

# Assistance Mechanism for the Atlantic Action Plan

Contract No: *EASME/EMFF/2015/1.3.1.4/SI2.720347*

## 4<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference Event Report, Glasgow, 8 November 2017 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Date of Issue: 15/12/2017

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Client: Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)

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This is the Executive Summary of the Event Report for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Atlantic Stakeholder Platform Conference (ASPC2017) that was held in Glasgow, Scotland, UK on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. The conference concentrated on **Priority 4 of the Atlantic Action Plan “Create a socially inclusive and sustainable model of regional development”**. Furthermore, it focused on the theme of regeneration and sought to explore further issues and topics such as health benefits and environmental improvements to coastal communities, best-practices in social inclusion, workforce development for blue skills, recreation and tourism projects, preservation and protection of tourist attractions and the seasonality challenge in the tourism sector, to name just a few.

In total, 325 registrations from stakeholders were recorded. The Conference was finally attended by 188 stakeholders from the private sector, academia and research centres, public national and regional authorities and the EU institutions.

The format chosen for the ASPC2017 included a **morning plenary session** that comprised welcome addresses followed by a **plenary opening panel of speakers** outlining the key Atlantic Action Plan achievements and providing an overview of funding instruments available to finance projects in the Atlantic areas. The plenary morning session concluded with the Atlantic Project Award Ceremony at which the **"2<sup>nd</sup> Atlantic Project Awards"** were presented followed by a presentation of the INTERREG North-West Europe programme scope and results. **Two parallel thematic workshop sessions** focused on Priority 4 of the Atlantic Action Plan followed. The **Working meeting dedicated to managing authorities** of ESIF was a side event of the ASPC2017 focused on the contribution of ESIF programmes to the implementation of the AAP (in parallel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of workshops and on invitation). The **closing plenary session** included a presentation of the workshop outcomes as well as remarks about the future of the Atlantic Action Plan and the AM.

**Networking and Matchmaking Activities** were prominent during the entire conference as they were implemented through the presence of **15 exhibition stands**<sup>1</sup> (project promoters, networks, workshop organisers, other stakeholders exhibiting documentation, promotional material, and videos), as well as, through a **designated matchmaking area** for appointments between participants (project promoters, funding agencies) and with the Support Team’s Help Desk.

The **opening plenary session** commenced with **welcome addresses** from the following representatives:

- Councillor Ms. Eva Bolander, Lord Provost of the City of Glasgow
- Mr. Fergus Ewing, Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity
- Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries,
- European Commission (video message)
- Mr. Jerry Lundy, Member of the Committee of the Regions

Closing Remarks by Mr. Bernhard Friess, Director, Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission.

The **Plenary opening panel** outlined the key Atlantic Action Plan achievements and provided an overview of funding instruments available to finance projects in the Atlantic areas. Mr. Christos Economou, Head of Unit in DG MARE responsible for the sea-basin strategies, regional cooperation

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<sup>1</sup> In total 20 organisations were exhibited at the ASPC2017 as some organisations shared the same stand, i.e. the INTERREG Programmes as well as some organisations with regional focus.

and maritime security chaired the panel composed of the four following speakers, in order of appearance:

- Ms. Ciara Delaney, Director, EU Policy; European Union Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland
- Mr. Costas Kastrinakis, Assistance Mechanism for the Atlantic Action Plan
- Ms. Conceição Santos, Head of Strategy Department of the Directorate General for Maritime Policy, Portugal
- Mr. Erik Kiesow, National Coordinator of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, EU Coordination Secretariat at the Prime Minister’s Office, Sweden.

The morning plenary panel provided participants with an overview of the progress of maritime cooperation in the Atlantic as it has been built around the Atlantic Strategy and the Atlantic Action Plan in the years since the adoption of the strategy. It also provided for an overview of a plethora of funding opportunities that are set to support its implementation and gave practical examples of good management practices from managing authorities that proactively support Atlantic projects to get their ideas funded by national and EU funds. Furthermore, it also provided examples of good practices from the Baltic Sea basin, one of the oldest EU Sea basin strategies, to be further exploited and reviewed by Atlantic stakeholders. Experiences and testimonies presented demonstrated that the Atlantic Strategy and Plan have succeeded to deliver concrete actions and projects.

After the 1st break, the conference continued with the **Award ceremony for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Atlantic Project Awards**, which are designed to honour outstanding success stories, achieved by projects in the geographical area covered by the Atlantic Strategy and that are related to the implementation of the Atlantic Action Plan. The Atlantic Project Awards, introduced by Mr. Bernhard Friess Director, Maritime Policy and Blue Economy at Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries from European Commission, covered four categories in line with the priorities of the Atlantic Strategy, namely Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Atlantic Marine and Coastal Environment, Accessibility and Connectivity, Sustainability, International Cooperation and a Special Award decided by the jury.

The prizes were given by the jury members or their representatives.

Project award winner	Jury member/representative
<p><b>Category:</b> Entrepreneurship &amp; innovation  <b>Project:</b> EcoPonics  <b>Co-Funded by:</b> Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS) and Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)</p>	<p>Bernhard Friess, director at DG MARE</p>
<p><b>Category:</b> Atlantic Marine and coastal environment  <b>Project:</b> MISTIC SEAS  <b>Co-Funded by:</b> European Maritime and Fisheries Fund -EMFF</p>	<p>Fernando de la Peña Lopez, ES ASG member</p>
<p><b>Category:</b> Accessibility and connectivity  <b>Project:</b> TAPAS  <b>Co-Funded by:</b> H2020-EU.3.2. - SOCIETAL CHALLENGES - Food security, sustainable agriculture and forestry, marine, maritime and inland water research, and the bioeconomy</p>	<p>James How, Chairman of ASG (UK member)</p>

<b>Category:</b> Sustainability <b>Project:</b> MAREA <b>Co-Funded by:</b> Interreg POCTEFA (France, Spain, and Andorre) 2017 -2020	Paulo Machado, PT ASG member
<b>Category:</b> International cooperation <b>Project:</b> RaiaCo <b>Co-Funded by:</b> Interreg VA - Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) - European Commission	Dymphna Keogh, IE ASG member
<b>Category:</b> Special Award <b>Project:</b> Tejiendo Mares de Solidaridad <b>Co-Funded by:</b> Fundación Biodiversidad - Ministerio de Agricultura y Pesca, Alimentación y Medio Ambiente	Claude Wohrer, FR ASG member

The Awards Ceremony was followed by **two presentations**, one on the main achievements of the **INTERREG North-West Europe Programme** and the opportunities available for Atlantic area projects and the other on the finalist project at the Regiostars awards, titled “Bio base NWE project”, a concrete example of what the INTERREG NWE programme funds and what results it achieves.

**Two sessions of 4 parallel workshops** (by the end of the morning and after lunch break) took place, each of them facilitated by one or more organisers. Workshop organisers were encouraged by the AM Team to assume an interactive session format with the participants and come up with tangible outcomes, by filling in the detailed workshop report template provided by the AM Team on the main outcomes of the workshop i.e. key objectives, and follow-up actions and recommendations in order to be presented at the closing session of the conference and further detailed after the conference.

Workshop title	Organiser
Workshop 1A: Year of Scotland’s Coast and Waters 2020: Multi-sector methodology to ensure Blue Growth	VisitScotland
Workshop 1B: She for Sea, the role of women in the Atlantic Strategy	Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities
Workshop 1C: ATLAS Project	University of Edinburgh
Workshop 1D: Setting a bridge between history and modernity of the cultural heritage of the Atlantic Area: from the cities’ maritime military and industrial heritage valorisation to the development of new nautical tourism activities, products and innovation	Interreg Atlantic Area
Workshop 2A: Social Innovation as a Strategy for Atlantic Area Sustainable and Inclusive Development	CES - Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
Workshop 2B: : Enhance the action plan with inclusive maritime education and awareness initiatives	We Atlantic
Workshop 2C: 'Speed dating' for Integrated Maritime Policy	Scottish Coastal Forum (in association with NL Ministry of Environment)
Workshop 2D: Community-Led Local Development: Opportunities for Fisheries Communities and Cooperation	FARNET

The **Working meeting dedicated to managing authorities of ESIF** focused on the contribution of ESIF programmes to the implementation of the AAP was attended by 15 Managing Authorities representatives of programmes coming from both the Investment for Growth and Jobs objective and European Territorial cooperation objective.

The objective of the meeting was, based in the interest showed by the Spanish Managing Authority in establishing a contact with other MAs in the area, to share experiences and exchange information about the Atlantic Strategy implementation within their programmes, to update MAs on the progress of the contribution of ESIF to the Atlantic Sea Basin Strategy as well as to learn how other MAs are embedding the Strategy in their programmes. Moreover, the meeting allowed interested regions to express their preference about specific topics of strategic interest (due to regional potential, regional development strategies, etc.), to reflect on possible cooperation activities at a larger scale in order to find potential synergies and complementarities between regions.

The **Plenary Closing session** commenced with the presentation of workshop sessions' outcomes by all rapporteurs.

The Plenary Closing session concluded with the speeches of Mr. **James How**, United Kingdom 2017 President of the Atlantic Strategy Group, Mr. **Fernando De La Peña López**, the Spanish 2018 Presidency representative of the Atlantic Strategy Group and Mr. **Christos Economou**, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission. Speakers stressed the importance of the Mid Term Review in taking forward the Atlantic Strategy implementation and that the views of stakeholders are taken into account to the greatest extent possible.

This year, the AM team proceeded with the launching of an **online matchmaking tool**, PitchandMatch, to provide for the **matchmaking and networking activities** of the ASPC2017. A total of 12 meetings were organised through the tool while another 22 meetings were "pending" in the application as several participants did not check their accounts to confirm or reject meeting requests. As part of the preparatory actions, the AMT contacted in-advance the involved stakeholders to inform them that they had meetings pending within their accounts and/or to suggest possible meetings with other stakeholders. Throughout the conference the team continued to assist significantly in networking and matchmaking.

**Social Media** was a very important part of the ASPC 2017. The Support Team provided for live social media coverage and innovative online engagement techniques, promoting the active engagement of participants on the day on all social media. Live-tweet of the conference was displayed on a plenary screen and two connected screens in order to generate interactions between participants, the on-line audience and the event organisers.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Platform Conference in Glasgow, through its dedicated Twitter account, increased the visibility of the event and achieved very high trending rates. A Live Twitter feed was active providing interested stakeholders with active twitter feeds from the conference proceedings and actually making the **ASPC2017 the 4<sup>th</sup> most important topic on Twitter on 8/11**. The dedicated **#ASPC2017** hashtag reached **300K impressions**, tweets earned **105,2 impressions**, **97K accounts** were reached and there were **67 contributors**.

More information on the event can be found at the dedicated section of the Atlantic Strategy website. (<http://www.atlanticstrategy.eu/en/news-and-events/news/4th-atlantic-stakeholder-platform-conference-8-november-2017-glasgow-scotland> )