

**Transnational Territorial Cooperation
Operational Programme for the
Atlantic Area 2007-2013**

Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

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PREFACE

ECOTEC Research and Consulting was commissioned by the Management Authority of the Atlantic Area to undertake the ex ante evaluation and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Operational Programme (OP) for the Trans-national Territorial Cooperation Objective for the Atlantic Area in the period 2007-2013.

The present report contains the **Strategic Environmental Assessment Report** prepared by the evaluation team for this Programme that will be subject to an open public consultation following Directive 2001/42/Ec on the evaluation of the effect of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

It draws together an analysis on the current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area and the Environmental assessment of the Programme, regarding both the consistency with EU environmental policy and the foreseeable environmental impact of the Programme in the period 2007-2013.

One single approach has been applied for all the countries involved in the Programme as regards the Strategic Environmental Assessment. Representatives of the different Member States, Working Group members and environmental administrations are being involved in the SEA process from an early stage (screening phase).

In accordance to the stipulations of the SEA directive mentioned above, a public consultation will be taking place on the following basis:

- 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 (October 2006).
- An official consultation for the public and the environmental authorities will be carried out starting 31 January 2007.

1. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF AN EX-ANTE EVALUATION

1.1 Introduction

This environmental assessment is 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 (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Directive. In Annex I of this Directive the contents of the environmental report are indicated.

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”. A Strategic Environmental Assessment shall be carried out for programmes and plans which are likely to have a significant environmental impact:

1. which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use and which set the framework for future development consent for projects listed in Annexes I and II to Directive 85/337/EEC (EIA = Environmental Impact Assessment);
2. which, in view of the likely effects on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 of 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

This report is an environmental assessment of the Draft Atlantic Area Programme.

1.2 Contents of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report

According to Annex I of Directive 2001/42/EC the environmental report consists of following elements:

1. an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;
2. the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme;
3. the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;
4. any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;

5. the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;
6. the likely significant effects¹ on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;
7. the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme;
8. an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;
9. a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring;
10. a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.

In this environmental report, the above mentioned elements will be described in five main chapters:

1. Chapter 2: Description of the programme (point 1);
2. Chapter 3: Description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area (points 2 to 4);
3. Chapter 4: Description of the environmental policy framework (point 5), based on the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme 2002-2012 and its 7 Thematic Strategies;
4. Chapter 5: Description of the likely significant effects of the programme on the environment (point 6);
5. Chapter 6: Description of the measures to prevent, reduce or offset these effects, including the monitoring measures (points 7 and 9).

Since the potential alternatives (point 8) mainly deal with the choice of objectives and actions and the internal distribution of financial means, this point will also be addressed in the “measures and monitoring” chapter. The report will be completed with an introductory chapter and a non-technical summary (point 10).

¹ These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergetic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects

1.3 Determining the environmental effects and their significance

Annex II of Directive 2001/42/EC describes the criteria for determining the likely significance of environmental effects:

The characteristics of the programme:

- the degree to which the programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;
- the degree to which the programme influences other plans and programmes;
- the relevance of the programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;
- environmental problems relevant to the programme;
- the relevance of the programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. waste management, water protection,...)

1. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
- the cumulative nature of the effects;
- the transboundary nature of the effects;
- the risks to human health of the environment (e.g. due to accidents);
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values and/of intensive land use;
- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.

The Atlantic Area Programme sets a framework for transnational cooperation small budget and “soft” (not infrastructure) projects within the Atlantic Area. 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.

It must be noted, however that the Atlantic Area Programme does not set binding directives to other plans or programmes. 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 will be at a strategic and generalised level.

The environmental effects description will be presented as compact tables with brief and to-the-point (bullet) texts. For each priority, objective and (potential) action of the Atlantic Area Programme, the first table will deal with the consistency with / relevance to the European environmental policy, and the second table with a description of the significant effects for each environmental aspect.

2. CONTENTS OF THE ATLANTIC AREA TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 2007-2013: PRIORITIES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Strategy of the Programme

The strategy responds to the identified opportunities and threats of the Atlantic Area transnational territorial cooperation area by setting out an overarching aim and by defining priority axes for the programming period 2007-2013. The Programme priorities take the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion into consideration. The priorities identify the range of actions and transnational projects envisaged to achieve the priority objectives.

While the cooperation area thus makes an important contribution to achieving the objectives set out in the Lisbon-Gothenburg strategy, Previous transnational cooperation [Atlantis and programmes under the previous INTERREG IIC (1997-1999) and INTERREG IIIB (2000-2006)] programmes have aimed to increase territorial integration by promoting a balanced spatial development and by supporting durable co-operation networks between organisations and institutions within the Atlantic Area. However, the Atlantic Area is a diverse territory where regional imbalances continue to present a challenge for territorial integration, and further cooperation efforts are deemed necessary to improve the integration and coherence of this macro-region.

The Atlantic Area Programme (2007-2013) presents the next phase of transnational territorial cooperation in the area, by building on the achievements of its predecessor programmes. The mutual learning process will for this period aim to achieve better territorial cohesion through transnational cooperation, thus strengthening the competitiveness and sustainability of the cooperation area. In doing so, the Operational Programme addresses the challenges formulated by the EU Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs, greater social cohesion and environmentally sustainable development patterns.

The Atlantic Area Programme 2007-2013 – reflecting the trends and tendencies of the region's socio-economic situation – will address those issues which require intervention at the transnational level. The Atlantic Area Programme will concentrate on the need to strengthen the knowledge economy by providing a more conducive climate for innovation (especially in maritime economy) and thus contribute to maintaining the competitiveness of the cooperation area. It will seek to actively maintain the natural marine and coastal environment and cultural heritage of the region alleviating negative environmental impacts on the territory. It will address the regional disparities in the region with a view to achieving better accessibility and connectivity across the territory and a balanced

settlement pattern. The Programme also promotes to actively strengthen the performance of urban and regional networks. In doing so, the Atlantic Area Programme will not substitute any national or EU-funded programmes in related areas, but will concentrate on achieving an added-value by demonstrating the transnational and territorial dimension of the envisaged actions.

Operations financed under the transnational territorial cooperation Programme for the Atlantic Area are set apart from any initiatives financed under cross-border for the following reasons: transnational cooperation involves larger regions compared to the cross-border cooperation component. Furthermore, transnational programmes focus on actions of relevance to the transnational territory, i.e. issues which nation-states or regions cannot solve alone or for which transnational cooperation offers considerable benefits. Its area of operation is thus distinctive, as are the types of projects that will be financed in the new programming period.

The overall aim of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme on transnational territorial development (2007-2013) is 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”

The programme will be delivered through four priorities of strategic character which are of particular relevance to the Atlantic Area:

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

In order to receive funding, projects have to be transnational. The requirement for transnationality implies that:

- the project addresses a topic of importance for, or having an impact on the whole or an important part of the Atlantic Area cooperation area;
- the project develops model solutions and provides for exchange of know-how and learning in a transnational context through the involvement of relevant actors in different countries of the Programme area;
- the project provides joint strategic actions, programmes or concepts for the whole of Atlantic Area or large contiguous parts of the transnational cooperation area.

The project proposal should aim to produce results and establish structures which will last beyond the lifetime of the project, i.e. have a long-term perspective, are durable and lay the ground for further investments or initiatives.

The following types of projects could be supported by the Programme:

- Feasibility or supporting studies.
- Plans for territorial arrangements on macro-regional scale.
- Elaboration of strategies for sustainable development, local strategic plans and sectoral plans of action.
- Exchange of transnational experiences, networks of collaboration and transference of knowledge.
- Plans and promotion of cooperation.
- Comparative transnational studies related to concepts of territorial development.
- Previous technical studies on investment preparation (evaluation of the territorial cohesion, environmental and territorial impact).
- Small-scale investments. (Examples of financed infrastructures: communication networks, information centers and pilot actions and demonstrations.)
- Elaboration of surveys, comparative analyses and data bases.
- Identification and design of sustainable alternatives, elaboration of good practice catalogues and formation and sensibility campaigns.
- Design and elaboration of tools and management methods.

All projects should be linked to concrete actions; study projects without follow up concrete actions will not be supported.

Project proposals should positively contribute to the sustainable territorial development of the Atlantic Area by incorporating the following three cross-cutting themes in their outline, methodology and actions:

- to strengthen the economic competitiveness of the Atlantic Area (cfr. Lisbon agenda);
- to increase the environmental sustainability of the Atlantic Area (cfr. Gothenburg agenda);
- to achieve a stronger territorial cohesion of the Atlantic Area by reducing territorial disparities, reflecting the aim of the EU Cohesion Policy.

2.2 Priorities and specific objectives

In the following paragraphs an overview is given of the four priorities with their specific objectives.

2.2.1 PRIORITY 1: *Promote Transnational Innovations Networks*

A OBJECTIVE 1.1: DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE TRANSFERS BETWEEN COMPANIES AND RESEARCH CENTRES

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. Therefore the scope of this objective clearly encompasses, but is not limited to, the maritime economy.

B OBJECTIVE 1.2: ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES IN MARITIME ECONOMY NICHEs OF EXCELLENCE

Objective 1.2 concentrates on niches of excellence, where the level and quality of R&D+i investments are such that the strengthening of a globally 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, development of fishing techniques and marine cultures, protection and promotion of the marine environment.

C OBJECTIVE 1.3: STIMULATE ECONOMIC CONVERSION AND DIVERSIFICATION BY PROMOTING THE REGIONAL ENDOGENOUS POTENTIAL

Following the Operational Programme, objective 1.3 aims to support this move on redirecting regional economies, to exploit their endogenous potential, by seizing opportunities specifically offered 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.

2.2.2 PRIORITY 2: Protect, Secure and Enhance the Marine and Coastal Environment Sustainably

A OBJECTIVE 2.1: IMPROVE MARITIME SAFETY

- Priority should be given to operational-type of projects over study and observation projects.

B OBJECTIVE 2.2: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE RESOURCES OF MARINE SPACES

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.

C OBJECTIVE 2.3: EXPLOIT THE RENEWABLE ENERGY POTENTIAL OF THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

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 supporting various kinds of transnational experiments and pilot projects.

D OBJECTIVE 2.4: PROTECT AND PROMOTE NATURAL SPACES, WATER RESOURCES AND COASTAL ZONES

The reinforced protection of natural areas is a major issue, which calls for a better coverage of many regions by Natura 2000 sites. 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. The purpose of Objective 2.3 is to support all types of transnational action contributing to nature protection and ICZM in the Atlantic Area.

2.2.3 PRIORITY 3: Improve Accesibility and Internal Links

A OBJECTIVE 3.1: PROMOTE INTEROPERABILITY AND CONTINUITY OF EXISTING TRANSPORT NETWORKS, AND SEA/ROAD/RAIL/ AIR INTERMODALITY

The purpose of objective 3.2 is to support projects providing appropriate transnational responses to a number of issues regarding interoperability and the use of transnational transport links.

B OBJECTIVE 3.2: PROMOTE SHORT-SEA SHIPPING AND COOPERATION BETWEEN PORTS

Atlantic seaports, despite their relatively limited size and competitiveness, retain a 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.

2.2.4 PRIORITY 4: Promote Transnational Synergies in Sustainable Urban and Regional Development

A OBJECTIVE 4.1: POOL RESOURCES AND SKILLS IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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 or the depopulation of fragile rural areas (in particular the provision of services of general economic interest), local transport and mobility policy

B OBJECTIVE 4.2: MAKE CITIES AND REGIONS MORE INFLUENTIAL AND ATTRACTIVE THROUGH NETWORKING

Transnational cooperation projects geared towards a joint promotion of regions in order to improve their international image and position and to make them more attractive places to invest will be supported under Objective 4.2

C OBJECTIVE 4.3: CONSERVE AND PROMOTE ATLANTIC CULTURAL HERITAGE OF
TRANSNATIONAL INTEREST

The Atlantic cultural heritage must be maintained in the perspective of the well-being and cultural openness of the 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.

3 CURRENT STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE ATLANTIC AREA

The following description is based on various sources including the Atlantic Area Operational Programme 2000-2006, Europe's Third Environmental Assessment Report (the so-called Kiev Report, 2003²), and information stemming from different projects co-financed by the Atlantic Area Operational Programme 2000-2006.

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 in common identity, one to be protected and promoted.

3.1 General remarks on the environment and on Europe's environmental policy

Environmental policies have in several fields led to significant improvements in and reduced pressures on Europe's environment:

- substantial reductions in emissions of substances that deplete the ozone layer;
- reductions in air emissions and improvements in air quality;
- reductions in point source emissions to water leading to improved water quality;
- some improved protection of biodiversity through the designation and protection of habitats.

This progress was realised mainly through "traditional" measures regulating products and production processes, and protecting important nature sites. In waste management, environmental policies have not led to significant overall reduction of use of natural resources so far, because improvements in waste prevention and recycling were neutralised by an increase in total waste volume related to the general economic growth.

Marked economic and social transition since the pan-European process began has resulted in environmental improvements in some areas. The transition of Europe from a manufacturing and agricultural society to a more service-oriented society has led to overall reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases.

² The Kiev report, produced by the European Environment Agency, is the most recent comprehensive overview of the status of the environment in Europe.

On the other hand, economic growth is making the achievement of individual burden-sharing targets for greenhouse gas emissions challenging for many European countries. Urban development and transport infrastructure is sealing soil and fragmenting habitats in many places. Overfishing is threatening marine natural resources. Because of the link with economic growth, progress is unlikely to be sustained and many negative impacts, e.g. in the transport field, are likely to be exacerbated.

The implementation of more integrated approaches to policy making needs to be accelerated if Europe is to ensure proper protection of the environment and meet its aspirations on sectoral integration and sustainable development: not only regulatory measures to deal with specific environmental problems, but also economic and other instruments to deal with the environmental impacts of sectoral activities.

3.2 Economic development and related pressures on the environment

3.2.1 ENERGY

Total energy consumption and related pressures on the environment fell in Europe in the 1990s but the impact of energy use on climate change appears destined to increase, unless fossil fuels become less dominant and large improvements in energy efficiency are made. The energy sector remains the dominant contributor to climate change. Efficiency and use of renewables (wind, solar power) must be increased, especially if the projected rundown of nuclear power takes place. Emissions of acidifying air pollutants from the energy sector did decrease substantially.

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. 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.

3.2.2 TRANSPORT

The lack of accessibility of the Atlantic Space is clearly identified as a brake in the well-balanced and polycentric development of the European territory. In freight transport, the road share has increased at the expense of rail. The volume of rail freight has remained stable or diminished slightly in the Atlantic Area regions. There is remarkable growth of maritime traffic in recent years is likely to continue, but traffic levels remain low.

3.2.3 TOURISM

Tourism is one of Europe's fastest growing sectors and a strong contributor to transport growth. In addition tourism brings further pressures at destination areas through water stress, waste generation and land fragmentation. Policy measures to promote more sustainable tourism are progressing.

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. 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. In France, Atlantic tourism is constantly growing. It damages the environment – including the landscapes – less than Mediterranean tourism, even though the exponential growth of holiday homes is a problem in this respect.

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.

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

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.

3.2.4 AGRICULTURE

The Atlantic Area is Europe's leading agricultural producer. This status has its price in terms of standardisation of the landscape, drying-out of wetlands and other effects of intensification of farming. Paradoxically, this intensification has also led to land being under-farmed or even left fallow in the regions where the land structures and the distancing of markets have not allowed it, notably in Portugal.

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.

3.2.5 FISHERIES

There are also concerns about the consequences of the intensification of fishing: alteration of the sea-beds and reduction of halieutic resources. Many marine fish stocks are below levels that can sustain their populations, due to overfishing by efficient, modernised fleets, despite the considerable reduction in fleet capacity. Aquaculture has grown dramatically in production (mussels in Galicia, oysters in Poitou-Charentes and Lower Normandy, salmon in Scotland and Ireland) and hence also in environmental impacts (nutrient status of waters, wild populations).

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. The importance of fisheries in the economy remains low 1% of GNP in Portugal, for example, and 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.

3.2.6 THE MARITIME HERITAGE

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.

The maritime heritage of the Atlantic Area regions represents a common identity. Ports and navigation 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.

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 areas is a major issue.

3.2.7 RESEARCH

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.

3.2.8 THE COASTAL SHIFT OF URBANISATION

As things stand at present, the Atlantic coastline seems less saturated than other coastlines in Europe. In the areas where natural zones dominate – Scotland, most of the Irish coast, 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 most 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 the Algarve, 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.

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.

3.3 Environmental developments

3.3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is considered to be partly responsible for the increased risk of floods in certain areas and droughts in other. At the current rate, Europe will be far short of its Kyoto targets for greenhouse gas emissions, but the costs of climate mitigation could be reduced significantly through the use of the Kyoto mechanisms (market for greenhouse gas allowances). But the Kyoto Protocol is only the first step towards “sustainable” greenhouse gas concentrations and climate conditions.

3.3.2 STRATOSPHERIC OZONE DEPLETION

There is a gradual fall in the concentration of chlorine-contaminating ozone-depleting substances in the troposphere, but increased ultraviolet radiation will continue and its damaging effects on human health and ecosystems are likely to persist for a considerable time.

3.3.3 AIR POLLUTION

The quality of the Atlantic air is, on average, one of the bests in Europe, However, air pollution, under particular circumstances, can be considered a problem in a number of Atlantic cities.

3.3.4 WASTE

Waste is a major issue in every European country and waste quantities are generally growing. De-industrialisation has brought with it a large number of urban wastelands, often with contaminated soils. The generation of waste reflects a loss of materials and energy and imposes economic and increasing environmental costs on society for its collection, treatment and disposal. Total waste generation has only been decoupled from economic growth by increased prevention and re-use in a few countries. Recycling initiatives are steadily growing in all countries involved. Many cities (Bristol, Cardiff, Nantes, Bilbao, Lisbon, etc.) have recently distinguished themselves with emblematic urban redevelopment operations.

3.3.5 WATER

Water resources in many areas of Europe are under threat from a range of human activities. Drinking water quality is still a concern throughout Europe. Water quality is generally better in the Atlantic Area than in other EU regions.

The quality of the Atlantic 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.

3.3.6 TECHNOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HAZARDS

Technological hazards (e.g. shiprecking, accidents in industry) and natural hazards (e.g. flooding) will continue to occur throughout the Atlantic Area.

Among the technological hazards, those related to petroleum facilities and transport cannot be ignored on the Atlantic seaboard. The issue is a major one. 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.

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 climatic instability seems to be aggravating these risks. The risk of earthquakes is not negligible in the Pyrenees and in Portugal.

A holistic approach to hazard management (better prevention and emergency planning) should help to reduce the number and consequences of technological accidents and reduce the impacts of some natural disasters.

3.3.7 BIODIVERSITY

In addition to a responsibility to reduce its “ecological footprint” on the rest of the world, the Atlantic Regions have a global responsibility to preserve the character of its varied ecosystems and landscapes, and to conserve the migratory species that cross its regions and the threatened species that it hosts. The number and total size of protected areas is remarkable, but is not likely to increase much further, because increasing land-use pressures from transport, urbanisation and agriculture are diminishing the remaining “protectable” semi-natural remote areas. Existing protected sites are facing similar land-use pressures.

These descriptions are very general, but the nature of such an Operational Programme does not allow a more detailed approach. A fully elaborated SEA report – as would be appropriate for a detailed and geographically well-defined regional development plan – does not seem feasible nor necessary when evaluating a Programme like this.

A detailed description of the current environmental state of such a vast area as Atlantic Area for example would not contribute to a more relevant environmental assessment. In general, the SEA *process* – the way in which environmental concerns were taken into account during the elaboration of the Programme, with a focus on the project selection procedure and the monitoring system (because the real environmental impact comes from the concrete projects and not from the Programme that finances them) – is reckoned to be more important than the SEA *report* itself.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

The environmental policy framework that will be used as a reference to evaluate the consistency of the Atlantic Area Programme are:

- The **Sixth Community Environment Action Programme 2002-2012 (EAP6)**³. 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.

4.2 Priorities of the Environment Action Programme 2002-2012

The Programme aims at four priorities:

1. climate change;
2. nature and biodiversity;
3. environment and health and quality of life;
4. natural resources and wastes.

4.2.1 PRIORITY 1: CLIMATE CHANGE

Aim: emphasising climate change as an outstanding challenge of the next 10 years and beyond and contributing to the long term objective of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

Objectives:

- ratification and entering into force of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations framework convention on climate change and fulfilment of commitments towards reduction in emissions by 2008-2012 compared to 1990 levels for the European Community as a whole;

³ Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002, OJ L 242 10.09.02

- realisation by 2005 of demonstrable progress in achieving the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol;
- placing the Community in a credible position to advocate an international agreement on more stringent reduction targets for the second commitment period for by the Kyoto Protocol.

Actions:

- implementing international climate commitments including the Kyoto Protocol;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the energy sector;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions in industrial production;
- reducing greenhouse gas emissions in other sectors;
- using other appropriate instruments (fiscal measures,...).

4.2.2 PRIORITY 2: NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

Aim: protecting, conserving, restoring and developing the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna with the aim of halting desertification and the loss of biodiversity, including diversity of genetic resources, both in the European Union and on a global scale.

Objectives:

- halting biodiversity decline with the aim to reach this objective by 2010, including prevention and mitigation of impacts of invasive alien species and genotypes;
- protection and appropriate restoration of nature and biodiversity from damaging pollution;
- conservation, appropriate restoration and sustainable use of marine environment, coasts and wetlands;
- conservation and appropriate restoration of areas of significant landscape values including cultivated as well as sensitive areas;
- conservation of species and habitats, with special concern to preventing habitat fragmentation;
- promotion of a sustainable use of the soil, with particular attention to preventing erosion, deterioration, contamination and desertification.

Actions on:

- biodiversity;
- accidents and disasters;
- soil protection;
- sustainable management of extractive industries;

- integration of conservation and restoration of landscape values into other policies including tourism;
- integration of biodiversity considerations in agricultural policies;
- sustainable use of the seas and conservation of marine ecosystems;
- forests;
- genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

4.2.3 PRIORITY 3: ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Aim: contributing to a high level of quality of life and social well being for citizens by providing an environment where the level of pollution does not give rise to harmful effects on human health and the environment and by encouraging a sustainable urban development.

Objectives:

- achieving better understanding of the threats to environment and human health;
- contributing to a better quality of life through an integrated approach concentrating on urban areas;
- aiming to achieve by 2020 that chemicals are only produced and used in ways that do not lead to a significant negative impact on health and the environment;
- substitution of dangerous chemicals by safer chemicals or safer alternative technologies not entailing the use of chemicals;
- reducing the impacts of pesticides on human health and the environment;
- achieving quality levels of ground and surface water without significant negative impacts and risks, and sustainable rates of extraction from water resources;
- achieving levels of air quality without significant negative impacts and risks;
- substantially reducing the number of people regularly affected by long-term average levels of (traffic) noise.

Actions on:

- reinforcement of Community research programmes and scientific expertise;
- chemicals;
- pesticides;
- the sustainable use and high quality of water;
- noise;
- urban environment.

4.2.4 PRIORITY 4: NATURAL RESOURCES AND WASTES

Aim: better resource efficiency and resource and waste management to bring about more sustainable production and consumption patterns, thereby decoupling the use of resources and the generation of waste from the rate of economic growth and aiming to ensure that the consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources does not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment.

Objectives:

- aiming at ensuring that the consumption of resources and their associated impacts do not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment and breaking the linkages between economic growth and resource use;
- achieving a significant overall reduction in the volumes of waste;
- a significant reduction in the quantity of waste going to disposal;
- encouraging re-use for wastes that are still generated.

Actions:

- developing a thematic strategy on the sustainable use and management of resources;
- developing and implementing measures on waste prevention and management;
- developing a thematic strategy on waste recycling;
- developing or revising the legislation on wastes.

4.3 Environmental Thematic Strategies

Based on the four priorities, the Sixth Environment Action Programme required the European Commission to prepare Thematic Strategies covering the following seven areas:

1. air pollution (adopted 21/09/2005);
2. prevention and recycling of waste (adopted 21/12/2005);
3. protection and conservation of the marine environment (adopted 24/10/2005);
4. soil (adopted 22/09/2006);
5. sustainable use of pesticides (adopted 12/07/2006);
6. sustainable use of resources (adopted 21/12/2005);
7. urban environment (adopted 11/01/2006).

These Thematic Strategies work with themes rather than with specific pollutants of economic activities. They take a longer-term perspective in setting clear environmental objectives to around 2020 and will thus provide a stable policy framework. Finally, they focus on identifying the most appropriate instruments to deliver European policy goals in

the least burdensome and most cost effective way possible. These strategies are often cross-cutting (especially the one on urban environment), and synergies with other policies are vital.

4.3.1 AIR POLLUTION

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 3 (“Environment and health and quality of life”). The thematic strategy (adopted 21/09/2005) sets health and environmental objectives and emission reduction targets for the main pollutants. In order to achieve the set objectives by 2020, there should be a reduction relative to the emissions of 2000 of:

- SO₂: -82%;
- NO_x: -60%;
- VOCs: -51%;
- ammonia: -27%;
- primary PM_{2.5}: -59%.

Actions:

- making environment legislation work better: simplification of air quality legislation; revision of the National Emission Ceiling Directive; coherence with other environment policies;
- integrating air quality concerns into other policy areas: energy, transport, agriculture, Structural Funds, including the international dimension (USA, China,...).

4.3.2 PREVENTION AND RECYCLING OF WASTE

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 4 (“Natural resources and wastes”). The long-term goal of the thematic strategy (adopted 21/12/2005) is for the EU to become a recycling society, that seeks to avoid waste and uses waste as a resource. With high environmental reference standards in place the internal market will facilitate recycling and recovery activities. The impact of the proposed changes should be:

- less waste to landfill;
- more compost and energy recovery from waste;
- more and better recycling.

Actions:

- a renewed emphasis on full implementation of existing legislation;
- simplification and modernisation of existing legislation;
- introduction of life-cycle thinking into waste policy;
- promotion of more ambitious waste prevention policies;
- better knowledge and information;
- development of common reference standards for recycling;
- further elaboration of the EU's recycling policy.

4.3.3 PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 2 (“Nature and biodiversity”). The objective of the thematic strategy (adopted 24/10/2005) is to protect and restore Europe's oceans and seas and ensure that human activities are carried out in a sustainable manner so that current and future generations enjoy and benefit from biologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas that are clean, safe, healthy and productive. A framework for enhanced cooperation – legally binding but respecting subsidiarity – should ensure:

- a high level of protection for Europe's oceans and seas;
- an improved knowledge base to inform policy making;
- integrated and cost-effective actions to reduce pressures;
- effective monitoring and assessment to make sure goals are achieved and actions deliver results.

4.3.4 SOIL PROTECTION

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 2 (“Nature and biodiversity”). The thematic strategy should set qualitative and quantitative objectives and the means to achieve them, in order to:

- put an end to the accumulation in soil of substances which pose an environmental and health hazard;
- reverse the alarming trend towards erosion, compaction and sealing, the removal and contamination of soil;
- protect soil in its role in storing CO₂, securing water resources and preserving biodiversity;
- protect soil for the sustainable production of food and renewable resources.

4.3.5 SUSTAINABLE USE OF PESTICIDES

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 3 (“Environment and health and quality of life”). The thematic strategy sets out its objectives as follows:

- to minimise the hazards and risks to health and environment from the use of pesticides;
- to improve controls on the use and distribution of pesticides;
- to reduce the levels of harmful active substances, in particular by replacing the most dangerous by safer (including non-chemical) alternatives;
- to encourage the use of low-input or pesticide-free crop farming;
- to establish a transparent system for reporting and monitoring progress including the development of appropriate indicators.

4.3.6 SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

This theme falls (mainly) under Priority 4 (“Natural resources and wastes”). The overall objective of the thematic strategy (adopted 21/12/2005) is to reduce the negative environmental impacts generated by the use of natural resources in a growing economy, a concept referred to as “decoupling”.

Actions:

- improve our understanding and knowledge of European resource use, its negative environmental impact and significance in the EU and globally;
- develop tools to monitor and report progress in the EU, Member States and economic sectors;
- foster the application of strategic approaches and processes both in economic sectors and in the member states and encourage them to develop related plans and programmes;
- raise awareness among stakeholders and citizens of the significant negative environmental impact of resource use.

4.3.7 URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This theme falls under Priority 3 (“Environment and health and quality of life”). The measures offered under the thematic strategy (adopted 11/01/2006) aim to contribute to a better implementation of existing EU environment policies and legislation at the local level by supporting and encouraging local authorities to adopt a more integrated approach to urban management and by inviting Member States to support this process and exploit the opportunities offered at EU level. If implemented at all level, the strategy will ultimately contribute to improve the quality of the urban environment, making cities more attractive and healthier places to live, work and invest in, and reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities on the wider environment.

Actions:

- guidance on integrated environmental management;
- guidance on sustainable urban transport plans;
- support for EU wide exchange of best practices;
- a Commission Internet Portal for Local Authorities;
- training;
- drawing on other Community Support Programmes (cohesion policy, research).

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ATLANTIC AREA PROGRAMME

The Strategic Environmental Assessment, as part of the ex-ante evaluation of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme, 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 and the 7 Thematic Strategies (see chapter 4);
- A description of the expected/potential environmental effects of the objectives and actions of the Programme, divided by theme, as it is contained in Annex 1, point f of Directive 2001/42/CE:
 - Biodiversity
 - Population
 - Human Health
 - Fauna
 - Flora
 - Soil
 - Water
 - Air
 - Climatic factors
 - Material assets
 - Culture & Heritage
 - Landscape

5.1 Assessment of relevance and consistency between Atlantic Area Programme and EU Environmental Policy

The Atlantic Area Program is aligned to the EU environmental policy priorities and legislation.

The matrix below reveals that none of the objectives of the Atlantic Area is incompatible with the priorities of the Sixth Environment Action Programme or the Environmental Thematic Strategies.

| Atlantic Area Operational Programme | Relationship with 6 th EAP Priorities | Relationship with Thematic Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks | | |
| | 6th EAP Priorities | Thematic Strategies |
| <p>Obj 1.1: Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research centres of different countries; 2. 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; 3. Pooling expertise in transnational technical assistance networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes; 4. Pooling results of technology-watch systems and training on economic intelligence techniques within transnational partnerships; 5. Improving the access to innovation financing, e.g. making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up transnational innovation trusts; 6. Developing transnational partnerships around European centres of excellence specialised in sectors with high technology contents. | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all seven Thematic Strategies</p> |
| <p>Obj 1.2: Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Facilitating the formation or consolidation of transnational networks of industrial clusters of the maritime economy; 8. Transnational transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge between research centres and enterprises, SMEs in particular, of the maritime economy 9. Elaboration of joint financial engineering instruments to support innovation in the maritime economy. 10. Transnational pooling of resource to improve the innovation environment of the maritime economy e.g. provision of joint business service, assistance to workforce mobility, joint scientific and vocational training | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all seven Thematic Strategies</p> |
| <p>Obj 1.3: Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting the regional endogenous potential Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Exploiting the potential of new ICT to favour development of international trade circuits for regional products. 12. Creating transnational teams specialised in measures to enhance innovation capacities, to pool together or benchmark the experience gained in the various national frameworks and experiment on transferring it to regions undergoing a restructuring process; 13. Joint marketing of various types of innovative sustainable tourism, e.g. oenotourism, submarine tourism; 14. Transnational transfer of know-how acquired in the field of innovative environmentally friendly agriculture; | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> <p>However a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with all seven Thematic Strategies</p> |

| Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably | | |
|---|--|--|
| | 6 th EAP Priorities | Thematic Strategies |
| <p>Obj 2.1: Improve maritime safety</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Identifying, evaluating and planning safe havens for ships in distress; 16. Identifying needs and increasing the capacity of available tug boats; 17. Improvement of the response capability, tools, action plans and awareness at all levels; 18. Training personnel of the local authorities and fishermen; 19. Creation of operational oceanographic services to monitor pollution at sea and evaluate its seriousness. | <p>Positive direct contribution to priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and biodiversity • Environment and health and quality of life | <p>Positive direct contribution to the Thematic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of the marine environment • Prevention and recycling of waste • soil |
| <p>Obj 2.2: Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Experimentation of joint tools and methods to monitor the evolution of halieutic resources and sea-beds; 21. Defining and implementing transnational strategies to protect and restore marine ecosystems (for a same sea basin or for the entire cooperation area) 22. 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 23. Coordination and exchange of knowledge between authorities responsible for national management plans foreseen in the EU Marine Strategy Directive, with joint implementation of transnationally relevant parts of these plans | <p>Positive direct contribution to priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and biodiversity | <p>Positive direct contribution to the Thematic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of the marine environment • Sustainable use of resources |
| <p>Obj 2.3: Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Joint experimentation, or supporting existing such centres to explore the potential of innovative source of renewable energy, for example sea current energy 25. Joint feasibility or financial engineering studies for large investments in off-shore wind energy 26. Transnational pooling of experience and monitor progress made in the sector of marine renewable energies 27. Joint demonstration pilot projects to test experimental types of renewable energy. | <p>Positive direct contribution to priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • Natural Resources and wastes | <p>Positive direct contribution to the Thematic Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Pollution • Sustainable use of resources |
| <p>Obj 2.4: Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 28. Extension of the coverage of the cooperation area by interconnected Natura 2000 protected sites; 29. Implementation of a joint conservation strategy of nature reserves, concentrating on transnational aspects, for example the protection of migratory species. 30. Development of transnational ICZM expertise, handling transfers of know-how between the experiments in different countries; 31. Designing model solutions and testing new methods within transnational partnerships to remedy the erosion of coastal lines. 32. Joint development of new planning techniques to anticipate the impact of climate change on coastal areas | <p>Positive direct contribution to all priorities</p> | <p>Positive direct contribution to the Thematic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of the marine environment |

| Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links | | |
|--|---|--|
| | 6 th EAP Priorities | Thematic Strategies |
| <p>Obj 3.1: Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 33. Actions favouring a better use of transnational rail links: better connection with multimodal platforms, optimization of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops, engine driver training, experimental launch of rail motorways, etc 34. 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.) 35. Feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses concerning the creation of logistic platforms; 36. Testing of possible responses to interoperability problems 37. 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 38. Design and testing of transnational strategies to improve the information about public transport services and optimize international trips of passengers (e.g. integrated ticketing) 39. Transfer of know-how about innovative solutions to improve the local accessibility of regional airports | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> |
| <p>Obj 3.2: Promote short-sea shipping and cooperation between ports</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40. Contributions of the launch of the first experimental motorway of the sea; 41. Joint development of smart technologies to improve the efficiency of SSS, e.g. real time tracking of cargoes; 42. 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; 43. Joint promotional campaigns for maritime transport, raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages; 44. Sharing “business intelligence” between ports, for example joint market studies. | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> <p>however, a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change) <p>actions may have a marginal negative impact on Priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and biodiversity | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> <p>however, a part of the envisaged innovations and knowledge should aim at improving environmental performance, and therefore this objective could have a positive indirect relationship with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Pollution <p>actions may have a marginal negative impact on Thematic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and conservation of the marine environment |

| Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development | | |
|--|---|---|
| | 6 th EAP Priorities | Thematic Strategies |
| <p>Obj 4.1: Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45. Transfers of know-how acquired in provision of a universal service (mail distribution or internet access, for example) in fragile rural zones between partner regions. 46. Creation and running of a joint agency of sustainable development; 47. Joint supply of services of general socio-economic interest through co-operation of cities and regions and wise use of ICT solutions (e.g. health services, education services, employment services) 48. Joint distance learning programmes intended for officials of regional and local administrations offering specialised teaching modules on various urban or rural development issues | <p>Positive indirect contribution to priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and health and quality of life | <p>Positive indirect contribution to the Thematic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban environment |
| <p>Obj 4.2: Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49. Creation of a joint public communication agency 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); 50. Implementation of a joint strategy to attract investors in a transnational network of regions or to promote their foreign trade (e.g. label creation, transnational Chamber of Commerce, commercial attachés abroad); 51. Transnational network of Atlantic regions and their NGOs engaged in decentralised cooperation with developing countries. | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> |
| <p>Obj 4.3: Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52. Joint professional training in cultural heritage conservation, specialised in issues of common interest for the Atlantic heritage, for example the restoration of bocage landscapes or the preservation of Celtic sites; 53. Joint promotion of historic places linked by a transnational theme, such as the ports from which the great explorers set out on their voyages of discovery⁴, in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism; 54. Joint labelling and communication strategy within transnational networks of regions hosting prominent sites of European culture (e.g. Mont Saint Michel, Santiago de Compostela) or included in the UNESCO list of the world-wide heritage (e.g. Le Havre); 55. Transnational pooling of archaeological expertise and research in excavation sites linked by a common feature of the Atlantic heritage. | <p>No apparent direct relationship with 6th EAP Priorities</p> | <p>No apparent direct relationship with Thematic Strategies</p> |

⁴ Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus, Diego Cam, Bartholomeu Dias, Magellan, Jacques Cartier, James Cook, etc.

5.2 Assessment of Environmental Impact of the Atlantic Area Programme

| Atlantic Area Operational Programme | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks | | | | |
| | biodiversity | population | human health | fauna & flora |
| <p>Obj 1.1: Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research centres of different countries; 2. 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; 3. Pooling expertise in transnational technical assistance networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes; 4. Pooling results of technology-watch systems and training on economic intelligence techniques within transnational partnerships; 5. Improving the access to innovation financing, e.g. making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up transnational innovation trusts; 6. Developing transnational partnerships around European centres of excellence specialised in sectors with high technology contents. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.2: Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Facilitating the formation or consolidation of transnational networks of industrial clusters of the maritime economy; 8. Transnational transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge between research centres and enterprises, SMEs in particular, of the maritime economy 9. Elaboration of joint financial engineering instruments to support innovation in the maritime economy. 10. Transnational pooling of resource to improve the innovation environment of the maritime economy e.g. provision of joint business service, assistance to workforce mobility, joint scientific and vocational training. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.3: Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting the regional endogenous potential</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Exploiting the potential of new ICT to favour development of international trade circuits for regional products. 13. Transnational teams specialised in measures to enhance innovation capacities, to pool together or benchmark the experience gained in the various national frameworks and experiment on transferring it to regions undergoing a restructuring process; 14. Stimulating the emergence of regional clusters 15. Joint marketing of various types of innovative sustainable tourism, e.g. oenotourism, submarine tourism; 16. Transnational transfer of know-how acquired in the field of innovative environmentally friendly agriculture; | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|---|---|
| | biodiversity | population | human health | fauna & flora |
| <p>Obj 2.1: Improve maritime safety</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Identifying, evaluating and planning safe havens for ships in distress; 18. Identifying needs and increasing the capacity of available tug boats; 19. Improvement of the response capability, tools, action plans and awareness at all levels; 20. Training personnel of the local authorities and fishermen; 21. Creation of operational oceanographic services to monitor pollution at sea and evaluate its seriousness. | No significant direct impact. However as these actions have the finality of improving maritime safety, and reducing the risk of pollution, actions may have a positive impact | No significant impact | No significant direct impact. However as these actions have the finality of improving maritime safety, and reducing the risk of pollution, actions may have a positive impact | No significant direct impact. However as these actions have the finality of improving maritime safety, and reducing the risk of pollution, actions may have a positive impact |
| <p>Obj 2.2: Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Experimentation of joint tools and methods to monitor the evolution of halieutic resources and sea-beds; 23. Defining and implementing transnational strategies to protect and restore marine ecosystems (for a same sea basin or for the entire cooperation area) 24. Coordination and exchange of knowledge between authorities responsible for national management plans foreseen in the EU Marine Strategy Directive, with joint implementation of transnationally relevant parts of these plans; | Possible positive marginal impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | Possible positive marginal impact |
| <p>Obj 2.3: Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25. Joint exploration, at transnational level, of the potential of innovative sources of renewable energy, for example sea current energy 26. Joint feasibility or financial engineering studies for large investments in off-shore wind energy 27. Creation of a transnational agency to pool experience and monitor progress made in the sector of marine renewable energies 28. Joint demonstration pilot projects to test experimental types of renewable energy. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 2.4: Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 29. Extension of the coverage of the cooperation area by interconnected Natura 2000 protected sites; 30. Implementation of a joint conservation strategy of nature reserves, concentrating on transnational aspects, for example the protection of migratory species. 31. Development of transnational ICZM expertise, handling transfers of know-how between the experiments in different countries; 32. Designing model solutions and testing new methods within transnational partnerships to remedy the erosion of coastal lines. 33. Joint development of new planning techniques to anticipate the impact of climate change on coastal areas | Possible positive marginal impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | Possible positive marginal impact |

| Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | biodiversity | population | human health | fauna & flora |
| <p>Obj 3.1: Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Actions favouring a better use of transnational rail links: better connection with multimodal platforms, optimization of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops, engine driver training, experimental launch of rail motorways, etc 36. 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.) 37. Feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses concerning the creation of logistic platforms; 38. Testing of possible responses to interoperability problems 39. 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 40. Design and testing of transnational strategies to improve the information about public transport services and optimize international trips of passengers (e.g. integrated ticketing) 41. Transfer of know-how about innovative solutions to improve the local accessibility of regional airports | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 3.2: Promote short-sea shipping and cooperation between ports</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42. Contributions of the launch of the first experimental motorway of the sea; 43. Joint development of smart technologies to improve the efficiency of SSS, e.g. real time tracking of cargoes; 44. 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; 45. Joint promotional campaigns for maritime transport, raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages; 46. Sharing “business intelligence” between ports, for example joint market studies. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | biodiversity | population | human health | fauna & flora |
| <p>Obj 4.1: Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47. Transfers of know-how acquired in provision of a universal service (mail distribution or internet access, for example) in fragile rural zones between partner regions. 48. Development of expertise in the field of sustainable development ; 49. Joint supply of services of general socio-economic interest through co-operation of cities and regions and wise use of ICT solutions (e.g. health services, education services, employment services) 50. Joint distance learning programmes intended for officials of regional and local administrations offering specialised teaching modules on various urban or rural development issues | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 4.2: Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51. 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); 52. Implementation of a joint strategy to attract investors in a transnational network of regions or to promote their foreign trade (e.g. label creation, transnational Chamber of Commerce, commercial attachés abroad); 53. Transnational network of Atlantic regions and their NGOs engaged in decentralised cooperation with developing countries. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 4.3: Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54. Joint professional training in cultural heritage conservation, specialised in issues of common interest for the Atlantic heritage, for example the restoration of bocage landscapes or the preservation of Celtic sites; 55. Joint promotion of historic places linked by a transnational theme, such as the ports from which the great explorers set out on their voyages of discovery⁵, in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism; 56. Joint labelling and communication strategy within transnational networks of regions hosting prominent sites of European culture (e.g. Mont Saint Michel, Santiago de Compostela) or included in the UNESCO list of the world-wide heritage (e.g. Le Havre); 57. Transnational pooling of archaeological expertise and research in excavation sites linked by a common feature of the Atlantic heritage. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

⁵ Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus, Diego Cam, Bartholomeu Dias, Magellan, Jacques Cartier, James Cook, etc.

Atlantic Area Operational Programme

Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks

| | soil | water | air | climatic factors |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <p>Obj 1.1: Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research centres of different countries; 2. 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; 3. Pooling expertise in transnational technical assistance networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes; 4. Pooling results of technology-watch systems and training on economic intelligence techniques within transnational partnerships; 5. Improving the access to innovation financing, e.g. making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up transnational innovation trusts; 6. Developing transnational partnerships around European centres of excellence specialised in sectors with high technology contents. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.2: Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Facilitating the formation or consolidation of transnational networks of industrial clusters of the maritime economy; 8. Transnational transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge between research centres and enterprises, SMEs in particular, of the maritime economy 9. Elaboration of joint financial engineering instruments to support innovation in the maritime economy. 10. Transnational pooling of resource to improve the innovation environment of the maritime economy e.g. provision of joint business service, assistance to workforce mobility, joint scientific and vocational training. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.3: Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting the regional endogenous potential</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Exploiting the potential of new ICT to favour development of international trade circuits for regional products. 13. Transnational teams specialised in measures to enhance innovation capacities, to pool together or benchmark the experience gained in the various national frameworks and experiment on transferring it to regions undergoing a restructuring process; 14. Stimulating the emergence of regional clusters; 15. Joint marketing of various types of innovative sustainable tourism, e.g. oenotourism, submarine tourism; 16. Transnational transfer of know-how acquired in the field of innovative environmentally friendly agriculture; | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| | soil | water | air | climatic factors |
| <p>Obj 2.1: Improve maritime safety</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Identifying, evaluating and planning safe havens for ships in distress; 18. Identifying needs and increasing the capacity of available tug boats; 19. Improvement of the response capability, tools, action plans and awareness at all levels; 20. Training personnel of the local authorities and fishermen; 21. Creating operational oceanographic services to monitor pollution at sea and evaluate its seriousness. | No significant impact | No significant direct impact. However as these actions have the finality of improving maritime safety, and reducing the risk of pollution, actions may have a positive impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 2.2: Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Experimentation of joint tools and methods to monitor the evolution of halieutic resources and sea-beds; 23. Defining and testing transnational strategies to protect and restore marine ecosystems (for a same sea basin or for the entire cooperation area) 24. Elaborating a spatial planning sytem for maritime activities 25. Coordination and exchange of knowledge between authorities responsible for national management plans foreseen in the EU Marine Strategy Directive, with joint implementation of transnationally relevant parts of these plans; | No significant impact | Possible positive marginal impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 2.3: Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Joint exploration, at the transnational level of the potential of innovative sources of renewable energy, for example sea current energy 27. Joint feasibility or financial engineering studies for large investments in off-shore wind energy 28. Transnational pooling of experience and monitor progress made in the sector of marine renewable energies 29. Joint demonstration pilot projects to test experimental types of renewable energy. | No significant impact | No significant impact | Possible positive marginal impact as a result of the substitution of conventional fuels. | Possible positive marginal impact as a result of the substitution of conventional fuels. |
| <p>Obj 2.4: Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Extension of the coverage of the cooperation area by interconnected Natura 2000 protected sites; 31. Implementation of a joint conservation strategy of nature reserves, concentrating on transnational aspects, for example the protection of migratory species. 32. Development of ICZM expertise, handling transfers of know-how between the experiments in different countries; 33. Designing model solutions and testing new methods within transnational partnerships to remedy the erosion of coastal lines. 34. Joint development of new planning techniques to anticipate the impact of climate change on coastal areas. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | soil | water | air | climatic factors |
| <p>Obj 3.1: Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Actions favouring a better use of transnational rail links: better connection with multimodal platforms, optimization of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops, engine driver training, experimental launch of rail motorways, etc 36. 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.) 37. Feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses concerning the creation of logistic platforms; 38. Testing of possible responses to interoperability problems 39. 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 40. Design and testing of transnational strategies to improve the information about public transport services and optimize international trips of passengers (e.g. integrated ticketing) 41. Transfer of know-how about innovative solutions to improve the local accessibility of regional airports | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 3.2: Promote short-sea shipping and cooperation between ports</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42. Contributions of the launch of the first experimental motorway of the sea; 43. Joint development of smart technologies to improve the efficiency of SSS, e.g. real time tracking of cargoes; 44. 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; 45. Joint promotional campaigns for maritime transport, raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages; 46. Sharing “business intelligence” between ports, for example joint market studies. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | soil | water | air | climatic factors |
| <p>Obj 4.1: Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <p>47. Transfers of know-how acquired in provision of a universal service (mail distribution or internet access, for example) in fragile rural zones between partner regions.</p> <p>48. Development of joint expertise in the field of sustainable development ;</p> <p>49. Joint supply of services of general socio-economic interest through co-operation of cities and regions and wise use of ICT solutions (e.g. health services, education services, employment services)</p> <p>50. Joint distance learning programmes intended for officials of regional and local administrations offering specialised teaching modules on various urban or rural development issues</p> | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 4.2: Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <p>51. Joint public communication agency 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);</p> <p>52. Joint strategy to attract investors in a transnational network of regions or to promote their foreign trade (e.g. label creation, transnational Chamber of Commerce, commercial attachés abroad);</p> <p>53. Transnational network of Atlantic regions and their NGOs engaged in decentralised cooperation with developing countries.</p> | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 4.3: Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <p>54. Joint professional training centre in cultural heritage conservation, specialised in issues of common interest for the Atlantic heritage, for example the restoration of bocage landscapes or the preservation of Celtic sites;</p> <p>55. Joint promotion of historic places linked by a transnational theme, such as the ports from which the great explorers set out on their voyages of discovery⁶, in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism;</p> <p>56. Joint labelling and communication strategy within transnational networks of regions hosting prominent sites of European culture (e.g. Mont Saint Michel, Santiago de Compostela) or included in the UNESCO list of the world-wide heritage (e.g. Le Havre);</p> <p>57. Transnational pooling of archaeological expertise and research in excavation sites linked by a common feature of the Atlantic heritage.</p> | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

⁶ Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus, Diego Cam, Bartholomeu Dias, Magellan, Jacques Cartier, James Cook, etc.

| Atlantic Area Operational Programme | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks | | | |
| | material assets | cultural heritage | landscape |
| <p>Obj 1.1: Develop knowledge transfers between companies and research centres</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating or reinforcing cooperation networks between companies and research centres of different countries; 2. 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; 3. Pooling expertise in transnational technical assistance networks to help SMEs diagnose and solve legal, organisational and human issues associated with innovation processes; 4. Pooling results of technology-watch systems and training on economic intelligence techniques within transnational partnerships; 5. Improving the access to innovation financing, e.g. making SMEs more familiar with various financial engineering techniques or setting up transnational innovation trusts; 6. Developing transnational partnerships around European centres of excellence specialised in sectors with high technology contents. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.2: Enhance competitiveness and innovation capacities in maritime economy niches of excellence</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Facilitating the formation or consolidation of transnational networks of industrial clusters of the maritime economy; 8. Transnational transfer of technology and dissemination of knowledge between research centres and enterprises, SMEs in particular, of the maritime economy 9. Elaboration of joint financial engineering instruments to support innovation in the maritime economy. 10. Transnational pooling of resource to improve the innovation environment of the maritime economy e.g. provision of joint business service, assistance to workforce mobility, joint scientific and vocational training. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 1.3: Stimulate economic conversion and diversification by promoting the regional endogenous potential</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Exploiting the potential of new ICT to favour development of international trade circuits for regional products. 13. Ttransnational teams specialised in measures to enhance innovation capacities, to pool together or benchmark the experience gained in the various national frameworks and experiment on transferring it to regions undergoing a restructuring process; 14. Stimulating the emergence of regional clusters; 15. Joint marketing of various types of innovative sustainable tourism, e.g. oenotourism, submarine tourism; 16. Transnational transfer of know-how acquired in the field of innovative environmentally friendly agriculture; | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably | | | |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | material assets | cultural heritage | landscape |
| <p>Obj 2.2: Sustainable management and protection of the resources of marine spaces</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Experimentation of joint tools and methods to monitor the evolution of halieutic resources and sea-beds; 23. Defining and implementing transnational strategies to protect and restore marine ecosystems (for a same sea basin or for the entire cooperation area) 24. Elaborating a spatial planning system for maritime activities 25. Coordination and exchange of knowledge between authorities responsible for national management plans foreseen in the EU Marine Strategy Directive, with joint implementation of transnationally relevant parts of these plans; | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 2.3: Exploit the renewable energy potential of the marine and coastal environment</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Joint exploration, at the transnational level, of potential of innovative sources of renewable energy, for example sea current energy 27. Joint feasibility or financial engineering studies for large investments in off-shore wind energy 28. Transnational pooling of experience and monitor progress made in the sector of marine renewable energies 29. Joint demonstration pilot projects to test experimental types of renewable energy. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 2.4: Protect and promote natural spaces, water resources and coastal zones</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30. Extension of the coverage of the cooperation area by interconnected Natura 2000 protected sites; 31. Implementation of a joint conservation strategy of nature reserves, concentrating on transnational aspects, for example the protection of migratory species. 32. Development of transnational ICZM expertise, handling transfers of know-how between the experiments in different countries; 33. Designing model solutions and testing new methods within transnational partnerships to remedy the erosion of coastal lines. 34. Joint development of new planning techniques to anticipate the impact of climate change on coastal areas | No significant impact | No significant impact | Positive marginal impact |

| Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | material assets | cultural heritage | landscape |
| <p>Obj 3.1: Promote interoperability and continuity of existing transport networks, and sea/road/rail/air intermodality</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. Actions favouring a better use of transnational rail links: better connection with multimodal platforms, optimization of train capacities, road haulage pricing, one-stop shops, engine driver training, experimental launch of rail motorways, etc 36. 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.) 37. Feasibility studies and cost-benefit analyses concerning the creation of logistic platforms; 38. Testing of possible responses to interoperability problems 39. 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 40. Design and testing of transnational strategies to improve the information about public transport services and optimize international trips of passengers (e.g. integrated ticketing) 41. Transfer of know-how about innovative solutions to improve the local accessibility of regional airports | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 3.2: Promote short-sea shipping and cooperation between ports</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42. Contributions of the launch of the first experimental motorway of the sea; 43. Joint development of smart technologies to improve the efficiency of SSS, e.g. real time tracking of cargoes; 44. 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; 45. Joint promotional campaigns for maritime transport, raising awareness about its environmental and economic advantages; 46. Sharing “business intelligence” between ports, for example joint market studies. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |

| Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | material assets | cultural heritage | Landscape |
| <p>Obj 4.1: Pool resources and skills in the field of sustainable urban and rural development</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 47. Transfers of know-how acquired in provision of a universal service (mail distribution or internet access, for example) in fragile rural zones between partner regions. 48. Development of joint expertise for sustainable development in the Atlantic Area; 49. Joint supply of services of general socio-economic interest through co-operation of cities and regions and wise use of ICT solutions (e.g. health services, education services, employment services) 50. Joint distance learning programmes intended for officials of regional and local administrations offering specialised teaching modules on various urban or rural development issues | No significant impact | No significant impact | Positive marginal impact |
| <p>Obj 4.2: Make cities and regions more influential and attractive through networking</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51. Joint public communication agency 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); 52. Joint strategy to attract investors in a transnational network of regions or to promote their foreign trade (e.g. label creation, transnational Chamber of Commerce, commercial attachés abroad); 53. Transnational network of Atlantic regions and their NGOs engaged in decentralised cooperation with developing countries. | No significant impact | No significant impact | No significant impact |
| <p>Obj 4.3: Conserve and promote Atlantic cultural heritage of transnational interest</p> <p>Examples of possible actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 54. Joint professional training in cultural heritage conservation, specialised in issues of common interest for the Atlantic heritage, for example the restoration of bocage landscapes or the preservation of Celtic sites; 55. Joint promotion of historic places linked by a transnational theme, such as the ports from which the great explorers set out on their voyages of discovery⁷, in accordance with the principles of sustainable tourism; 56. Joint labelling and communication strategy within transnational networks of regions hosting prominent sites of European culture (e.g. Mont Saint Michel, Santiago de Compostela) or included in the UNESCO list of the world-wide heritage (e.g. Le Havre); 57. Transnational pooling of archaeological expertise and research in excavation sites linked by a common feature of the Atlantic heritage. | No significant impact | Positive marginal impact | No significant impact |

⁷ Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus, Diego Cam, Bartholomeu Dias, Magellan, Jacques Cartier, James Cook, etc.

5.3 Conclusions of the environmental assessment

Basically, the Atlantic Area Program 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.).

As it is logical, in this phase of the programme none of the activities or projects are described sufficiently detailed to provide a basis for a quantitative assessment. All assessments are qualitative and based on expert judgements and on experiences in assessing environmental impacts at this level of planning/programming.

The aim and the objectives of the programme emphasise sustainable development as an intrinsic part of the programmes 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.

Moreover, the evaluator acknowledges that there is a firm commitment of major stakeholders taking part on the decisions regarding the Atlantic Area Operational Programme to that projects supported are to be designed to have a positive environmental impact or at least that environmental issues will be considered carefully. The following conclusions can be drawn concerning the potential environmental impact of each of the four priorities of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme:

- Priority 1 – Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks: No significant environmental impact.
- Priority 2 – Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably: Positive direct marginal contribution to the environment.
- Priority 3 – Improve accessibility and internal links: No significant environmental impact.

The projects financed under priority 3 will not have significant environmental effects themselves due to their “soft” nature. However, projects within the specific objective 3.2 in particular aiming promoting short-sea shipping, should compulsorily 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.

In addition, it would be of great value if some projects would have the objective of presenting optimal solutions in terms of environmental effects, or of supporting eco-innovation to reduce the shipping pollution, etc.

- Priority 4 – Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development. No significant environmental impact.

As a way of summary, it should be emphasized, nevertheless, 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. The distribution of the financial means among the 4 priorities and 12 specific objectives is not decided at this stage. However, 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 a reduced part 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, being the main effects of the Programme as a whole in the field of sensibilisation and encouragement of initiatives towards sustainability.

6. MEASURES AND MONITORING

6.1 Project selection and monitoring procedure

It is clear that not the Atlantic Area Programme itself, but the kind of actions and projects financed by it, will determine the Programme's environmental impact. Therefore, a project selection and monitoring procedure with adequate emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability will be crucial.

The selection and monitoring procedures are part of the overall implementation structure of the Atlantic Area Programme.

6.2 Suggestions concerning project selection and monitoring

6.3.1 Selection Procedure

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 steering project applications with enough potential towards a more effective contribution to achieving the objectives.

In order to ensure adequate emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability, the bodies involved in the project selection procedure should count 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, is 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.

The proposed advisory working group on environmental issues will advise on all kinds of transnational programmes and projects on a regular basis. This would ensure consistency, continuity and efficiency in its decision making process.

In order to smoothen the assessment procedure, each project application should include a brief note about the environmental aspects of the project⁸. 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 contains a description of the environmental improvements envisaged by the project and its potential (negative) side effects.

In short: the assessments of geographically defined projects will logically focus on the “immission side” (local environmental quality), those of non-geographically defined project on the “emission side” (waste, pollutants) and on raw material and energy consumption.

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 judgement 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.

As an example, the selection procedure as described would ensure that projects presented under Priority 1 Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks, concerning new patents, will only deal with environmentally-compliant patents. The selection procedure should encourage projects involving training to include specific environmental training on the concerned field when is pertinent.

⁸ The format of this note will be agreed and will be part of the application form

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.

6.3.2 Monitoring

Because of their size and nature, just 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.

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.

The European guidelines indicate five kinds of indicators:

- baseline indicators: indicators about the general reference situation at the start of the project;
- input indicators: financial input (programme budget and other means) attributed to a certain objective or action;
- output indicators: indicators concerning the execution of the Programme itself = number of supported initiatives and total attributed amount;
- result indicators: indicators that measure the direct effects of an action (e.g. decline in emissions by plants as a result of the implementation of an innovative technique; capacity growth of infrastructure due to innovative traffic management;...);
- impact indicators: indicators about the general situation = absolute and relative evolution of the baseline indicators.

Input and output indicators are standard indicators which are similar for each project or action, regardless of its type. Result indicators depend on the project and should be determined at the start of the project. The same goes for impact indicators of geographically defined projects, because they depend on the delimitation and characteristics of the project area(s) in question.

7. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

7.1 Introduction

This environmental assessment is 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). 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”. A Strategic Environmental Assessment shall be carried out for programmes and plans which are likely to have a significant environmental impact.

The Atlantic Area Programme sets a framework for transnational cooperation small budget and “soft” (not infrastructure) projects within the Atlantic Area. 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.

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 is at a strategic and generalised level.

7.2 Contents of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme

The overall aim of the Atlantic Area Operational Programme on transnational territorial cooperation (2007-2013) is 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”

The programme will be delivered through four priorities of strategic character which are of particular relevance to Atlantic Area. For each priority, specific objectives are set. In the following paragraph an overview is given of the priorities and objectives.

A PRIORITY 1: PROMOTE TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INNOVATION NETWORKS

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 the regional endogenous potential

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

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

C PRIORITY 3: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND INTERANAL LINKS

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

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

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

7.3 Current state of the environment in the Atlantic Area

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 in common identity, one to be protected and promoted.

The description of the current state of the environment in 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 steaming from projects co-financed by the Atlantic Area Operational Programme 2000-2006.

The description is 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.

7.4 Environmental policy framework

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)**⁹. 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.

⁹ Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 July 2002, OJ L 242 10.09.02

- The **Thematic Strategies** that have been prepared by the European Commission in accordance with the requirements of EAP6.

A PRIORITIES OF THE ENVIRONMENT ACTION PROGRAMME 2002-2012

The Programme aims at four priorities:

1. climate change;
2. nature and biodiversity;
3. environment and health and quality of life;
4. Natural resources and wastes.

The general aim of these four priorities is formulated as follows:

Climate change: emphasising climate change as an outstanding challenge of the next 10 years and beyond and contributing to the long term objective of stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

Nature and biodiversity: protecting, conserving, restoring and developing the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna with the aim of halting desertification and the loss of biodiversity, including diversity of genetic resources, both in the European Union and on a global scale.

Environment and health and quality of life: contributing to a high level of quality of life and social well being for citizens by providing an environment where the level of pollution does not give rise to harmful effects on human health and the environment and by encouraging a sustainable urban development.

Natural resources and wastes: better resource efficiency and resource and waste management to bring about more sustainable production and consumption patterns, thereby decoupling the use of resources and the generation of waste from the rate of economic growth and aiming to ensure that the consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources does not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment.

B ENVIRONMENTAL THEMATIC STRATEGIES

Based on the four priorities, the Sixth Environment Action Programme required the European Commission to prepare Thematic Strategies covering the following seven areas:

1. air pollution (adopted 21/09/2005);
2. prevention and recycling of waste (adopted 21/12/2005);
3. protection and conservation of the marine environment (adopted 24/10/2005);
4. soil (adopted 22/09/2006);
5. sustainable use of pesticides (adopted 12/07/2006);
6. sustainable use of resources (adopted 21/12/2005);
7. urban environment (adopted 11/01/2006).

These Thematic Strategies work with themes rather than with specific pollutants of economic activities. They take a longer-term perspective in setting clear environmental objectives to around 2020 and will thus provide a stable policy framework. Finally, they focus on identifying the most appropriate instruments to deliver European policy goals in the least burdensome and most cost effective way possible. These strategies are often cross-cutting (especially the one on urban environment), and synergies with other policies are vital.

7.5 Environmental assessment of the Atlantic Area Programme

The Strategic Environmental Assessment contained in the 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.

In this non-technical summary, only the general assessment per priority and objective is presented in the following table.

| Priorities and objectives | General assessment |
|--|--|
| Priority 1 : Promote transnational entrepreneurial and innovation networks | |
| 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 |
| Priority 2 : Protect, secure and enhance the marine and coastal environment sustainably | |
| 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 |
| Priority 3 : Improve accessibility and internal links | |
| 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 in particular aiming promoting short-sea shipping should compulsorily 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. |
| Priority 4 : Promote transnational synergies in sustainable urban and regional development | |
| 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 |

7.6 Conclusions of the environmental assessment

Basically, the Atlantic Area Program 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.).

The aim and the objectives of the Programme emphasise sustainable development as an intrinsic part of the programmes 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.

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.

The potential environmental impact of the Atlantic Area Programme as a whole largely depends in addition on its total **budget** (104.051.192 euro of ERDF funding) and on the distribution of the financial means among the four priorities and the specific objectives.

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.

7.7 Suggestions on the project selection and monitoring procedure

Project selection

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.

In order to ensure adequate emphasis on environmental issues and sustainability, the bodies involved in the project selection procedure should count 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, is 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.

Also, and with a view to smoothen the assessment procedure, each project application should include a brief note about the environmental aspects of the project¹⁰. 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 contains a description of the environmental improvements envisaged by the project and its potential (negative) side effects.

¹⁰ The format of this note will be agreed and will be part of the application form

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 judgement 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.

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

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.

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.

ANNEX 1: List of Acronyms

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| 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 (FP6) (FP7) | Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (of the European Union) (Sixth Framework Programme) (Seventh Framework Programme) |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GEIZ | Global Economic Integration Zone |
| 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 |
| (N)ICT | (New) Information and Communication Technologies |
| 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 |
| SSS | Short-Sea Shipping |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats |
| WG 2007-2013 | Working Group 2007-2013 |

ANNEX 2: Information and analysis of the responses received on the public consultation process

| MS | No | Comment by | Comment content | SEA | OP | Analysis |
|----|----|---------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|---|
| FR | 1 | DRAC Bretagne | To include in the OP in Chapter II.B.2 on environment and maritime heritage four key elements of coastal and maritime heritage: Sea Forts Sea lights Submarine archaeology Ethnology of people living on the coasts | | OP related | Project examples are very specific to Brittany. Their inclusion as such in the OP does not seem appropriate. However, submarine archaeological sites have been mentioned in the last example of section IV.D.2.c. |
| FR | 2 | EMC2 | Waste management | | | Mere expression of interest → no amendment of the OP needed |
| FR | 3 | CEPRI | Floods | | OP related | Floods is a real issue in various river basins of the cooperation area, but the vast majority of river basins are not entirely included in it. The issue of floods and other aspects of water management will be better addressed by other programmes, including NWE and SWE, as explained in Section II.E |
| FR | 4 | CR Pêches maritimes & élevages marins | Comments on section IV.B.2 | SEA related | OP related | IV.B.2.a (maritime safety): inclusion of merchant navy staff training in the relevant project example + "Creating ...etc." replaced by "Strengthening of, and resource pooling between, operational oceanographic services" IV.B.2.b: "exhaustion" → "overexploitation (of halieutic resources)" IV.B.2.c.: new § about the environmental impact of some renewable energy technologies and the need for a holistic approach. IV.B.2.d.: the suggestion to involve professional fishermen in protected area management is a bit too specific, but nothing prevents from including it in the work plan of a project submitted under Priority 2 |
| FR | 5 | Espace métropolitain Loire Bretagne | Role of cities not sufficiently stressed + comments on Priorities | | OP related | Low amount allocated to Priority 4: difficult to reconsider the choices made by the WG 2007-13... Participation of cities in monitoring committee meetings: section VI.A.1.a (MC composition) specifies that "transnational networks or associations of local or regional authorities" may take part in MC meetings, but it is difficult to be more specific (otherwise, why not rural areas, islands, etc.); up to the associations of cities to make their case. Participation of cities in the various priorities is clarified in the 2 nd § of section IV.D. In the introduction to Priority 4, and many references to cities had already been included to take account of the note of comments received from the Conference of AA Cities |
| PT | 6 | CCDR Norte | No significant environmental effects of the OP Adequate Programme and preventive measures | SEA related | | No implications for the OP |
| PT | 7 | Instituto do Ambiente | The allegation generally indicates that the Institute agrees with the SEA report, taking into consideration the strategic approach of the OP for the Atlantic Area | SEA related | | No implications for the OP |
| PT | 8 | Portuguese citizen (Paulo) | The allegation refers to a lack of an specific objective where potential proposals focusing on | | OP related | Nothing in the draft OP prevent projects on new technologies applied to coastal management from taking place. |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|--------------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|---|
| | | Alexandre) | new technologies applied to coastal management could apply. The allegations also suggests the idea that it could be good to save some part of the budget devoted to undertake specific research and technological development in the environmental services aspects. Rationale: This allegation is based in a degradation of Portuguese coastal areas | | | Ring-fencing of funds for very specific themes seems inappropriate. |
| UK | 9 | Argyll and Bute Council | OP does not mention islands when defining the diagnosis. It is also missing on the accessibility and transport section Integrate ICZM in Priority 2 | | OP related | Issue of islands raised in section II.B.3., SWOT table (accessibility), IV.C.2.a, IV.C.2.b (project example) |
| UK | 10 | West of Scotland European Consortium | OP should not be perceived as being purely of a maritime character Very interesting suggestions and comments referring to the OP, although they don't deal with environmental issues, for example: OP should encourage "North South Partnerships" | | OP related | Various amendments actually discussed in Porto (study projects, creation of joint agencies) the comment on "Open perpetuation" underestimates the importance of the word "open" (cooperation not intended for a close circle of insiders) North-South project partnerships: this is for project selection criteria/PIMH, as acknowledged in the note wine replaced by gastronomy/ecotourism footnote on tug boats amendment on regional airports included sentence about 5 airports removed |
| UK | 11 | Countryside Council for Wales | Pleased with key themes highlighted as Priorities. Pleased that OP refers to EU maritime policy and EU maritime strategy Dissatisfied that there is no explicit reference to ICZM strategies that have been prepared. Suggestion puts forward a number of proposals referring to Priority 2 | | OP related | IV.B.2.b. Other causes of environmental degradation mentioned + Ecosystem Approach in the examples IV.B.2.c. Amendments re: renewable energies incorporated IV.B.2.d. Explicit reference to sea level rise / climate change, EU ICZM Recommendation 2002/413/EC (also in Appendices 2 and 3), enhanced protection (as opposed to extension of Natura 2000 coverage) |
| UK | 12 | Natural England | Draft OP for the Atlantic Space is not compatible with Regulation 1083/2006 in terms of sustainable development: articles 3 and 17 Programme has not been developed in a partnership: Not compatible with article 11 of the Regulation The SEA report is not robust. Very detailed allegation on the above mentioned. | | OP related | No other alterations of the OP besides those recommended in the first SEA report. |
| UK | 13 | Countryside Council for | Disagreement with the SEA procedure. Allegation refers to a number of comments that | SEA related | | No other alterations of the OP besides those recommended in the first SEA report. |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|--------------------|--|-------------|------------|--|
| | | Wales | need clarification on the effects of the Programme on the environment. Clarification is sought in many points of the SEA report. | | | |
| UK | 14 | Environment Agency | <p>Criticism over the procedure for the SEA, in particular on the scoping stage: the environment agency was not given the opportunity to comment on the scope and level of detail.</p> <p>It also makes a number of comments on the SEA report: Environmental characteristics of the Atlantic Area are covered is insufficient. For the environmental assessment, allegation indicates that inter-relationships have not been addressed as part of the assessment and then goes arguing on the coverage of the effects</p> | SEA related | | <p>No other alterations of the OP besides those recommended in the first SEA report.</p> <p>Concerning the points raised on the SEA report: indeed, the descriptions are very general, but the nature of such an Operational Programme does not allow a more detailed approach. A fully elaborated SEA report – as would be appropriate for a detailed and geographically well-defined regional development plan – does not seem feasible nor necessary when evaluating a framework programme like this. This was agreed during the scoping phases and transmitted to the ex ante evaluators that were in charge of drafting the report.</p> |
| UK | 15 | Environment Agency | <p>Recommendations to address significant inconsistencies in the draft programme in terms of sustainable development</p> <p>The allegation from the Environment Agency also disagrees with the contents of the proposed priorities as they don't think that they sufficiently address the climate change and resource efficiency challenge to the economies of the Atlantic Area Member States.</p> | SEA related | OP related | <p>The environmental dimension is addressed in all priorities. Sustainability is a fundamental dimension of all priorities as well, including sustainable mobility (presented as key for the reduction of green house gas emission by the Env. Agency): promotion of sustainable means of transport in Priority 3, sustainable urban mobility in Priority 4 (along with Agenda 21 and many other issues), etc.</p> <p>Regarding compliance with Article 11 of Regulation 1083/2006: this article makes reference to "environmental partners" indeed, but among many other bodies. It cannot be inferred from Art. 11 that a representation of these partners in the WG 2007-2013 was essential, as suggested by the Env. Agency, which welcomes the opportunity for responding to the consultation.</p> <p>Regarding compliance with UK NSRF: quite normally, section III.E.3 addresses the consistency with NSRF provisions specifically linked to European territorial cooperation. Art. 12-3 of Regulation 1080/2006 provides that this consistency shall be checked "where the MS has chosen to include actions financed under the European territorial cooperation objective within it", which is not the case of the UK NSRF.</p> <p>Regarding tangible project results: criticism mainly based on the large number of projects announcing the creation of new structures, agencies, etc. This issue was addressed at the Porto meeting. Moreover, cooperation involves a significant component of capacity building in the area of transnational governance: this has little to do with a "Europe of institutions" but much with "a Europe of results" because adopting the same style of working in cooperation projects as in Objective 1 or 2 projects would be bound to failure.</p> <p>Climate change is a global issue discussed at the global level, but in terms of relevant responses, concrete steps specific to transnational cooperation do not seem essential. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions must be undertaken in many different contexts, including in sustainable urban development strategies and schemes, which can be done</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|---|---|-------------|------------|--|
| | | | | | | <p>under Priority 4 for example. A focused programme strategy cannot address everything, even some issues which admittedly represent a major cause for concern. However, references to sea level rise (a possible consequence of climate change which significantly threatens low altitude coastal areas) have been included in section IV.B.2.d</p> <p>Priority 1: a reference to eco-innovation has been included (section IV.A.2)</p> <p>Priority 2: water resource management has been included in the 3rd draft OP (Evironm. Agency is probably referring to the 2nd draft); inclusion of fish habitat creation in the examples of projects (IV.B.2.b).</p> <p>Priority 3: air links will not be supported (only better access to regional airports)</p> <p>Priority 4: the "joint agency for sustainable development" no longer appears, as agreed upon in Porto</p> <p>Chapter VI: new provisions concerning the environmental dimension have been included (see hereunder, No19 – SEA Report): transnational expert group, project application and assessment, etc. For the rest, comments made by the Env. Agency should be considered when elaborating the PIMH (audits, national correspondent, etc.)</p> |
| UK | 16 | COMET Interreg Partnership | possible COMET role in AA 2007-13 cooperation + some suggestions | | OP related | <p>Apart from the last comment (lack of reference to EU enlargement and mobility of workers), no real criticisms in this paper. As project proposals are very specific, they have not been included in the revised OP. To be considered by the JTS when elaborating the data base of project ideas and potential project partners.</p> |
| UK | 17 | Council for Nature conserv. & Countryside | Supports the SEA aproach | SEA related | | <p>This note is apparently more intended for the SAE procedure. However, an example of project ("Joint experimentation of new solutions in the field of eco-innovation to reduce the shipping pollution") has been included in IV.C.2.b., as suggested.</p> |
| ES | 18 | Instituto de Salud Carlos III | The allegation just indicates that the Instituto does not have competences related to those set up in the OP. | | | <p>No response needed.</p> |