stakeholders can be an instrument to support programme managers in their management and reporting"* in the specific case of territorial cooperation programmes. This is the line taken to elaborate the set of indicators of the Programme.

interpretation of each indicator will be clarified, and regularly improved with insights provided by the practical experience of data collection.

V. Financing

(323) The ERDF funding made available for the Programme will amount to €104,051,233

V.A. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS BY YEAR

(324) The yearly amount of the financial appropriation envisaged for the ERDF contribution over the period 2007-2013 is as follows:

YEAR	ERDF FUNDING (€)
2007	13 794 106
2008	13 840 359
2009	14 227 276
2010	14 765 678
2011	15 320 802
2012	15 803 291
2013	16 299 721
TOTAL 2007-2013	104 051 233

(325) According to Article 75-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006, ERDF commitments to the Programme shall be made by the Commission on an annual basis.

(326) The period allocated for project implementation will extend until 31 December 2015.

V.B. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS BY PRIORITY

(327) The table below displays, for the whole programming period and for each priority, the financial appropriation of the ERDF contribution, the national match funding and the ERDF grant rate.

PRIORITY AXES	ERDF FUNDING	NATIONAL COUNTER-PART	INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERPART		TOTAL FUNDING	CO-FINANCING RATE	FOR INFORMATION	
			NATIONAL PUBLIC FUNDING	NATIONAL PRIVATE FUNDING ⁵²			EIB Contribution	Other funding ⁵³
	(a)	(b) = (c)+(d)	(c)	(d)	(e) = (a)+(b)	(f) = (a)/(e)		
Priority 1: Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks	27 352 061	14 728 033	14 728 033		42 080 094	65%		736 402
Priority 2: Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably	37 704 800	20 302 585	20 302 585		58 007 385	65%		
Priority 3: Improve accessibility and internal links	18 433 632	9 925 802	9 925 802		28 359 434	65%		
Priority 4: Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development	14 317 666	7 709 512	7 709 512		22 027 178	65%		
Technical Assistance	6 243 074	2 081 025	2 081 025		8 324 099	75%		
TOTAL	104 051 233	54 746 957	54 746 935		158 798 190	66%		736 402

⁵² To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs

⁵³ Including national private funding when priority axes are expressed in public costs

(328) Public expenditure , is understood as in Article 2-5) of General Regulation 1083/2006⁵⁴.

(329) The indicative breakdown by category of the programmed use of the ERDF funding referred to in Article 12-5) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 is presented in Appendix 5.

V.C. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(330) Pursuant to Article 46 of General Regulation 1083/2006, technical assistance funding shall be used to finance the preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Programme, together with activities to reinforce the administrative capacity of the various bodies of the management structure.

(331) The Monitoring Committee shall approve

- a technical assistance budget for the whole programming period;
- on the basis of the written agreements referred to in paragraph (336), a common basis for the management and/or collection of national contributions to the technical assistance budget and the management of the technical assistance funding;
- yearly technical assistance budgets, prepared in conjunction with the annual action plans.

(332) Technical assistance shall be made available to cover the expenditure incurred by the bodies that compose the management structure to perform their duties described in Section VI.A. This applies, among others, to the National Correspondents. In the specific case of the French National Correspondent however, extra technical assistance funding shall be earmarked, as of 2009 and depending on needs, for the winding-up of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme entrusted to its Managing Authority, Poitou-Charentes Regional Council.

⁵⁴ 'public expenditure': any public contribution to the financing of operations whose origin is the budget of the State, of regional and local authorities, of the European Communities related to the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund and any similar expenditure. Any contribution to the financing of operations whose origin is the budget of public law bodies or associations of one or more regional or local authorities or public law bodies acting in accordance with Directive 2004/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 31 March 2004 on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts shall be regarded as similar expenditure.

VI. Implementation and management

(333) Pursuant to Article 12-8) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, this chapter sets out the implementing provisions for the Programme. The following issues will be addressed successively:

- the management structure, including the remit of the authorities designated by the Atlantic Area Member States⁵⁵;
- the project generation process and principles applying to project selection
- the monitoring and evaluation systems⁵⁶
- the mobilisation, circulation and control of financial flows⁵⁷
- the communication and publicity strategy⁵⁸
- the exchange of computerised data with the Commission⁵⁹.

(334) Only the key-features and main principles of the programme implementation and management system have been presented in the following sections. Further information will be provided in the Programme Implementation and Management Handbook (PIMH) about the respective responsibilities and tasks to be performed by the various bodies that compose the management structure and their mutual relationships as well as the detailed modalities of the various procedures set out in this chapter.

VI.A. THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

(335) The management structure of the Programme is composed of the following bodies: the Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority, the Audit Authority, the Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and a network of National Correspondents.

(336) Pursuant to Article 59-3) of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Member States participating in the Programme shall lay down rules governing their relations with the Managing, Certifying and Audit Authorities and their relations with the Commission, including provisions applying to national contributions to the Technical Assistance budget. For this purpose, each Member State participating in the Programme shall sign a written agreement of similar type and wording with these authorities, before the submission of the programme management and control system referred to in Article 71 of General Regulation 1083/2006.

⁵⁵ cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art 12-8): items (a) and (c)

⁵⁶ Ibid., item (b)

⁵⁷ Ibid., item (d)

⁵⁸ Ibid., item (e)

⁵⁹ Ibid., item (f)

VI.A.1. Monitoring Committee

(337) Pursuant to Article 63 of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Member States participating in the Programme, in agreement with the Managing Authority, shall set up a Monitoring Committee within three months from the date of notification to the Member States of the Commission decision approving the operational programme.

VI.A.1.a. Composition and functioning of the Monitoring Committee

(338) Pursuant to Article 14-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, each Member State participating in the Programme shall appoint representatives to sit on the Monitoring Committee.

(339) The Monitoring Committee shall be composed of representatives of the Member States and Regions participating in the Programme, of the Managing Authority and the Certifying Authority. The Audit Authority may also take part in the meetings as appropriate.

(340) In compliance with Article 64-2) of General Regulation 1083/2006, a representative of the Commission shall participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee in an advisory capacity, at its own initiative or at the request of the committee. Should the EIB or the EIF contribute to operations of the Programme, a representative of these institutions may also participate in an advisory capacity. The JTS and representatives of the economic and social partners shall participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee in an advisory capacity.

(341) Each delegation to the Monitoring Committee shall be composed of national and regional representatives, no more than four in total, duly accredited by the competent authorities of the Member State. However, the membership of a delegation may vary depending on issues to be addressed.

(342) The Monitoring Committee may decide to invite, on an occasional or permanent basis, representatives of other administrations and the organised civil society to attend its meetings in an advisory capacity. This applies in particular to the transnational advisory group on environmental issues referred to in the SEA report (cf. section III.E.5) and transnational networks or associations of local or regional authorities.

(343) The members of the Monitoring Committee may be assisted by expert observers, who can advise the members of their delegation without taking part in the debates.

(344) Pursuant to Article 19-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the Monitoring Committee may set up a steering committee reporting to it, responsible for selecting operations. As appropriate, the Monitoring Committee may set up working parties or sub-committees and ask them to report on specific issues encountered in the implementation of the Programme.

(345) The Monitoring Committee shall draw up its own rules of procedure within the institutional, legal and financial framework of the Member States concerned and adopt them in agreement with the Managing Authority.

VI.A.1.b. Remit of the Monitoring Committee

(346) Pursuant to Article 65 of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Monitoring Committee shall satisfy itself as to the effectiveness and quality of the implementation of the Programme, in accordance with the following provisions:

- (a) it shall consider and approve the criteria for selecting the operations financed within six months of the approval of the Programme and approve any revision of those criteria in accordance with programming needs;
- (b) it shall periodically review progress made towards achieving the specific targets of the Programme on the basis of documents submitted by the Managing Authority;
- (c) it shall examine the results of implementation, particularly achievement of the targets set for each priority axis and the evaluations referred to in Article 48(3) of General Regulation 1083/2006;
- (d) it shall consider and approve the annual and final reports on implementation referred to in Article 67 of General Regulation 1083/2006;
- (e) it shall be informed of the annual control report and of any relevant comments the Commission may make after examining that report;
- (f) it may propose to the Managing Authority any revision or examination of the Programme likely to make possible the attainment of the Funds' objectives referred to in Article 3 of General Regulation 1083/2006 or to improve its management, including its financial management;
- (g) it shall consider and approve any proposal to amend the content of the Commission decision on the contribution from the Funds.

(347) Furthermore, the Monitoring Committee shall make decision on any other issue of relevance for the effective implementation and sound management of the Programme, in particular

- (h) the content of the PIMH;
- (i) the communication plan referred to in Article 2 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006;
- (j) the programme evaluations referred to in Article 47 of General Regulation 1083/2006;
- (k) the annual action plan;
- (l) the technical assistance budget;
- (m) the supervision of the implementation of approved projects;
- (n) the supervision of the thematic project groupings (cf. Section IV.F);
- (o) the launch and supervision of the implementation of the strategic frameworks, including the related specific provisions referred to above (cf. Section IV.G);
- (p) the legality and regularity of expenditure incurred outside the programme area in compliance with Article 21-4) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006.

(348) Pursuant to Article 19-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the Monitoring Committee shall take on the selection of project applications following each of the successive calls for project proposals. Appropriate provisions shall be included in the Monitoring Committee rules of procedure to guarantee that decisions relating to the selection of projects are based on a fair and impartial comparison of the

respective merits of project applications. For this purpose, applications declared admissible shall be scored against the agreed set of selection criteria and ranked on a transnational basis, i.e. irrespective of the nationality of the project partners. The respective merits of the project applications shall be presented to the Monitoring Committee in an assessment report.

VI.A.2. Managing Authority

(349) Pursuant to Article 59 of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 14-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the "Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional do Norte (CCDR Norte)" has been appointed Managing Authority of the Programme. Appropriate staff resources shall be allocated to the Managing Authority to assist it in performing its duties.

(350) Contact details of the Managing Authority:

Comissão de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento da Região Norte (CCDR-N)
Rua Rainha D. Estefânia, 251
4150-034 Porto
Portugal
Tél: +351 (0) 226086300
Fax : +351 (0) 226061489
E-mail: coop-atlantico@ccdr-n.pt

(351) Pursuant to Article 60 of General Regulation 1083/2006, as specified for territorial cooperation programmes by Article 15 of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 and Articles 7, 13 and 21 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, the Managing Authority shall fulfil the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) ensuring that operations are selected for funding in compliance with the criteria applicable to the Programme and that they comply with applicable Community and national rules for the whole of their implementation period; for the purpose of the selection and approval of operations to be funded under Article 60(a) of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Managing Authority shall ensure that beneficiaries are informed of the specific conditions concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, the time limit for execution, and the financial and other information to be kept and communicated; it shall satisfy itself that the beneficiary has the capacity to fulfil these obligations before the approval decision is taken by the Monitoring Committee⁶⁰;
- (b) satisfying itself that the expenditure of each beneficiary participating in an operation has been validated by the controller referred to in Article 16(1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006;
- (c) ensuring that there is a system for recording and storing in computerised form accounting records of each operation under the Programme and that the data on implementation necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, audits and evaluation is collected; the accounting records of operations and the data on implementation shall include the information set out in Annex III to Implementation Regulation 1828/2006. The Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority shall have access to this information⁶¹;

⁶⁰ Implementation Regulation, Art. 13-1)

⁶¹ Ibid., Art. 14-1)

- (d) ensuring that beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation of operations maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to the operation without prejudice to national accounting rules;
- (e) ensuring that the evaluations of operational programmes referred to in Article 48(3) of General Regulation 1083/2006 are carried out in compliance with its Article 47;
- (f) setting up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and audits required to ensure an adequate audit trail are held in compliance with the requirements of Article 90 of General Regulation 1083/2006;
- (g) ensuring that the Certifying Authority receives all necessary information on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure for the purpose of certification;
- (h) guiding the work of the Monitoring Committee and providing it with the documents required to permit the quality of the implementation of the operational programme to be monitored in the light of its specific goals;
- (i) drawing up and, after approval by the Monitoring Committee, submitting to the Commission the annual and final reports on implementation in compliance with Article 68 of General Regulation 1083/2006;
- (j) ensuring compliance with the information and publicity requirements laid down in Article 69 of General Regulation 1083/2006 and articles 2 to 10 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006.

(352) Furthermore the Managing Authority shall

- (k) set up the JTS, after consulting the Member States participating in the Programme⁶²;
- (l) sign a formal Grant Offer Letter specifying the implementing arrangements for each approved project, in agreement with the project Lead Partner⁶³;
- (m) in collaboration with the Monitoring Committee, carry out monitoring against financial and physical indicators specified in the Programme⁶⁴;
- (n) in collaboration with the Commission, annually examine the progress made in implementing the operational programme, the principal results achieved over the previous year, the financial implementation and other factors with a view to improving implementation⁶⁵;
- (o) inform the Monitoring Committee of the comments made by the Commission after the annual examination of the Programme⁶⁶;
- (p) confirm the selection of operations outside the eligible area as referred to in Articles 21-2) and -3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006⁶⁷;

⁶² cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art. 14-1)

⁶³ Ibid., Article 15-2)

⁶⁴ cf. General Regulation 1083/2006, Art. 66-2) and ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art. 12-4)

⁶⁵ cf. General Regulation 1083/2006, Art. 68-1)

⁶⁶ Ibid., Art. 68-2)

- (q) in collaboration with the Certifying and Audit Authorities, elaborate the description of the programme management and control systems referred to in Article 71-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Articles 21 to 24 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006.

(353) The Managing Authority shall comply with any Community or national law and regulation that may apply.

(354) In performing its function, the Managing Authority shall be supported by the JTS of the Programme.

VI.A.3. Certifying Authority

(355) Pursuant to Article 59 of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 14-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the "IFDR, Instituto Financeiro para o Desenvolvimento Regional" of the "Ministério do Ambiente, Ordenamento do Território e Desenvolvimento Regional", based in Lisbon, has been appointed Certifying Authority for the Programme.

(356) Contact details of the Certifying Authority:

Instituto Financeiro para o Desenvolvimento Regional, I.P.
Rua de São Julião, 63
1149-030 Lisboa
Portugal
Téléphone: +351 (0) 218814091
Fax: +351 (0) 218881111
E-mail: jose.soeiro@dgdr.pt

(357) Pursuant to Article 61 of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 17-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the Certifying Authority shall fulfil the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) drawing up and submitting to the Commission certified statements of expenditure and applications for payment in compliance with Articles 78, 79-2), 81-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 20 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006,
- (b) certifying that:
 - the statement of expenditure is accurate, results from reliable accounting systems and is based on verifiable supporting documents;
 - the expenditure declared complies with applicable Community and national rules and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in compliance with the criteria applicable to the Programme and complying with Community and national rules;
- (c) ensuring for certification purposes that it has received adequate information from the Managing Authority on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure included in statements of expenditure;
- (d) taking account for certification purposes of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the Audit Authority;

⁶⁷ cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art. 21-4)

- (e) maintaining accounting records in computerised form of expenditure declared to the Commission;
 - (f) keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the general budget of the European Union, prior to the closure of the operational programme by deducting them from the next statement of expenditure.
- (358) Furthermore the Certifying Authority shall be responsible for
- (g) elaborating, in collaboration with the Managing and Audit Authorities, the description of the programme management and control systems referred to in Article 71-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Articles 21 to 24 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006;
 - (h) receiving the payments made by the Commission (pre-financing, interim payments and the payment of the final balance⁶⁸ and making payments to beneficiaries⁶⁹);
 - (i) at the latest by 30 April every year, sending the Commission, on behalf of the Member States, a provisional forecast of the likely payment applications for the current financial year and the subsequent financial year⁷⁰;
 - (j) posting any interest generated by the pre-financing⁷¹ to the Programme, being regarded as resources for the Member States participating in the Programme as national public contribution; it shall be declared to the Commission at the time of the final closure of the Programme⁷²;
 - (k) sending requests for interim payments, as far as possible, on three separate occasions a year. For a payment to be made by the Commission in the current year, the latest date on which the payment application shall be submitted is 31 October⁷³;
 - (l) ensuring that the beneficiaries receive the total amount of the public contribution as quickly as possible and in full. No amount shall be deducted or withheld, nor any further specific charge or other charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce these amounts for the lead beneficiaries⁷⁴;
 - (m) without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid, ensuring that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered from the lead beneficiary⁷⁵.

⁶⁸ as defined in Art. 76-2) of General Regulation 1083/2006

⁶⁹ cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 Art. 14-1)

⁷⁰ cf. General Regulation 1083/2006, Art. 76-3)

⁷¹ Ibid., Art. 82-1)

⁷² Ibid., Art. 83

⁷³ Ibid., Art. 87-1)

⁷⁴ Ibid., Art. 80

⁷⁵ cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art. 17-2)

VI.A.4. Audit Authority

(359) Pursuant to Article 59 of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 14-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the "Inspecção Geral de Finanças" has been appointed Audit Authority for the Programme.

(360) Contact details of the Audit Authority:

Inspecção-Geral de Finanças
Rua Angelina Vidal, 41
1199-005 LISBOA
Portugal
Téléphone: +351 (0) 218113500
Fax: +351 (0) 218162573
E-mail: carlostrigacheiro@igf.min-financas.pt

(361) Pursuant to Articles 62 and 73 of General Regulation 1083/2006, Article 16 of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 and Articles 15 to 18 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, the Audit Authority shall fulfil the following functions and responsibilities:

- (a) ensuring that audits are carried out to verify the effective functioning of the management and control system of the Programme;
- (b) ensuring that audits are carried out on operations on the basis of an appropriate sample to verify expenditure declared; the audits and the sampling shall be carried out in compliance with Articles 16 and 17 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006 respectively;
- (c) presenting to the Commission, within nine months of the approval of the Programme, an audit strategy covering the bodies which will perform the audits referred to under paragraphs(a) and (b), the method to be used, the sampling method for audits on operations and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and that audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period; the audit strategy shall be established in compliance with Article 18(1) of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006;
- (d) by 31 December each year from 2008 to 2015:
 - i.] submitting to the Commission an annual control report setting out the findings of the audits carried out during the previous 12-month period ending on 30 June of the year concerned, in compliance with the audit strategy of the Programme, and reporting any shortcomings found in the Programme management and control system. The first report to be submitted by 31 December 2008 shall cover the period from 1 January 2007 to 30 June 2008. The information concerning the audits carried out after 1 July 2015 shall be included in the final control report supporting the winding-up declaration referred to in point (e);
 - ii.] issuing an opinion, on the basis of the controls and audits that have been carried out under the responsibility of the Audit Authority, as to whether the management and control system functions effectively, so as to provide a reasonable assurance that statements of expenditure presented to the Commission are correct and, as a consequence, reasonable assurance that the

underlying transactions are legal and regular; the annual control report and the opinion referred to in i.] and ii.] shall be drawn up in compliance with Articles 18-2) and 4) of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006;

iii] submitting, where applicable under Article 88 of General Regulation 1083/2006, a declaration for partial winding up assessing the legality and regularity of the expenditure concerned; this declaration shall be drawn up in compliance with Article 18-5) of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006 and submitted with the opinion referred to in point d) ii.].

(e) submitting to the Commission, by 31 March 2017, a winding-up declaration assessing the validity of the application for payment of the final balance and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions covered by the final statement of expenditure, which shall be supported by a final control report; the closure declaration and the final control report shall be drawn up in compliance with Article 18-3) and 18-4) of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006.

(362) The Audit Authority shall ensure that the audit work takes account of internationally accepted audit standards.

(363) Where the audits and controls referred to in paragraph (a) and (b) are carried out by a body other than the Audit Authority, the Audit Authority shall ensure that such bodies have the necessary functional independence.

(364) Furthermore the Audit Authority shall

(f) elaborate, in collaboration with the Managing and Certifying Authorities, the description of the programme management and control systems referred to in Article 71-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Articles 21 to 24 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006; on behalf of the Member States participating in the Programme, submit this description before submission of the first interim payment application to the Commission by the Certifying Authority or at the latest within twelve months of the approval of the Programme;

(g) establish the report and the opinion referred to in Article 71-2) of the General Regulation; to fulfil this task, the Audit Authority may contract a public or private body functionally independent of the Managing Authority and Certifying Authority; this body shall carry out its work taking account of internationally accepted audit standards⁷⁶; the report and the opinion referred to in Article 71-2) of General Regulation 1083/2006 shall be drawn up in compliance with Article 25 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006;

(h) chair the group of auditors referred to in Article 14-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006.

(365) The Audit Authority shall be assisted by a group of auditors comprising a representative of each Member State participating in the Programme carrying out the duties provided for in Article 62 of the General Regulation. Alternatively, the Audit Authority could be authorised to carry out these duties directly in the whole programme cooperation area, should the Member States so decide unanimously. Otherwise, the group of auditors shall be set up within three months of the

⁷⁶ General Regulation 1083/2006, Art. 71-3)

decision approving the Programme, at the latest. It shall draw up its own rules of procedure. It shall be chaired by the Audit Authority⁷⁷.

(366) The auditors shall be independent of the control system referred to in Article 16(1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006.

VI.A.5. Joint Technical Secretariat

(367) Pursuant to Article 14(1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, the Managing Authority, after consultation with the Member States participating in the Programme, shall set up a Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS). The JTS office shall be located in Porto, Portugal.

VI.A.5.a. JTS staff and operation

(368) The secretariat has a particularly vital role to play in a European territorial cooperation programme. The JTS of the Programme shall therefore be staffed with a highly skilled and qualified workforce, capable of fulfilling the tasks and responsibilities reviewed in the following section.

(369) Job profiles shall be elaborated accordingly by the Managing Authority to advertise vacant posts on a transparent and international basis. Staff members shall be recruited strictly on merit, regardless of their country of origin. However, staff language skills within the JTS team shall provide for a sufficient and balanced coverage of the four languages of the cooperation area.

(370) The JTS Head shall report to the Managing Authority and bear overall responsibility for the management of the entire JTS work and resources. Other members of staff may include administrative and financial officers, project development officers, communication officers and clerical assistants. On this indicative basis, the Managing Authority shall elaborate a formal organisation of the JTS structure.

(371) The JTS shall be funded by the Technical Assistance budget.

VI.A.5.b. Tasks and responsibilities of the JTS

(372) Under the supervision of the Managing Authority, the JTS shall be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Programme. It shall assist the Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and, where appropriate, the Audit Authority, in carrying out their respective duties. This involves in particular

- (a) providing the Managing Authority, the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority with the information, expertise and support they may need to perform their duties;
- (b) acting as secretariat to the Monitoring Committee: organisation of meetings, drafting of minutes, preparation, implementation and follow up of decisions.

(373) Furthermore the JTS shall

- (c) take all appropriate steps to promote the Programme on the basis of the publicity strategy approved by the Monitoring Committee; this entails acting as the central contact point for the public interested in the Programme, potential beneficiaries and selected/running projects;

⁷⁷ ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Article 14-2)

- (d) proactively initiate, facilitate and coordinate the generation and development of good-quality transnational projects, in close consultation with the National Correspondents through early mobilisation of key-players and provision of relevant information to project applicants;
- (e) issue periodic calls for project proposals, register the applications received and conduct the project assessment procedure in view of the Monitoring Committee⁷⁸ sessions dedicated to project selection;
- (f) assist lead beneficiaries in project implementation; monitor progress, including financial progress, made by approved projects by checking project implementation reports.

VI.A.6. National Correspondents

(374) The competent authorities in Spain, France, Ireland, Portugal and the United Kingdom shall appoint a body to act as National Correspondent of the Programme in their respective countries.

(375) In close consultation with the Managing Authority and the JTS, the said authorities shall ensure that the following functions and responsibilities are fulfilled by their respective National Correspondent:

- (a) contributing to the programme promotion and communication strategy
- (b) assisting in project generation and early mobilisation of key-players, for example through the creation and updating of a database of potential project partners;
- (c) providing project applicants with any information they may need to prepare their application;
- (d) advising and assisting project partnerships in the implementation of their project;
- (e) providing the Managing Authority and the JTS with all relevant information about constraints resulting from national law, regulations and policies that should be taken into consideration when implementing programme procedures, for example the compatibility of project applications with such constraints.

(376) Furthermore the Member States may decide that their National Correspondent shall perform the duties of the "controller" referred to in Article 16 of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 (cf. Section VI.E.4.b below).

VI.B. PROJECTS: FROM GENERATION TO SELECTION

(377) As emphasised in Section III.C, strengthening transnational cooperation in the Atlantic Area entails widening the programme audience while striving to raise project quality standards. Therefore the process leading to the selection of quality applications needs to be framed with great care. This process is presented in the following sections.

⁷⁸ alternatively, the Steering Committee set up by the Monitoring Committee

VI.B.1. Generating projects

(378) The Managing Authority, with the assistance of the JTS and the network of National Correspondents, shall take all appropriate steps to promote the programme strategy widely. Awareness shall be raised of the need for transnational cooperation in the Atlantic Area and its benefits for project partnerships. For this purpose, project generation campaigns will be launched in the framework of the communication strategy (see section VI.F below).

(379) Such campaigns shall strive to mobilise key-players at an early stage, including those relatively unaware of transnational territorial cooperation so far.

(380) An interactive process should take place between these key-players, the Managing Authority, the JTS and the network of National Correspondents to identify innovative project ideas of high transnational relevance and gather them in a joint data-base that is publicly accessible and used as a tool for partner searches. Bodies having submitted a project idea will receive relevant information from the JTS and their National Correspondent on request.

(381) In specific circumstances, for example the implementation of a strategic framework (cf. Section IV.G), the Monitoring Committee may take appropriate steps, for example the establishment of task forces or teams of field experts, to assist targeted categories of project applicants in the elaboration of their application.

VI.B.2. Presenting projects

VI.B.2.a. Project partnerships

(382) Any project of the Programme must involve a transnational partnership whose members shall appoint a "Lead Partner" among themselves. The terms "Lead Partner" and "project partner" used in this Operational Programme shall be understood as synonyms for "lead beneficiary" and "other beneficiary" respectively, as defined in Articles 20-1) and 20-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006. The project partners shall assume the responsibilities listed in the said articles.

VI.B.2.b. Types of possible project partners

(383) A wide range of legal bodies under public or private law are potential beneficiaries of ERDF funding and may therefore join a project partnership, including:

- national, regional and local authorities including sector departments and related public agencies, or equivalent agencies;
- transnational bodies and partnerships;
- universities, research and development agencies;
- voluntary-sector organisations including NGOs and organisations in the social economy.

(384) Profit-distributing enterprises having an industrial or commercial character (SMEs, start-ups, etc.) are welcome to participate as associate partners in a project with ERDF support to co-finance their networking and cooperation-related expenditure, subject to compliance with conditions set by the EU and national law and regulations on state aid. Moreover, public procurement rules must be adhered to in case of service provision by enterprises for the implementation of project-related activities. Considering possible conflicts of

interest, a company (e.g. a consultancy) participating in a project as associate partner cannot contract for service provision to project partners.

(385) Any body listed in paragraph (383) may act as Lead Partner, subject to sufficient guarantees of its solvency and management capacities being provided.

VI.B.2.c. Location of lead beneficiaries and other beneficiaries eligible for ERDF support

(386) In compliance with Article 21-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, in duly justified cases and subject to prior confirmation by the Monitoring Committee and the Managing Authority, the ERDF may, up to a limit of 20 % of the amount of its contribution to the Programme, finance expenditure incurred by partners located outside the programme cooperation area but inside the European Community, provided that such expenditure is for the benefit of the regions in the cooperation area. However, the project Lead Partner must have a seat in the cooperation area of the Programme.

(387) In compliance with Article 21-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, in duly justified cases and subject to prior confirmation by the Monitoring Committee and the Managing Authority, the ERDF may, up to a limit of 10 % of the amount of its contribution to the Programme, finance expenditure incurred in implementing operations or parts of operations on the territory of countries outside the European Community, provided that such expenditure is for the benefit of the regions in the cooperation area.

(388) Further detail about the implementation modalities of Article 21-2) and -3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 will be provided in the PIMH.

VI.B.2.d. Project application procedure

(389) Under the supervision of the Managing Authority, the JTS shall launch and widely advertise periodic public calls for project proposals. Targeted calls may be used for specific purposes, e.g. focusing on specific objectives insufficiently covered by projects already approved or launching a strategic framework (cf. Section IV.G.) A two-step application procedure including a pre-application and pre-selection phase may also be organised, should the Monitoring Committee so decide. The number of calls per year will be flexible, depending on the state of progress of the Programme.

(390) To be submitted for consideration by the Monitoring Committee an application must have been received by the JTS within the deadline specified in the call for project proposals.

(391) The JTS shall elaborate and publish an information and application pack, downloadable from the Programme web-site and made available in hard-copy format on request. The pack shall include the necessary guidance to assist project partnerships in the preparation of their application, including an indicative model of the contract between project partners.

(392) The pack shall also include a standard application form, the use of which shall be mandatory for all applicants. Project applications shall include an action plan and a budget, mentioning the total eligible expenditure and the amount of ERDF support applied for. The resulting ERDF grant rate must not exceed 65%. A brief note about the environmental impact of the proposed project shall be attached to the application.

(393) The starting date for the eligibility of expenditure is 1st January 2007. Expenditure actually incurred prior to this date will not be eligible for ERDF support.

(394) Detailed information about the calls for project proposals, the content of the information and application pack, the project application procedure and the modalities of its implementation will be provided in the PIMH.

VI.B.3. Assessing and selecting project applications

(395) On behalf of the Managing Authority, the JTS shall acknowledge receipt of the project applications and coordinate the procedure leading to the submission of project assessment reports to the Monitoring Committee.

(396) This procedure shall include various checks (e.g. compliance with admissibility conditions⁷⁹, verified by the JTS) and consultations (e.g. compatibility with national laws, regulations and policies, verified by the National Correspondents, consultation of the transnational advisory working group on environmental issues referred to in the SEA report - cf. section III.E.5). The respective merits of applications shall be assessed by the JTS, if necessary assisted by independent evaluators, should the Monitoring Committee so decide. The proposed projects shall be scored against the agreed set of selection criteria and ranked on a transnational basis.

(397) On the basis of the assessment reports, the Monitoring Committee⁸⁰ shall consider all the applications received in due course by the JTS. The detailed modalities of the assessment procedure, including the set of admissibility conditions and selection criteria, as well as specific provisions possibly applying to project proposals submitted following the launch of a strategic framework (cf. Section IV.G.), will be described in the PIMH. The set of admissibility conditions and selection criteria will also be included in the information and application pack.

(398) Compliance with the provisions of Articles 16 (equality between men and women and non-discrimination) and 17 (promotion of sustainable development, protection and improvement of the environment) of General Regulation 1083/2006 shall rank among the project admissibility conditions.

VI.C. MONITORING SYSTEM

(399) Pursuant to Article 66 of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee shall ensure the quality of the implementation of the Programme. For this purpose, they shall hold joint responsibility for monitoring the Programme.

(400) This monitoring shall be carried out by reference to indicators referred to in Article 12-4) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006. Core indicators, as well as related targets, have been presented in Section IV.H above and in Appendix 4. The list of indicators provided in Appendix 4 remains indicative at this stage. The Monitoring Committee may decide to amend it and approve additional indicators as appropriate, especially in view of the first call for project proposals⁸¹ or for the specific needs of a strategic framework.

(401) In duly justified cases, the Monitoring Committee may approve complementary measures to monitor the environmental impact of a specific project or category of projects.

⁷⁹ Admissibility conditions are minimum requirements, all of which must be met for an application to be declared admissible.

⁸⁰ alternatively, the Steering Committee set up by the Monitoring Committee

⁸¹ after the first round of project applications, alterations to the existing list of indicators shall be avoided to the greatest extent possible.

(402) The Managing Authority assisted by the JTS shall report regularly to the Monitoring Committee on progress made toward achieving the Programme objectives, as measured through the approved set of indicators. Six-monthly progress reports received from the project lead partners shall be the main information basis to monitor the Programme performances. The Managing Authority shall also report regularly on ERDF commitments and payments.

(403) Pursuant to Article 67 of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Managing Authority shall, by 30 June each year and for the first time in 2008, submit an annual implementation report to the Commission. The final report shall be submitted by 31 March 2017. The annual and final reports shall be drafted by the JTS under the supervision of the Managing Authority, considered and approved by the Monitoring Committee before they are sent to the Commission. The aggregate results of monitoring against the physical and financial indicators shall be published in the Programme annual reports.

(404) The JTS shall gather the relevant data throughout the whole Programme period. A computerised Programme management system shall be developed for this purpose (cf. Section VI.G).

VI.D. EVALUATION

VI.D.1.a. *Ex ante* evaluation

(405) Pursuant to Article 48-2) of General Regulation 1083/2006, an *ex ante* evaluation was carried out by ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd under the responsibility of the Working Group 2007-2013 entrusted with the elaboration of the Operational Programme. The findings of the *ex ante* evaluation, including those of the Strategic Environmental Assessment procedure are presented in Section III.E.4.⁸²

VI.D.1.b. Evaluation during the Programme period

(406) The Programme shall be subject to the stipulations of Articles 47, 48 and 49 of General Regulation 1083/2006 relating to evaluation procedures.

(407) In compliance with Article 47, evaluations shall aim to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of ERDF assistance, and the strategy and implementation of the operational programme with respect to the specific structural problems affecting the Member States and regions concerned, while taking account of the objective of sustainable development and of the relevant Community legislation concerning environmental impact and SEA.

(408) Evaluations may be of a strategic nature in order to examine the evolution of the Programme in relation to Community and national priorities, or of an operational nature in order to support programme monitoring.

(409) Pursuant to Article 48-3), the Managing Authority, under the guidance of the Monitoring Committee, shall undertake evaluations linked to the monitoring of the Programme during the programming period, in particular where that monitoring reveals a significant departure from the goals initially set or where proposals are made for the revision of the operational programme⁸³.

⁸² The *ex ante* evaluation report and the SEA report are attached as separate volumes A and B respectively.

⁸³ Article 33 of General Regulation 1083/2006 provides that an operational programme may be re-examined in several cases

(410) The scope of evaluation(s) will be tailored to specific needs identified through programme monitoring, for example a better insight into the results of complete projects or the impact of the Programme.

(411) In compliance with Article 47-3), the evaluations shall be carried out by experts or bodies, internal or external, functionally independent of the Certifying Authority and the Audit Authority of the Programme. The results shall be published according to the applicable rules on access to documents, and sent to the Commission.

(412) The evaluations shall draw on the indicative guidance on evaluation methods that will be provided by the European Commission and possibly the Member States.

(413) Pursuant to Article 48-1), the Member States participating in the Programme and the Managing Authority assisted by the JTS shall provide the resources necessary for carrying out evaluations, organise the production and gathering of the necessary data and use the various types of information provided by the monitoring system.

VI.E. MOBILISATION, CIRCULATION AND CONTROL OF FINANCIAL FLOWS

(414) In compliance with Article 12, 8(d) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, this section provides the main features of the procedures for the mobilisation and circulation of financial flows. Complementary information is also provided on controls and audits as well as financial corrections referred to in General Regulation 1083/2006 (respectively in Articles 70 to 74 and Articles 98 to 102).

(415) Detailed information shall be provided about these procedures in the PIMH, especially in the management and control system of the Programme referred to in Article 71-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006. This system shall be submitted to the Commission before the submission of the first interim application for ERDF payment or at the latest within twelve months of the approval of the Operational Programme.

VI.E.1. Programme single account

(416) Pursuant to Article 76.1 of General Regulation 1083/2006, payments of ERDF contributions to the Programme shall be made by the Commission in accordance with the budget appropriations. To receive these payments on behalf of the Programme, IFDR, the Certifying Authority, shall open a single account with no national sub-account⁸⁴:

(417) Any interest earned on the payment on account shall be allocated to the Programme by the Certifying Authority on the recommendation of the Monitoring Committee.

(418) In compliance with Article 93-1) and 93-2) of General Regulation 1083/2006, any part of a budget commitment that has not been used for payment of the pre-financing or interim payments, or for which an application for payment has not been sent by 31 December of the third year (year "N+3") following the year (year "N") of the annual budget commitment from 2007 to 2010, will be automatically de-committed by the European Commission and lost to the Programme.

⁸⁴ cf. ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, Art. 17-1)

VI.E.2. ERDF contribution

(419) Projects approved by the Monitoring Committee may receive ERDF support from the Programme only. A single project cannot be financed simultaneously by more than one operational programme or other EU-funded programmes⁸⁵.

(420) The ERDF support to project activities cannot exceed 65% of total eligible expenditure. Unless specified otherwise in duly justified cases, the project ERDF grant rate approved by the Monitoring Committee shall be uniformly applied to any expenditure incurred for the implementation of a single project.

VI.E.3. Payments to beneficiaries

(421) The Managing Authority shall address a 'Grant Offer Letter' to the project Lead Partner of an approved project to confirm the decision of the Monitoring Committee⁸⁶, including the conditions imposed on the execution of, and the maximum amount of ERDF funding allocated to, the project. Moreover, the Grant Offer Letter shall remind the project Lead Partner of its financial and legal responsibilities.

(422) Lead Partners shall provide activity reports and payment claims on a regular basis. These documents shall be checked against the Grant Offer Letter and the approved application, to secure consistency between the activities and expenses declared with the approved project action plan and budget.

(423) The Lead Partner must ensure that each payment claim has been certified in accordance with the system set up by the Member States for verifying the delivery of project products and services co-financed by the ERDF funding (cf. Section VI.E.4.b below.)

(424) If these conditions are fulfilled, the Managing Authority shall recommend to the Certifying Authority to proceed with payment. Otherwise, appropriate steps shall be taken to obtain full prior clarity about the payment claim.

VI.E.4. Controls and audits

VI.E.4.a. Liability

(425) By the joint forwarding of this operational programme, the national authorities of each Member State participating in the Programme have agreed to retain overall administrative responsibility for the expenditure incurred and co-financed by the ERDF.

(426) According to Article 17-3) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, if the project Lead Partner fails to secure repayment from another partner of an amount unduly paid, the Member State on whose territory the partner concerned is located shall reimburse the Certifying Authority for the amount unduly paid to that partner.

⁸⁵ It may occur that an organisation applies for EU funding under more than one programme to finance complementary strands of activities of a same complex scheme. In such an instance, the scheme shall be split into clearly distinct projects, which may be submitted as separate applications, each under a different programme, but the same activity can of course not be included in more than one project work plan. Moreover, the projects, despite their complementary nature, must be self-sufficient: the implementation of one of them cannot depend on the approval of another. A typical example of an acceptable scheme is a transnational cooperation project dedicated to cross-fertilisation of activities carried out by other projects already approved at the regional level.

⁸⁶ alternatively, the Steering Committee set up by the Monitoring Committee

(427) The Member States shall retain liability for the Technical Assistance budget proportionally to their contribution to it.

VI.E.4.b. Validation of project expenditure

(428) Pursuant to Article 16 of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, each Member State shall set up a control system making it possible to verify the delivery of project products and services co-financed by the ERDF funding, the soundness of the expenditure declared and its compliance with Community rules and its national rules.

(429) Each Member State participating in the programme shall designate a "controller"⁸⁷ responsible for verifying the legality and regularity of the expenditure declared by each project partner, and ensure that this can be done within a period of three months⁸⁸.

VI.E.4.c. Audits

(430) Pursuant to Article 62-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Audit Authority shall present an audit strategy to the Commission within nine months of the approval of the Operational Programme. This strategy shall identify the bodies responsible for performing the audits, the overall audit method to be used, the sampling method to be applied in view of the spot checks and the indicative planning of audits to ensure that the main bodies are audited and that audits are spread evenly throughout the programming period.

(431) In compliance with Article 18 of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, the audit strategy shall be updated and reviewed annually and, if necessary, during the course of the year.

VI.E.5. Irregularities and financial corrections

(432) Pursuant to Article 98(1) of General Regulation 1083/2006, each Member State shall bear responsibility in the first instance for investigating irregularities, acting upon evidence of any major change affecting the nature or the conditions for the implementation or control of projects of the Programme and making the financial corrections required.

(433) Without prejudice to the Member States' responsibility for detecting and correcting irregularities and for recovering amounts unduly paid⁸⁹, the Certifying Authority, pursuant to Article 17-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006, shall ensure that any amount paid as a result of an irregularity is recovered.

(434) The Managing Authority shall ensure that the Monitoring Committee is informed on a regular basis of all irregularities detected and all financial corrections undertaken. The Managing and Audit Authorities will submit proposals to the Monitoring Committee to improve the programme management and control system as appropriate..

VI.F. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICITY STRATEGY

(435) Pursuant to Article 69-1) of General Regulation 1083/2006, the Member States participating in the Programme and the Managing Authority shall provide information on and publicise the projects and the Programme. The information shall be addressed to European citizens and project partnerships with the aim of

⁸⁷ as understood by Article 16-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006

⁸⁸ cf. Article 16-2) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006

⁸⁹ cf. Article 70-1)(b) of General Regulation 1083/2006

highlighting the role of the Community and ensuring that assistance from the Structural Funds is transparent.

(436) The Managing Authority shall draw up a communication plan as defined in Article 2(2) of Implementation Regulation 1828/2006, and submit it for approval by the Monitoring Committee. The Managing Authority shall submit the communication plan to the Commission within four months of the date of adoption of the programme.

(437) The four official languages of the Programme are English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Publications and formal documents of the Programme will be produced in these languages. Further detail about the use of languages will be provided in the PIMH.

VI.G. EXCHANGE OF COMPUTERISED DATA WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

(438) Pursuant to Article 66-3) of General Regulation 1083/2006, the exchange of programme monitoring data between the Commission and the Managing Authority on behalf the Member States shall be carried out electronically.

(439) For this purpose, a computer system - SFC 2007 - has been established by the Commission, which permits the secure exchange of data. All documents (and updates) for which the Programme Authorities are responsible shall be recorded into this computer system. All exchanges of data shall bear an electronic signature, legally recognised by the Member States and the Commission. The computer system for data exchange shall be accessible to the Member States and the Commission, either directly or via an interface.

(440) The computer system of the Programme shall meet the technical requirements of both SFC 2007 and the Portuguese system used by the Managing Authority, to secure consistency between, and integrity of, the two types of data processing.

APPENDICES

1. Glossary
2. Documentary References
3. Overview of EU programmes and initiatives with connection to the Priorities of the Programme
4. Quantification of programme objectives and performances
5. Indicative breakdown of the Community contribution by category in the Operational Programme
6. Key-figures
7. Maps

Separate volumes:

- *Ex ante* evaluation Report
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY

Selected terms used in the Programme have been defined in the following list. Many definitions refer to the specific meaning of the term as understood in the Programme, EU regulations or other reference documents, which may deviate from the ordinary meaning.

(441) ASSOCIATE PARTNER

A body contributing to the implementation of a project of the Programme without benefiting from any ERDF support (generally profit-distributing companies having an industrial or commercial character, which are not entitled to ERDF subsidies).

(442) BASELINE (or "baseline data")

The initial value against which an indicator is subsequently measured.

(443) BOCAGE

A type of rural landscape with small fields enclosed by low, hedged banks and/or a line of pollarded trees. (Definition taken from Brian Goodall [1987] *Dictionary of Human Geography*, Penguin Book.)

(444) CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Cooperation between neighbouring NUTS level 3 regions on either side of a common national border (referred to in Article 7-1] of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 6, 1] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006).

(445) EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE

A type of project activity consisting in a comparison of the respective practices of the project partners in a common field or policy. This involves sharing data and information, promoting mutual understanding between partners and raising awareness among them about the diversity of their approaches and cultures, but without altering the state of things in their respective regions, at least during the project lifespan.

(446) IMPACT

Change in the socio-economic or natural environment resulting from the implementation of an operation and affecting a wider population than the beneficiaries of that operation, e.g. a higher GDP.

Impact indicators refer to the consequences of a programme beyond its immediate effects.

(447) INDICATOR

The measurement of an objective to be met, a resource mobilised ("resource indicator"), an effect obtained, a gauge of quality or a context variable.

(448) KEY-PLAYERS

Bodies who are particularly likely to contribute to one or more of the Programme objectives owing to their field of activity and responsibilities, regardless of their degree of familiarity with, or involvement in, previous cooperation programmes.

(449) LEAD PARTNER

The project partner appointed by the project partnership to assume the responsibilities of the "lead beneficiary" defined in Article 20-1) of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006.

(450) OUTPUT (physical output)

The direct result of a certain project or other operation, e.g., kilometres of a railroad constructed or consultancy services provided to enterprises.

Output indicators relate to activity. They are measured in physical or monetary units (e.g., length of railroad constructed, number of firms financially supported, etc.)

(451) POOLING OF A CRITICAL MASS OF MEANS

The sharing of human, technical, financial and other resources between project partners to increase their efficiency and achieve joint tangible results that would have remained out of reach on an individual basis. (To some extent, the application of the principle "the whole is more than the sum of its parts" to a project partnership).

(452) RESULT

Advantages obtained by the beneficiaries of an operation (e.g. project partners) through its outputs, such as reduced travelling time resulting from the construction of a railroad or acquired new knowledge resulting from consultancy services provided to enterprises.

Result indicators relate to the direct and immediate effect on direct beneficiaries brought about by a programme. They provide information on changes to, for example, the behaviour, capacity or performance of beneficiaries.

(453) SHORT SEA SHIPPING (SSS)

Commercial waterborne transport that does not transit an ocean (international definition).

The movement of cargo and passengers by sea between ports situated in geographical Europe or between those ports and ports situated in non-European countries having a coastline on the enclosed seas bordering Europe (EU definition).

(454) STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

A fully developed plan approved by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme to achieve a particular strategic purpose, defining a series of coordinated, strategically linked activities, including the proactive generation, preparation and implementation of one or more specific projects.

(455) TARGET

A quantified objective expressed as a value to be reached by an indicator (output, result or impact indicator), usually within a given time frame.

(456) TRANSFER OF KNOW-HOW

A type of project activity consisting in concrete steps taken by project partners to reform their respective practices by importing know-how from a region to another, resulting in actual change in the regions concerned.

(457) TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

Cooperation between regions belonging to a wide transnational grouping (referred to in Article 7-2] of General Regulation 1083/2006 and Article 6, 2] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006).

(458) TRANSNATIONAL ISSUE

An issue requiring transnational cooperation to be addressed correctly: neither action on the national, regional or local level nor cross-border cooperation is enough to provide an appropriate response.

(459) UNIVERSAL SERVICE

A given minimum service, the quality of which is specified, for all users, at an accessible price.

APPENDIX 2 – DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

- (460) ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK, "ACCESSIBILITY" WORKING GROUP (May 2005), *Maritime Goods Transport and Traffic Safety*, Report presented by Pierre DELFAUD
- (461) ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK, "ACCESSIBILITY" WORKING GROUP (April 2006), *Intermodality in Freight Transport: Ports and Hinterlands, Maritime Transport, including Short Sea Shipping*, Final Report presented by Stuart COLE and Armand VILLA.
- (462) ATLANTIC TRANSNATIONAL NETWORK, "RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER" WORKING GROUP (April 2006), *Innovation and Technology Transfer: The Cooperation Challenge for the Regions in the Atlantic Arc*, Report presented by Jean-Louis MARTRES, Pierre CAPY, Fernando VIADERO RUEDA, Leire OZERIN ETXEBARRIA, Jean TIROT.
- (463) BUNDESAMT FÜR BAUWESEN UND RAUMORDNUNG (May 2006), *ESPON Project 2.4.2. - Integrated Analysis of Transnational and National Territories Based on ESPON Results* - Final Report
- (464) CENTRE FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (not dated), *ESPON Project 1.2.2. - Telecommunication Services and Networks: Territorial Trends and Basic Supply of Infrastructure for Territorial Cohesion* - Final Report
- (465) CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS OF EUROPE, ATLANTIC ARC COMMISSION, PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS FORWARD STUDIES UNIT (November 2005), *Atlantic Spatial Development Perspective [ASDP]*
- (466) COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (20 September 2005) *Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development* [EAFRD Regulation]
- (467) COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (11 July 2006), *Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, and repealing Regulation (EC) n° 1260/1999*, ["General Regulation"]
- (468) COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (27 July 2006) *Regulation (EC) No 1198/2006 on the European Fisheries Fund* ["EFF Regulation"]
- (469) ECOTEC RESEARCH & CONSULTING (2005), *Update of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme*, summary of the final report
- (470) EDATER, with the collaboration of ADE (December 2003), *INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area 2000-2006 Mid-Term Evaluation*, summary of the final report
- (471) EURONET, ROYAL HASKONING, EUROPEAN CENTER FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (ECNC) (not dated), *ESPON Project 1.3.2. - Territorial Trends of the Management of the Natural Heritage* - Final Report
- (472) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (1999), *European Spatial Development Perspective: Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the EU* (Agreed at the Informal Council of Ministers responsible for Spatial

Planning, Potsdam - Germany May 1999), Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg

(473) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (24 October 2005), *Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment* Communication to the Council and European Parliament [COM(2005)504 final]

(474) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (24 October 2005), *Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Framework for Community Action in the field of Marine Environmental Policy (Marine Strategy Directive)* [COM(2005) 505 final]

(475) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (23 January 2006) *"Indicators for monitoring and evaluation: a practical guide"* Draft Methodological Working Paper [X] published in view of the new programming period 2007-2013.

(476) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (7 July 2006), *Green Paper - Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: a European vision for the oceans and seas* [COM(2006) 275 final, Volume II - Annex]

(477) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (13 July 2006), *Cohesion policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions*, Communication to the Council and European Parliament [COM(2006) 385 final]

(478) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (13 July 2006), *Proposal for a Council decision on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion* [COM(2006) 386 final]

(479) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (8 November 2006), *Regions for Economic Change*, Communication [COM(2006) 675 final]

(480) EUROPEAN COMMISSION (8 December 2006), *Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 setting out rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and of Regulation (EC) N° 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional Development Fund* ["Implementation Regulation"]

(481) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (27 June 2001), *Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment*, ["Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA Directive"]

(482) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (30 May 2002), *Recommendation (2002/413/EC) concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe*

(483) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (5 July 2006), *Regulation (EC) N° 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) n° 1783/1999*, ["ERDF Regulation"]

(484) GEOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS (GTK), (not dated) *ESPON Project 1.3.1 - The Spatial Effects and Management of Natural and Technological Hazards in Europe -*

(485) INTERREG IIIB FACT-FINDING MISSION ON MARITIME SAFETY (2004), *Transnational Cooperation in Maritime Safety*, report by the group of experts, mission conducted by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)

(486) Websites:

- (487) European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA):
<http://www.emsa.eu.int>
- (488) European Rail Agency:
<http://www.era.eu.int>
- (489) BEI:
<http://www.eib.europa.eu/>
- (490) European Commission:
- research and innovation:
http://europa.eu/pol/rd/index_fr.htm
 - environment:
http://europa.eu/pol/env/index_fr.htm
 - maritime affairs:
<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/>
 - regional policy:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/
 - transport:
<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/>
- (491) Atlantic Area (INTERREG IIC and IIIB Programmes):
www.interreg-atlantique.org/fr
- (492) Atlantic Area Programme 2007-2013:
www.coop-atlantico.com
- (493) EIF:
<http://www.eif.europa.eu/>
- (494) IDABC
<http://europa.eu.int/idabc/>
- (495) ESPON: www.espon.eu
- (496) Atlantic Transnational Network: www.rta-atn.org

APPENDIX 3 – OVERVIEW OF EU PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES WITH CONNECTION TO THE PRIORITIES OF THE PROGRAMME

Priority 1

- 7th FPRD
- Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme
- "Entrepreneurship and Innovation" Programme
- JEREMIE initiative (Joint European Resources for Micro and Medium Enterprises)
- operations of the EIB and EIF
- "Regions for Economic Change" initiative.

Priority 2

- strategy to protect and conserve the marine environment (also take account of the [proposal for a] directive establishing a European framework for action in the field of marine environmental policy
- green paper on the future of maritime policy
- EFF operations
- European programme on climate change and green paper on energy
- European strategy in favour of safe, competitive, sustainable energy
- "Intelligent Energy for Europe" programme,
- Trans-European Energy Networks ("TEN-Es")
- European emissions quota trading system according to the ETS Directive (Emissions Trading Scheme)
- Sixth Environment Action Programme and its thematic strategies
- Natura 2000 programme
- LIFE+ programme
- strategic guidelines for rural development and the interventions of the EAFRD
- interventions of the EIB and EIF

- ICZM Recommendation 2002/413/EC.

Objective 2.1 projects should also endeavour to coordinate their action with that of the European Maritime Safety Agency.

Priority 3

- white paper on European transport policy
- green paper on fair, effective transport pricing
- priority axes of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T)
- Marco Polo II
- motorways of the sea
- Quick Start
- operations of the EIB and the EIF

Priority 3 projects should also endeavour to coordinate their action with that of the European Rail Agency.

Priority 4

- ERDF interventions in the field of sustainable urban development referred to in Article 8 of Regulation 1080/2006
- Strategic guidelines for rural development and interventions of the EAFRD
- European framework programme for exchanges of experience and good practice intended to carry on and extend the work achieved by URBACT (announced in Commission Communication COM(2006)385 of 13 July 2006 on cohesion policy and cities)
- CIVITAS II programme
- IDABC programme (online delivery of European e-government services)
- thematic strategy for the urban environment in the 6th Environment Action Programme
- operations of the EIB and EIF
- "Regions for Economic Change" initiative.

APPENDIX 4 – QUANTIFICATION OF PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES AND PERFORMANCES

OUTPUT INDICATORS

Code	PROJECT LEVEL	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE / PRIORITY / PROGRAMME LEVEL
O.1	(n.a.)	(number of operations)
O.1a	(n.a.)	number of projects approved
O.1b	(n.a.)	number of projects completed
O.1c	(n.a.)	number of project groupings (priority/programme level)
O.1d	(n.a.)	number of strategic frameworks launched (priority/programme level)
	(
	Within the project partnership, number of:	
O.2	public authorities (+ breakdown national/regional/local?)	
O.3	pre-existing cross-border or transnational bodies	
O.4	voluntary sector / non profit organisations (NGO, etc)	
O.5	research/education centres	
O.6	others	
O.7	Number of associate partners (cf. Appendix 1 – Glossary)	
O.8	Jobs (full-time equivalents) created for the development/implementation of the project	aggregated values
(O.8w)	posts filled by a woman	
(O.8m)	posts filled by a man	
O.9	Investment made by the project (€)	aggregated values
	Participation in transnational events/meetings organised by the project:	
O.10	number of attendees ⁹⁰ (natural persons)	aggregated values
(O.10w)	women	aggregated values
(O.10m)	men	aggregated values
O.11	number of public authorities represented ⁹¹	aggregated values
O.12	number of cross-border or transnational bodies represented	aggregated values
O.13	number of pre-existing cross-border or transnational bodies represented	aggregated values
O.14	number of voluntary sector organisations (NGO, etc) represented	aggregated values
O.15	number of research/education centres represented	aggregated values
O.16	number of private enterprises (SMEs, etc.) represented	aggregated values
O.17	number of other bodies (SMEs, etc.) represented	aggregated values

⁹⁰ i.e. number of natural persons participating in each meeting, seminar or event, regardless of whether they belong to a project partner organisation; if one and the same person attends more than one meeting, seminar or event, the indicator will be incremented as many times as (s)he participates.

⁹¹ i.e. by one or more participants

OUTPUT INDICATORS (Continuation)

Code	PROJECT LEVEL	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE / PRIORITY / PROGRAMME LEVEL
O.18	Number of publications made by the project:	aggregated values
O.18a	- interim study reports	aggregated values
O.18b	- final study reports	aggregated values
O.18c	- articles in the press or specialised magazines	aggregated values
O.18d	- issues of a project newsletter	aggregated values
O.18e	- handbooks, guides, catalogues	aggregated values
O.18f	- brochures, leaflets and other awareness-raising publications	aggregated values
O.18g	- others	aggregated values
O.19	Project cooperation intensity ⁹² :	Aggregated values:
O.19a	- transfer of know-how (Y/N)?	- number of projects with transfer of know-how
O.19b	- pooling of a critical mass of resources/means (Y/N)?	- number of projects pooling a critical mass of resources /means
O.19c	- transnational issue tackled (Y/N)?	- number of projects tackling a transnational issue

⁹² The value (Y/N) of these three indicators may prove a matter of appreciation. A value will be proposed for each new project application by the team of project evaluators and confirmed by the Monitoring Committee during the project selection procedure. A consistent approach will be secured by applying equal standards between projects submitted in the framework of the successive rounds of applications. Criteria applied to projects in the first rounds will serve, as it were, as "internal case-law" for decision making in the subsequent rounds. The same criteria will be applied to INTERREG IIIB projects to determine the baseline value of the indicators.

RESULT INDICATORS

Code	PROJECT LEVEL	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE / PRIORITY / PROGRAMME LEVEL
R.1	Number of new projects generated by the project activities	aggregated values
R.2	Number of existing projects enhanced by the project activities	aggregated values
R.3	Number of new networks ⁹³ generated by the project activities	aggregated values
R.4	Number of programmes influenced by the experience gained during the project implementation	aggregated values
R.4a	- EU programmes	aggregated values
R.4b	- national programmes	aggregated values
R.4c	- regional programmes	aggregated values
R.4d	- local programmes	aggregated values
R.5	Number of policies influenced by the experience gained during the project implementation	aggregated values
R.5a	- EU policies	aggregated values
R.5b	- national policies	aggregated values
R.5c	- regional policies	aggregated values
R.5d	- local policies	aggregated values
R.6	Job creation induced by the project (number of jobs in full time equiv.) ⁹⁴	Aggregated values
R.7	Investment induced by the project (€)	Aggregated values
R.8a	Number of hits/month of the project web-site ⁹⁵	Average value per project
R.8b	(n.a.).....	Number of hits/month of the programme web-site (result indicator at the programme level only)
R.9	Project perpetuation: after project completion, a 2/3 majority of project partners have decided to carry on cooperating (Y/N)	Number of projects with "Y" as value of the indicator

⁹³ distinct from the project partnership

⁹⁴ on top of jobs created for the development/ implementation of the project (i.e. exclusive of jobs counted by indicator O.8); a breakdown by gender seems difficult to provide.

⁹⁵ either a dynamic indicator (diagram with monthly values) or simply the average monthly value since the project start

IMPACT INDICATORS AT PROGRAMME LEVEL⁹⁶

Values gathered at the programme start in 2007 (baseline information) at the mid-term (2010) and the end (2013) of the programming period

Relative audience of the Programme estimated within the following categories of key-players by the ratio:

$$\frac{\text{number of bodies of the category having benefited from results of at least one AA project}}{\text{total number of bodies of the category}}$$

CODE	INDICATOR (PROGRAMME LEVEL ONLY)
I.1	Relative audience of the Programme among various national sector administrations (economy, transport, environment, etc.)
I.2	Relative audience of the Programme among regional authorities
I.3	Relative audience of the Programme among local authorities
I.3.a.	- in urban areas of various sub-categories ⁹⁷
I.3.b	- in rural areas
I.4	Relative audience of the Programme among education and research centres
I.5	Relative audience of the Programme among voluntary sector / non profit organisations (NGO, etc)
I.6	Relative audience of the Programme among private enterprises (SMEs, etc.)

⁹⁶ N.B. These indicators are given for illustrative purposes only. They exemplify the approach that could be adopted to define impact indicators at the Programme level. The use of such impact indicators is not compulsory (Article 12-4] of ERDF Regulation 1080/2006 refers to outputs and results only) and is subject to confirmation by the Monitoring Committee of the Programme.

⁹⁷ Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAS) and Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) as defined in the ESPON publications

Quantification of the outputs and results of PRIORITY N

	Outputs			Results		
	Indicator	Baseline ⁹⁸	Target	Indicator	Baseline	Target
Obj. N.1	O.1a O.1b O.2 O.3 O.4 O.5 O.6 O.7 O.8 O.9 O.10 O.11 O.12 O.13 O.14 O.15 O.16 O.17 O.18 O.19	(INTERREG IIIB values)		R.1 R.2 R.3 R.4 R.5 R.6 R.7 R.8a R.9	(INTERREG IIIB values)	
Obj. N.2	same indicators	(INTERREG IIIB values)		same indicators	(INTERREG IIIB values)	
Obj. N.3	same indicators	(INTERREG IIIB values)		same indicators	(INTERREG IIIB values)	
Priority N	(aggregated values for the same indicators) + O.1c + O.1d	(INTERREG IIIB values)		aggregated values for the same indicators	(INTERREG IIIB values)	

⁹⁸ There is no one-to-one correspondence between Priorities A, B, C and D of the INTERREG IIIB Atlantic Area Programme and Priorities 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the new Objective 3 Programme. Considering the similarity of issues addressed however, most INTERREG IIIB projects can easily be re-allocated to one of the four priorities of the new Programme. The value of the indicators applied to these re-allocated projects will be included in the "baseline" column of the above tables.

Quantification of outputs, results and impacts of the PROGRAMME

Outputs			Results			Impacts		
Indicator	Baseline ⁹⁹	Target	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Indicator	Baseline	Target
aggregation of values collected at the Priority level	aggregation of INTERREG IIIB values collected at the Priority level + values relating to "non re-allocated projects"		aggregation of values collected at the Priority level + indicator R.8b	aggregation of INTERREG IIIB values collected at the Priority level + values relating to "non re-allocated projects"		I.1 I.2 I.3 I.4 I.5 I.6	collected in 2007	

⁹⁹ The reallocation of some INTERREG IIIB projects to the priorities of the Programme will not be possible. This will be the case, for example, of projects addressing topics of an overarching nature such as "ASDP". The information relating to such projects will not be accounted for at the specific objective and Priority levels, but it will at the Programme level.

APPENDIX 5 – INDICATIVE BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION BY CATEGORY IN THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

[Cf. § (329)]

Commission reference No: _____

Name of the programme:

Transnational Cooperation ATLANTIC AREA 2007-2013

Date of the last Commission decision for the Operational Programme concerned: __/__/__

(in euros)

(in euros)

(in euros)

Dimension 1 Priority theme		Dimension 2 Form of finance		Dimension 3 Territory	
Code *	Amount **	Code *	Amount **	Code *	Amount **
01	1 094 082	01	104 051 233	09	104 051 233
02	1 094 082				
03	2 735 205				
04	2 735 205				
05	2 188 164				
06	3 149 314				
07	2 188 164				
08	1 641 123				
09	2 188 164				
11	4 643 744				
13	572 706				
14	1 653 955				
15	1 653 955				
16	1 843 363				
17	1 843 363				
18	1 843 363				
19	1 843 363				
24	286 353				
25	859 060				
26	2 416 069				
27	1 843 363				
28	1 843 363				
29	1 843 363				
30	2 765 044				

* The categories should be coded for each dimension using the standard classification.

** Estimated amount of the Community contribution for each category.

Dimension 1 Priority theme		Dimension 2 Form of finance		Dimension 3 Territory	
Code	Amount	Code	Amount	Code	Amount
*	**	*	**	*	**
39	2 639 335				
40	1 508 191				
41	1 885 239				
42	3 016 383				
43	1 508 191				
44	2 080 897				
45	1 508 191				
46	1 508 191				
47	2 080 897				
48	2 367 251				
49	1 508 191				
50	859 060				
51	3 393 431				
52	859 060				
53	8 672 101				
54	1 508 191				
55	715 883				
56	1 508 191				
57	2 083 485				
58	1 431 766				
59	1 431 766				
60	1 431 766				
61	1 431 766				
62	1 367 602				
63	1 367 602				
64	1 367 602				
85	5 563 074				
86	680 000				
Total	104 051 233	Total	104 051 233	Total	104 051 233

* The categories should be coded for each dimension using the standard classification.

** Estimated amount of the Community contribution for each category.

Code	Theme	% P1	ERDF P1	% P2	ERDF P2	% P3	ERDF P3	% P4	ERDF P4	% TA	ERDF TA	TOTAL ERDF
01	R&TD activities in research centres	4	1 094 082									1 094 082
02	R&TD infrastructure and centres of competence in a specific technology.	4	1 094 082									1 094 082
03	Technology transfer & cooperation networks between enterprises, higher education and research centres, and regional authorities	10	2 735 205									2 735 205
04	Assistance to R&TD, particularly in SMEs	10	2 735 205									2 735 205
05	Advanced support services for (group of) firms	8	2 188 164									2 188 164
06	Assistance to SMEs for the promotion of environmentally-friendly products and production processes	6	1 641 123	4	1 508 191							3 149 314
07	Investment in firms directly linked to research and innovation	8	2 188 164									2 188 164
08	Other investment in firms	6	1 641 123									1 641 123
09	Other measures to stimulate research, innovation and entrepreneurship in SMEs	8	2 188 164									2 188 164
11	ICTs	6	1 641 137	4	1 508 210	5	921 684	4	572 713			4 643 744
13	Services and applications for the citizen							4	572 706			572 706
14	Services and applications for SMEs	5	1 367 602					2	286 353			1 653 955
15	Other measures for improving access to & efficient use of ICT by SMEs	5	1 367 602					2	286 353			1 653 955
16	Railways					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
17	Railways (TEN-T)					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
18	Mobile rail assets					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
19	Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)					10	1 843 363					1 843 363

Code	Theme	% P1	ERDF P1	% P2	ERDF P2	% P3	ERDF P3	% P4	ERDF P4	% TA	ERDF TA	TOTAL ERDF
24	Cycle tracks							2	286 353			286 353
25	Urban transport							6	859 060			859 060
26	Multimodal transport					10	1 843 363	4	572 706			2 416 069
27	Multimodal transport (TEN-T)					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
28	Intelligent transport systems					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
29	Airports					10	1 843 363					1 843 363
30	Ports					15	2 765 044					2 765 044
39	Renewable energy: wind			7	2 639 335							2 639 335
40	Renewable energy: solar			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
41	Renewable energy: biomass			5	1 885 239							1 885 239
42	Renewable energy: other			8	3 016 383							3 016 383
43	Energy efficiency, co-generation, energy management			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
44	Management of household & industrial waste			4	1 508 191			4	572 706			2 080 897
45	Management and distribution of water (drinking water)			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
46	Water treatment (waste water)			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
47	Air quality			4	1 508 191			4	572 706			2 080 897
48	Integrated prevention and pollution control			4	1 508 191			6	859 060			2 367 251
49	Mitigation & adaptation to climate change			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
50	Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land							6	859 060			859 060
51	Promotion of biodiversity & nature protection			9	3 393 431							3 393 431
52	Promotion of clean urban transport							6	859 060			859 060
53	Risk prevention			23	8 672 101							8 672 101
54	Other measures to preserve the environment and prevent risks			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
55	Promotion of natural assets							5	715 883			715 883

<i>Code</i>	<i>Theme</i>	% P1	ERDF P1	% P2	ERDF P2	% P3	ERDF P3	% P4	ERDF P4	% TA	ERDF TA	TOTAL ERDF
56	Protection & development of natural heritage			4	1 508 191							1 508 191
57	Other assistance to improve tourist services	5	1 367 602					5	715 883			2 083 485
58	Protection & preservation of the cultural heritage							10	1 431 766			1 431 766
59	Development of cultural infrastructure							10	1 431 766			1 431 766
60	Other assistance to improve cultural services							10	1 431 766			1 431 766
61	Integrated projects for urban and rural regeneration							10	1 431 766			1 431 766
62	Development of life-long learning systems & strategies in firms; (...) promoting entrepreneurship & innovation	5	1 367 602									1 367 602
63	Design & dissemination of innovative & more productive ways of organising work	5	1 367 602									1 367 602
64	Development of specific services for employment, training & support in connection with restructuring of sectors & firms, development of systems for anticipating economic changes & future requirements in terms of jobs & skills	5	1 367 602									1 367 602
85	TA: preparation, implementation, monitoring & inspection									89	5 563 074	5 563 074
86	TA: evaluation & studies; information & communication									11	680 000	680 000
	TOTAL	100	27 352 061	100	37 704 800	100	18 433 632	100	14 317 666	100	6 243 074	104 051 233

APPENDIX 6 - KEY-FIGURES

[Cf. § (25) & (26)]

A. Demography / Surface area

Population and size of eligible regions

NUTS Code	Name	Population			Pop. change	Size	Density
		1995	2000	2005	1995-2005 %	[km ²]	2003 [inh/km ²]
EU25	European Union 25		452927808	459113792 (a)		3959022	117.5
ES	Spain						
ES11	Galicia	2719536	2684551	2712162	-0.3	29574	91.4
ES12	Principado de Asturias	1084286	1063156	1059133	-2.3	10604	100.0
ES13	Cantabria	528851	531072	551085	4.2	5321	101.9
ES21	País Vasco	2084996	2070279	2103441	0.9	7235	289.1
ES22	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	530913	546692	580616	9.4	10391	54.7
ES61	Andalucía						
ES612	Cádiz	1096656 (c)	1120836 (c)	1135344 (b)	3.5	7440	152.6
ES615	Huelva	452143 (c)	462632 (c)	468926 (b)	3.7	10128	46.3
ES618	Sevilla	1642613 (c)	1710788 (c)	1751693 (b)	6.6	14036	124.8
	TOTAL	10139994	10190006	10362400	2.2	94729	108.5
FR	France						
FR23	Haute-Normandie	1771034	1785908	1797791 (b)	1.5	12317.4	146.1
FR25	Basse-Normandie	1408316	1427246	1437355 (b)	2.1	17589.3	81.8
FR51	Pays de la Loire	3145757	3246389	3334014 (b)	6.0	32081.8	104.3
FR52	Bretagne	2840680	2923952	2994078 (b)	5.4	27207.8	110.5
FR53	Poitou-Charentes	1619284	1648623	1679123 (b)	3.7	25809.5	65.3
FR61	Aquitaine	2855720	2930605	3016239 (b)	5.6	41308.4	73.4
	TOTAL	13640 791	13962723	14258600	4.5	156314.2	90.3
IE	Ireland						
IE01	Border, Midland and Western	994235	996085	1098144	10.5	33252	33.1
IE02	Southern and Eastern	2660476	2781678	3011029	13.2	36545	80.8
	TOTAL	3654711	3777763	4109173	12.4	69797	56.5
PT	Portugal						
PT11	Norte	3541805	3621210	3727310	5.2	21287	173.5
PT15	Algarve	349658	375841	411468	17.7	4996	80.5
PT16	Centro	2276261	2312390	2376609	4.4	28199	83.8
PT17	Lisboa	2593283	2643253	2760697	6.5	2935	952.1
PT18	Alentejo	767593	764653	767679	0.0	31551	24.4
	Total	9528600	9717347	10043763	5.4	88968	111.1
UK	United Kingdom				(d)		
UKD1	Cumbria	490228	492976	488513	-0.3	13591.5	71.9
UKD2	Cheshire	976855	984830	986079	0.9	4674.1	424.5
UKD3	Greater Manchester	2578149	2582612	2513468	-2.5	2561.9	1968.2
UKD4	Lancashire	1425019	1428727	1421912	-0.2	6144.8	465.5
UKD5	Merseyside	1430799	1407045	1361009	-4.9	1300.2	2083.2
UKK1	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset	2120076	2185350	2170827	2.4	15068.2	288.3

UKK2	Dorset and Somerset	1155316	1188385	1199751		3.8	12207.8	197.6
	Cornwall and Isles of							
UKK3	Scilly	964319	495914	508412	(b)	5.0 (d)	7122	144.2
UKK4	Devon	2116161	1078142	1082287	(b)	0.8 (d)	13410.4	162.6
UKL1	West Wales and The							
	Valleys	3752225	1872243	1860436	(b)	-1.3 (d)	26221	142.4
UKL2	East Wales	2081136	1072485	1058287	(b)	-2.6 (d)	15280	139.9
UKM3	South Western Scotland	2360979	2340294	2280775		-3.4	13033	175.0
UKM4	Highlands and Islands	372338	367382	369929		-0.6	39777.3	9.3
UKN0	Northern Ireland	1645336	1697775	1696641		3.1	14160.4	120.3
TOTAL		19083241	19194160	18998326	(b)	-1.0	184552.6	103.5

TOTAL PROGRAMME		56047337	56841999	57772262		3.1	594361	96.4
------------------------	--	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------	--	------------	---------------	-------------

(a) 2004; (b) 2003; (c) interpolated values; (d) estimated population change because of a change in the definition of the regions between 1995 and 2000

B. Gross Domestic Product and Employment

Code	Name	GDP	GDP /h.	GDP	GDP /h.	GDP	GDP /h.	GDP growth	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
		1995	1995	1999	1999	2003	2003	2003	2004	2004
		PPS	PPS	PPS	PPS	PPS	PPS		15 years and older	15 years and older
		[Millions of PPP]	EU= 100	[Millions of PPP]	EU= 100	[Millions of PPP]	EU= 100			

EU25	European Union 25	6947274.2	100	8486384.5	100	9953329.3	100	:	51.4	9.2
-------------	--------------------------	------------------	------------	------------------	------------	------------------	------------	----------	-------------	------------

ES	Spain									
ES11	Galicia	30019.5	71.3	37838.4	74.9	45028.2	76.6	2.5	45.5	13.6
ES12	Principado de Asturias	12932.3	77.0	15564.4	77.7	19137.7	83.0	2.2	41.2	10.4
ES13	Cantabria	6678.6	81.4	8671.9	86.9	11115.4	94.3	2.2	47.1	10.5
ES21	País Vasco	33784	104.6	44452.5	114.2	54878.5	120.7	2.5	50.4	9.7
ES22	Comunidad Foral de Navarra	9109.6	110.3	11680.4	114.0	15219.5	123.1	3.0	53.5	5.5
ES61	Andalucía	71251.6		92055.9		120847.3				
ES612	Cádiz	10716.8	69.1	13446.6	70.1	18332.7	72.3			22.7
ES615	Huelva	4712.5	74.6	6122.4	73.2	7961.4	74.9			16.0
ES618	Sevilla	17512.8	68.8	22236.3	70.0	29032.7	73.4			17.4
TOTAL		196717.7		252068.8		321553.4				

FR	France									
FR23	Haute-Normandie	29504.5	107.4	35063.2	104.5	39517.1	100.9	1.3	53.5	8.5
FR25	Basse-Normandie	21380.4	97.8	25550.4	95.4	29053.2	92.7	1.5	50.8	7.6
FR51	Pays de la Loire	49234.8	100.7	60752.5	99.9	74068.0	102.2	1.4	54.1	7.8
FR52	Bretagne	42365.7	96.0	52878.3	96.5	63013.8	96.7	1.3	50.5	7.1
FR53	Poitou-Charentes	23853.6	94.9	28725.1	92.9	34330.3	93.9	1.2	50.2	8.4
FR61	Aquitaine	45112.5	101.7	55855.1	101.9	66900.5	101.4	0.2	48.2	10.5
TOTAL		211451.5		258824.6		306882.9				

IE	Ireland									
IE01	Border, Midland and Western	11058.4	74.2	16441.9	88.4	21348.5	92.5	:	56.5	4.7
IE02	Southern and Eastern	44008.7	107.4	69517.0	133.8	95034	149.2	:	58.6	4.5
TOTAL		55067.1		85958.9		116382.5				

PT	Portugal									
PT11	Norte	35128.1	63.8	44585.1	65.6	46188.9	57.4	-2.5	57.8	7.7
PT15	Algarve	4251.9	78.0	5723.3	81.7	6874.6	78.7	0.0	56.5	5.5
PT16	Centro	22434.1	63.5	29382.1	67.7	31482.1	61.3	-1.2	63.2	4.3
PT17	Lisboa	42928.1	106.6	57321.6	115.6	61831	104.3	-0.5	55.6	7.6
PT18	Alentejo	8015.1	67.4	9963.6	69.3	11086.9	66.4	0.1	51.6	8.8
TOTAL		112757.3		146975.7		157463.5				

UK	United Kingdom									
UKD1	Cumbria	7674.2	101.9	8223.6	90.5	9793.8	91.9	9.5	61.1	4.0
UKD2	Cheshire	18430.9	122.8	22949.8	126.4	26856	124.9	-1.1	59.7	3.1
UKD3	Greater Manchester	39529.7	99.8	49725.8	104.4	59942.9	109.0	2.9	57.9	4.6
UKD4	Lancashire	21485.6	98.2	24945.9	94.7	30059.5	96.8	2.0	58.2	4.3
UKD5	Merseyside	17033.6	77.5	20320.2	78.3	25312.2	85.3	2.8	54.1	5.4
UKK1	Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset	37403.3	114.9	50303.3	124.8	63611.4	133.5	3.2	62.9	3.3

UKK2	Dorset and Somerset	16432.2	92.6	20995.7	95.8	24984.6	95.3	3.6	58.7	2.4
UKK3	Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	5032.6	68.1	6181.6	67.6	8453.3	75.8	4.1	57.7	4.0
UKK4	Devon	15387.5	94.9	17667.8	88.9	20466.5	86.4	-1.9	57.5	3.4
UKL1	West Wales and The Valleys	23064.1	80.1	25598.7	74.2	30764.9	75.8	1.1	52.9	5.2
UKL2	East Wales	17561.5	109.9	22094.7	111.7	27705.3	119.1	4.9	59.9	3.4
UKM3	South Western Scotland	36809.5	101.5	43623.8	100.6	53053.5	107.0	3.1	56.2	6.7
UKM4	Highlands and Islands	4837.1	84.6	5858.9	85.9	6681.1	83.2	4.5	57.3	4.8
UKN0	Northern Ireland	22363.0	88.3	28291.9	90.5	34357.5	92.8	2.2	54.7	5.0
TOTAL		283044.8		346781.7		422042.5				

TOTAL PROGRAMME	859038.4		1090609.7		1324324.8					
-----------------	----------	--	-----------	--	-----------	--	--	--	--	--

APPENDIX 7 – MAPS

MAP 1

[Cf. § (22)]

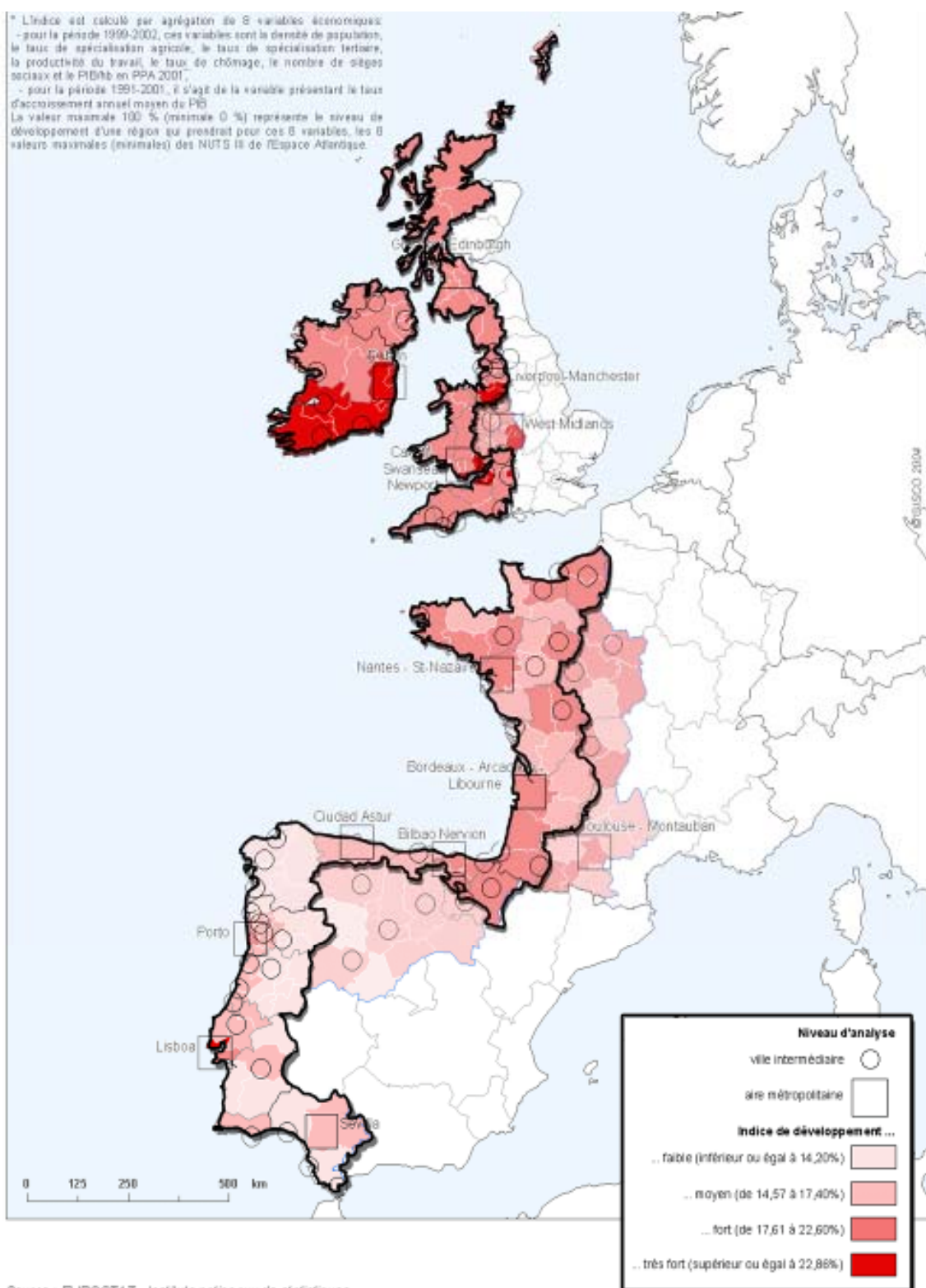
COOPERATION AREA OF THE PROGRAMME



MAP 2

[Cf. § (28)]

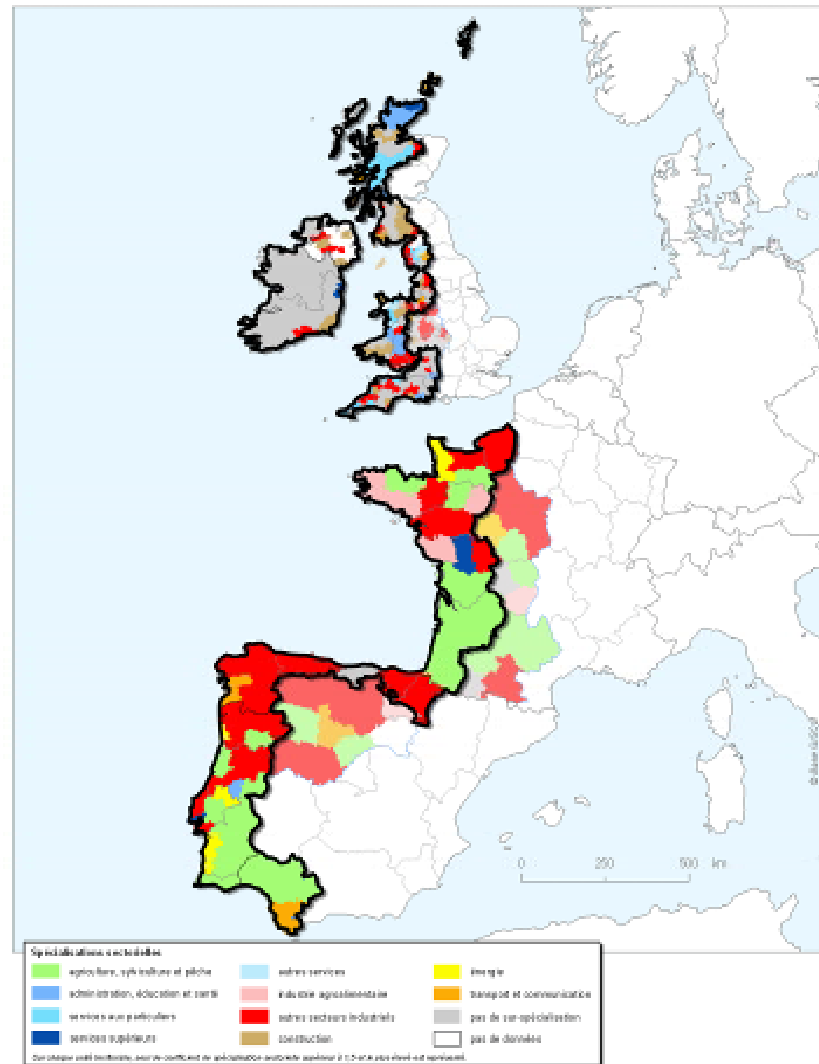
ATLANTIC SPACE: RELATIVE DEVELOPMENT INDEX



MAP 3A

[Cf. § (34)]

ATLANTIC SPACE: DOMINANT SECTOR SPECIALISATIONS



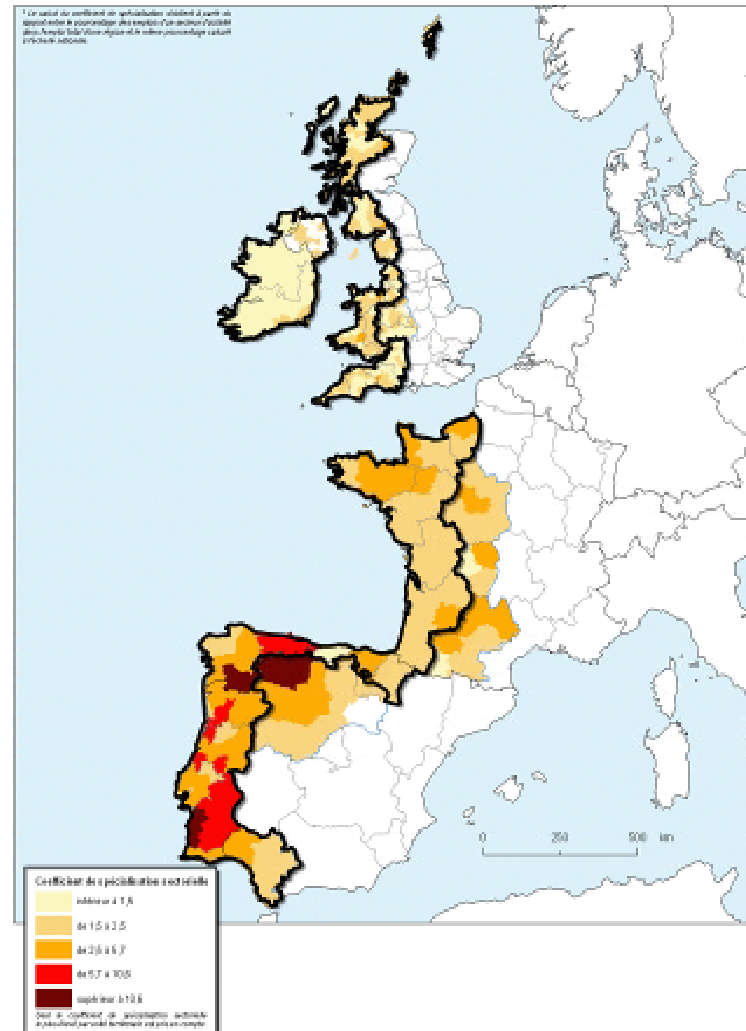
Source : Institut statistique national

© IAAAT 2005

MAP 3B

[Cf. § (34)]

ATLANTIC SPACE: SECTOR SPECIALISATION COEFFICIENT



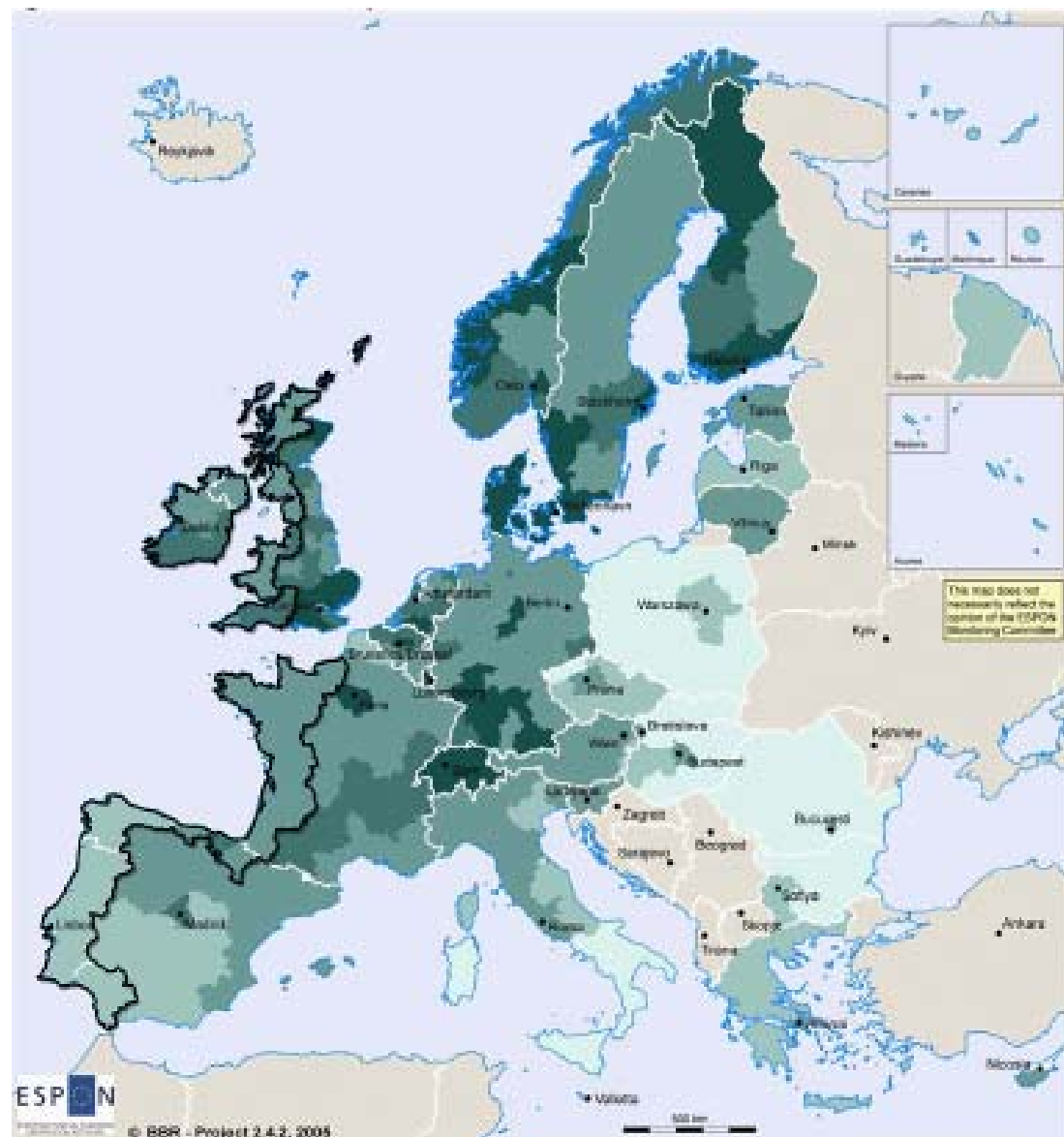
Source : Institut statistique national

© IAAAT 2005

MAP 4

[Cf. § (43)]

LISBON STRATEGY: PERFORMANCES OF EUROPEAN REGIONS



Degree of Lisbon performance as an aggregate of 5 indicators:

- Productivity (GDP per person employed 2002) +
- Employment rate (Employed population / population aged 15-64 2002) +
- Expenditure on R&D (Expenditure on R&D / Total GDP 2002) +
- R&D Business Enterprise Sector (Personnel / 1,000 active persons 2001) +
- Highly educated population (Highly educated population / total educated population 2002) +



© EuroGeographical Association for administrative boundaries
Regional level: NUTS 2
Original data: ESPON 2.4.2 BBR team calculations
Coordinates for geographical location: BBR team
Source: ESPON database

Standardised based on the European mean value

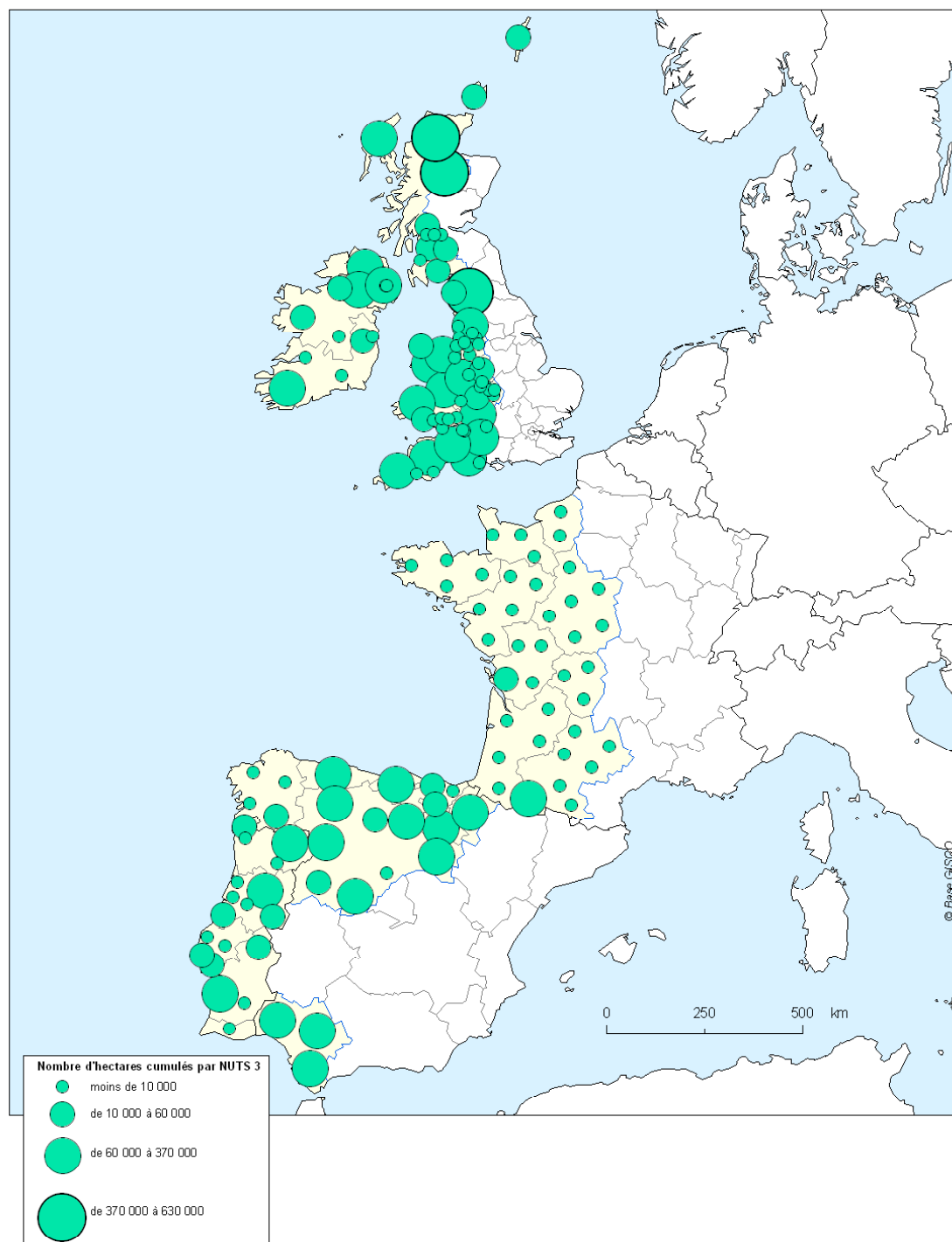
MAP 5

[Cf. § (51)]

PROTECTED AREAS IN THE ATLANTIC AREA

ESPACE ATLANTIQUE

Zones protégées * : sites désignés au niveau national



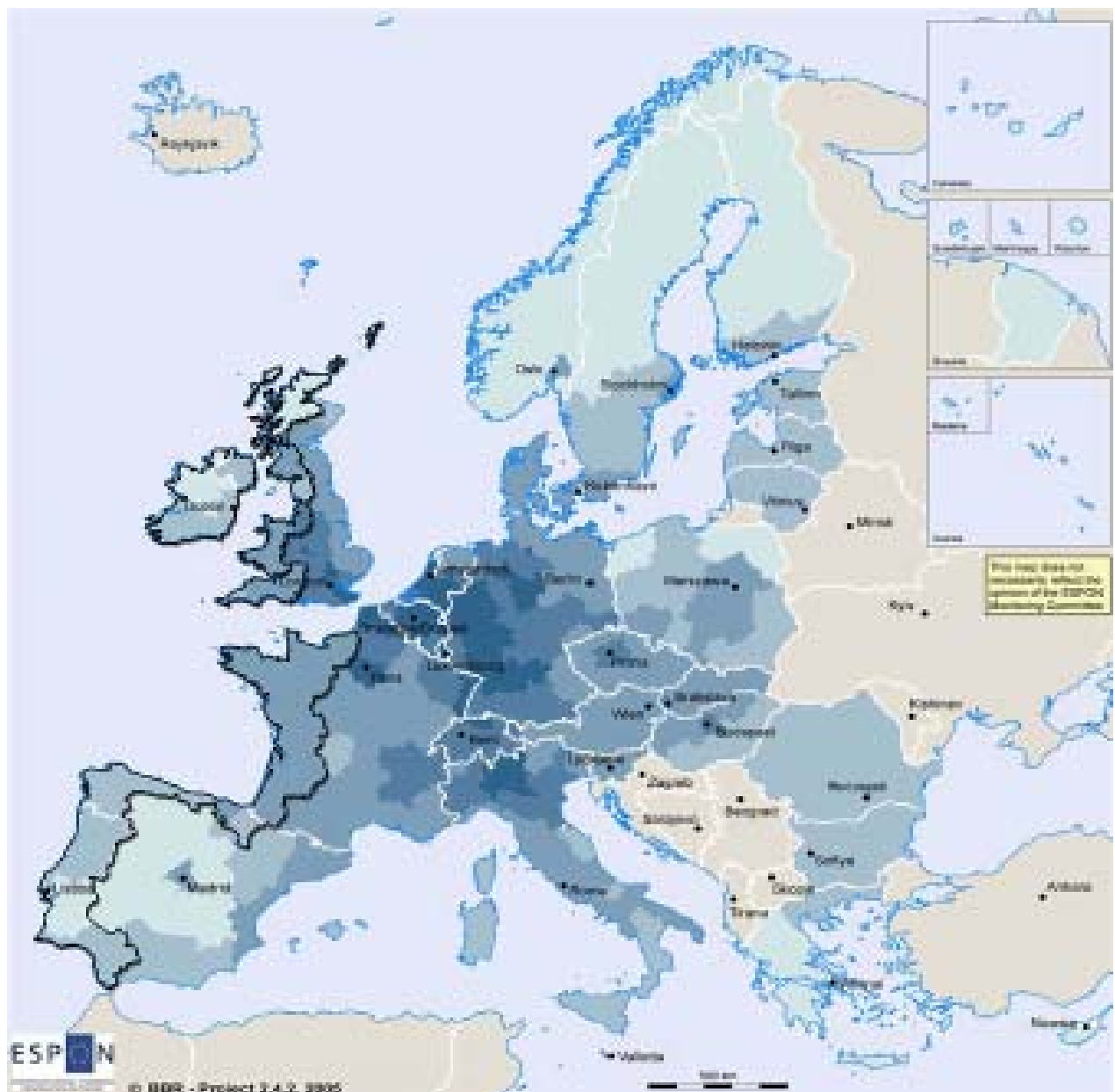
Source : European Topic Centre on Nature Protection and Biodiversity. Date of delivery: 08/02/2005

© IAAT 2005

MAP 6

[Cf. § (72)]

ACCESSIBILITY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS



Degree of accessibility as an aggregate of 4 indicators:

- Potential accessibility by road +
- Potential accessibility by rail +
- Potential accessibility by air +
- Time to market meso-scale -

Below average
Moderately below average
Average
Moderately above average
Above average

© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries
Regional level, NUTS 2
Origin of data: ESPON 1.2, 1.5/NT
ESPON 2.4.2 BBR, own calculations
Cyrilic: data for government controlled areas only

Source: ESPON database

Standardised based on the European mean value

MAP 7

[Cf. § (75)]

ROAD CONNECTIVITY OF URBAN AREAS



Source : www.viamichelin.fr

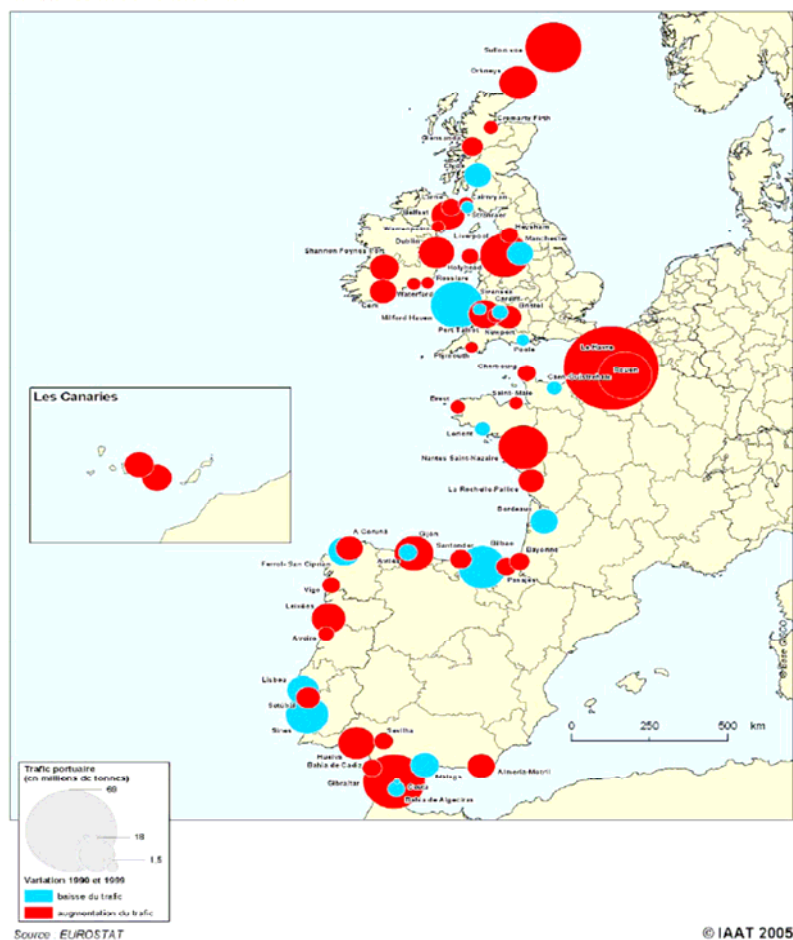
© IAAT 2005

MAP 8

[Cf. § (80)]

SEA PORTS and 1990-1999 TRAFFIC VARIATION

ESPACE ATLANTIQUE
Localisation des ports et
variation du trafic entre 1990 et 1999

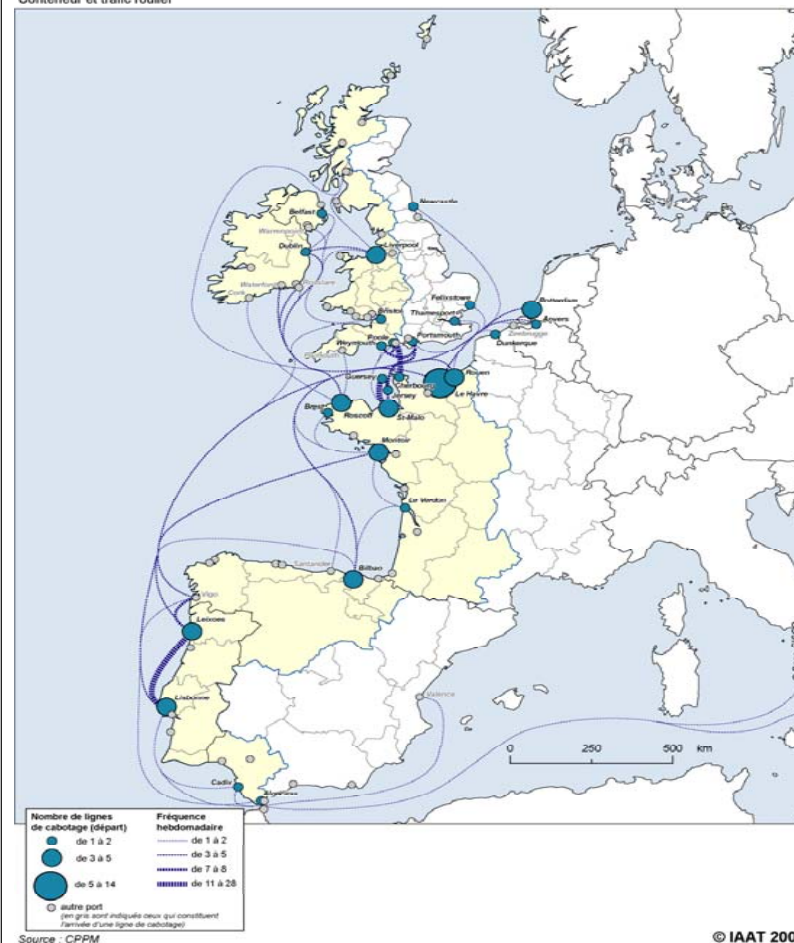


MAP 9

[Cf. § (82)]

SSS ROUTES (APRIL 2005)

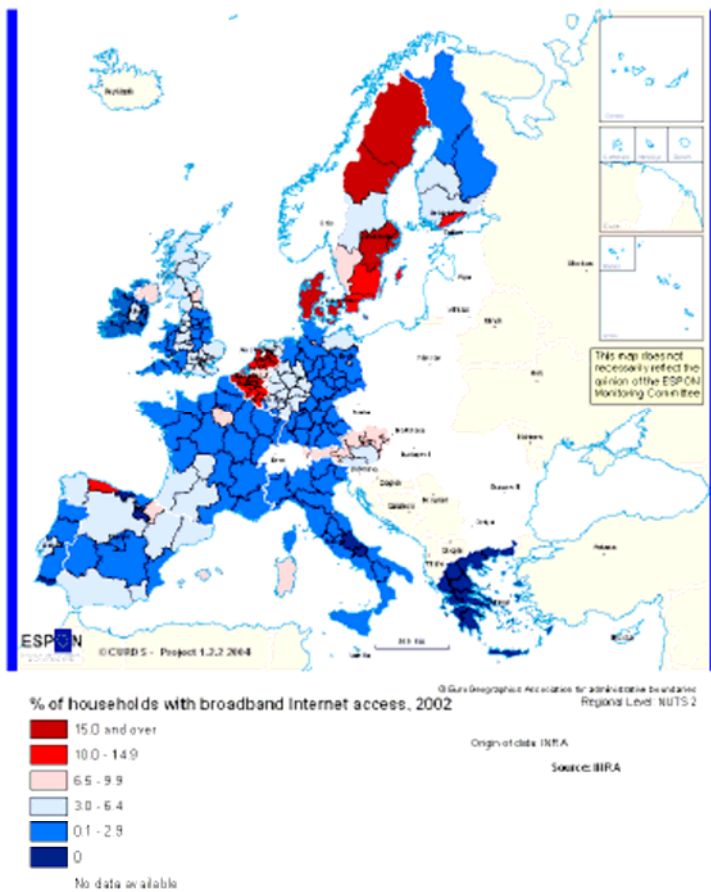
ESPACE ATLANTIQUE
Lignes de cabotage desservant des ports atlantiques (avril 2005)
Conteneur et trafic roulier



MAP 10

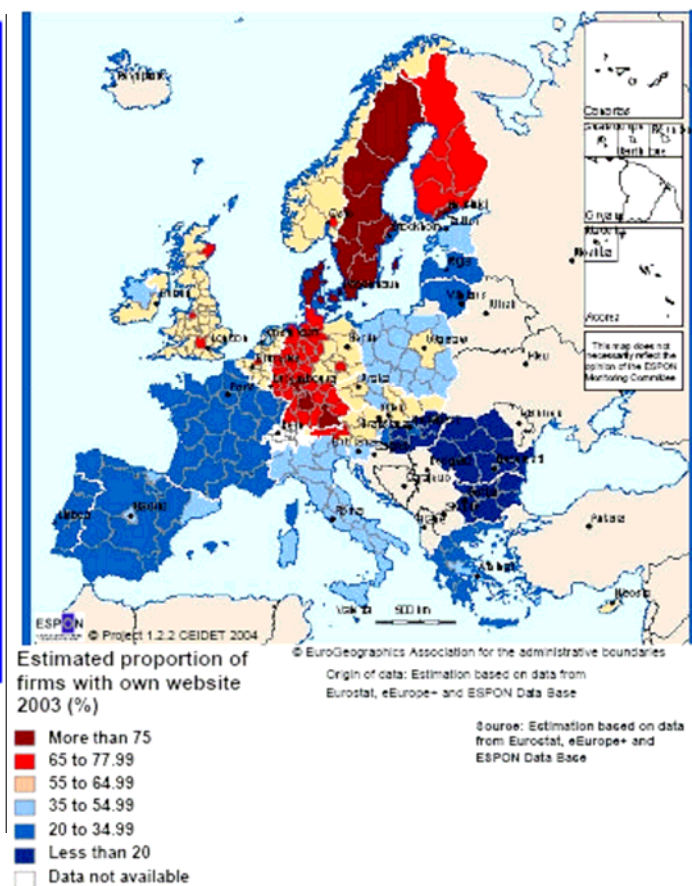
[Cf. § (86)]

**PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH
BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS, 2002**

**MAP 11**

[Cf. § (87)]

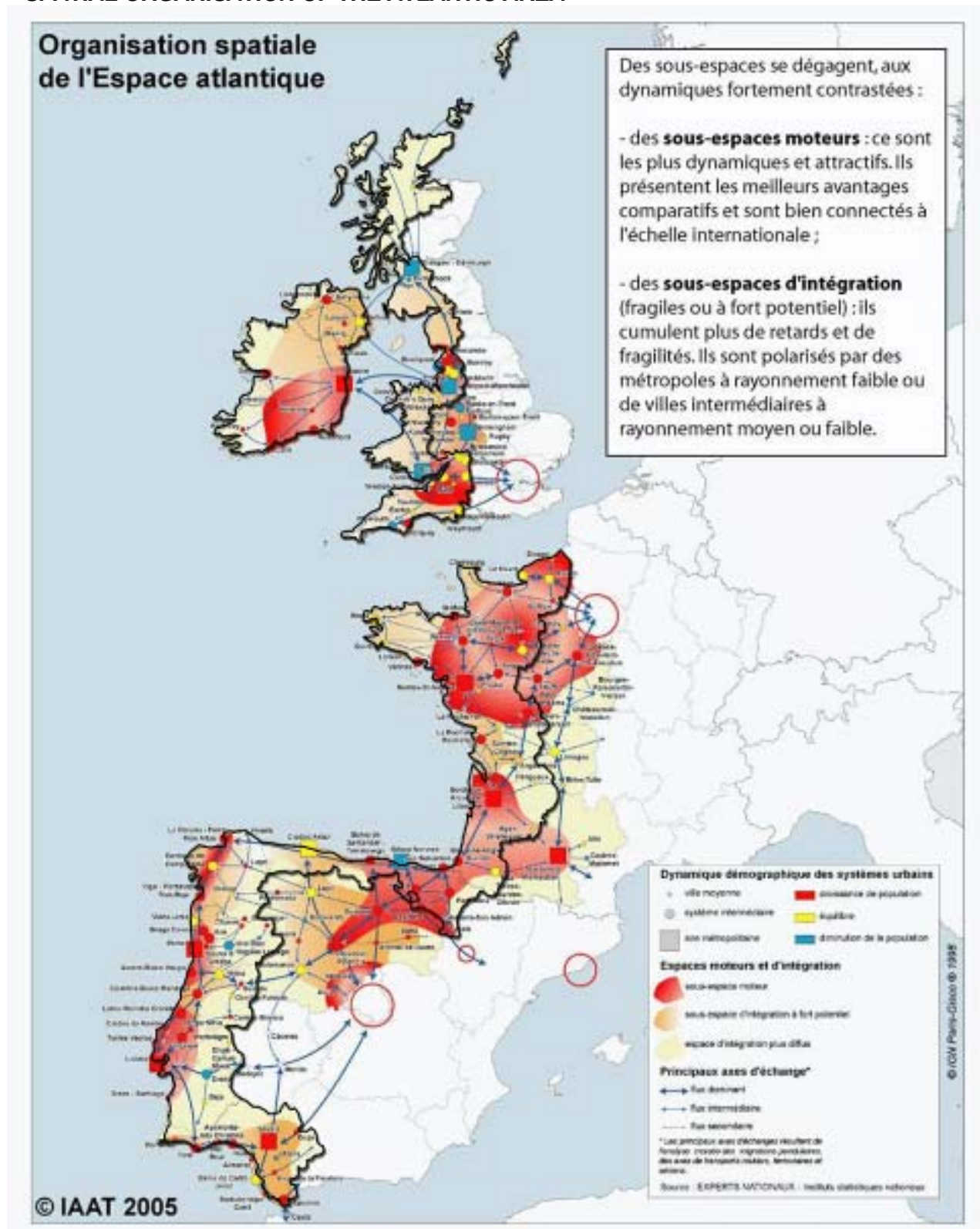
ESTIMATED PROPORTION OF FIRMS WITH OWN WEB-SITE



MAP 12

[Cf. § (91)]

SPATIAL ORGANISATION OF THE ATLANTIC AREA



SEPARATE VOLUMES

A. Ex ante evaluation Report

B. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report