

## Guidance Note 1

# Welcome to the Interreg VA France (Channel) England Programme

### I. Introduction

Welcome to this manual dedicated to supporting existing and potential Lead partners and Partners of the INTERREG VA France (Channel) England programme.

The aim of this manual is to provide information to potential Project Partners about all aspects of the France (Channel) England Programme, and then support Project Partners throughout the life of their project, from the idea for a potential project, through the application process, the project implementation and the project closure.

### II. What is European Territorial Cooperation?

A European Territorial Cooperation Programme is an economic development programme that funds various projects which take place across multiple countries and regions. These projects aim to find common solutions to common problems which exist in multiple countries.

The France (Channel) England Programme is a “Cross Border” programme under the European Territorial Cooperation Goal, meaning it aims to support the development of the Channel Border region between France and England.

#### A. Why participate in an ETC Programme?

The programme provides funding to project partnerships to support them in gaining the full benefits of working on a cross-border basis

The benefits of working across borders include;

- Working together to develop one solution to a common problem.
- Working together to learn from each other’s experiences and expertise, giving organisations a wider area to search for solutions to their problems.
- Opening up new audiences for ideas and products, and new markets for SMEs to break into using the experience gained from Cross Border working.
- Reducing the costs normally associated with gaining this type of experience and opportunity, meaning it is a great chance for those looking for new opportunities and challenges.

## B. What are we trying to Achieve?

The France (Channel) England Programme, as with all European Programmes, is part of the Europe 2020 strategy, which is the European Union's strategy to deliver growth and jobs. Launched in 2010, it is focused in part on Europe's recovery from the 2008 financial crisis, but it is also about a new form of growth, focusing on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

To support this objective the EU has set 5 headline targets to be achieved by the end of 2020<sup>1</sup>;

1. **Employment**  
75% of 20-64 year olds to be employed
2. **R&D**  
3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in R&D
3. **Climate change and energy sustainability**  
Greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990 levels  
20% of energy to come from renewable sources  
20% increase in energy efficiency
4. **Education**  
Reducing rates of early school leaving to below 10%  
At least 40% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education
5. **Fighting Poverty and Social exclusion**  
At least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion

The Programme Strategy is built upon a combination of these principles, and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis carried out in the Programme Area in order to determine how the Programme funding should be allocated in order to achieve the maximum development towards these goals.

In this context, 3 priorities were chosen for the France (Channel) England Programme, which are considered to be the areas where the cross border approach is needed to support the Europe 2020 goals.

### 1. **Support Innovation in order to address the economic and societal issues facing the France (Channel) England Area**

This priority is split into two parts, firstly it aims to support economic development, and the second part is aimed at innovative solutions to ensuring that growth is inclusive.

The first half of this priority is aimed at the "smart" growth objective set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. However as all these priorities are interlinked by increasing innovation we hope to not only bring growth and employment to our programme area, but to bring improvements to our quality of life and societal wellbeing at the same time.

Whilst some parts of the Programme Area see very high levels of innovation, there are also many areas which perform less well. In addition to supporting a general increase in the amount of innovation in the Programme area, the Programme aims to take this a step further and increase the

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<sup>1</sup> Europe 2020 Targets [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/europe-2020-in-a-nutshell/targets/index_en.htm)

commercialisation of research, in particular supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in taking up and rolling out these innovations, and bringing new products and new ideas to the market.

The fact that this is a cross border programme represents an opportunity to unlock the potential of SMEs as it is able to support them in reaching across the Channel to build upon research that is taking place at their doorstep, but often restricted by cultural or linguistic barriers.

The second half of this priority is aimed at the inclusive growth objective set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. The Programme Area faces similar challenges in relation to social exclusion on both sides of the Channel. These challenges include the decline of traditional industries reducing opportunities for work for those previously employed in these industries. In particular, the peripheral coastal and rural areas of the Programme Area have often been badly affected by this, although this is not limited to specific areas of the Programme. Economic and Social deprivation is a problem across all the parts of the Programme Area.

At the same time, the fact that we have such similar problems across the Programme Area offers an opportunity to pool resources and ideas on a wider scale, and to produce new solutions and ideas that can be implemented on both sides of the channel. This creates not only the chance to save effort by not duplicating work, but to learn from each other and as a result develop better ideas for meeting these challenges.

## **2. Support the transition to a low-carbon economy in the France (Channel) England Area**

This priority aims to support the Programme Area in meeting the challenges of the Europe 2020 targets to reduce carbon emissions, and to increase the use of renewables and energy efficiency. At the same time, it recognises the opportunities the Programme Area has, to build on its renewable energy resources, to save organisations money by increasing energy efficiency, and to support economic growth by developing and support new products, processes, systems and services.

The similar geography of the two sides of the Programme Area means that there are similar opportunities to build upon, such as the renewable energy sources available on both sides of the Channel. At the same time there are similar challenges relating to energy inefficiency on both sides of the Channel.

## **3. Enhance the attractiveness of the territories of the France (Channel) England Area**

The Programme Area is fortunate to have a collection of stunning landscapes and a rich natural and cultural heritage, including 15 UNESCO world heritage sites. This presents us with both the challenge of protecting the Programme Area from harm caused by human activity such as pollution and climate change, and the opportunity to build upon this to create a place that people want to live in, work in and visit.

The Programme focuses on two objectives under this priority;

- a) To build upon the common cultural and natural heritage of the Programme Area, for example by creating new tourism opportunities and developing existing tourist attractions. The second objective is to support management of the Channel and coastal environment of the Programme Area.
- b) As with priority 2, the similar geography of the two sides of the Channel present similar opportunities and challenges. The pressure on the environment and ecosystems is seen in both countries, and Partners working together on both sides of the Channel will face the same problems for which common solutions can be found.

### III. Selected Thematic Objectives, Investment priorities, and Specific Objectives

Within the framework of European Territorial Cooperation Programmes the European Commission has set out a list of Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities that programmes can select to prioritise how they will spend their funding.

In simple terms, a Thematic Objective is a general ambition which contributes to one of the Europe 2020 growth objectives. For example, Thematic Objective 4 (which is included in the FCE programme) has the general objective of, “Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.”

For each Thematic Objective the Commission has set out a list of Investment Priorities, which set out the types of activities programmes can support in order to meet the Thematic Objectives. As an example, one of the available Investment Priorities for Thematic Objective 4 is “Promoting research in, innovation in and adoption of Low-carbon technologies.”

For each selected Investment Priority the Programme has defined a “Specific Objective.” In simple terms, the Specific Objective sets out the change that the Programme is aiming to achieve in the Programme Area through supporting projects under the Investment Priority. For example, by promoting research in, innovation in and adoption of low carbon technologies, the Programme is aiming to achieve an increase in the development and uptake of existing or new low-carbon technologies and services.

The full selection of the Thematic Objectives, Investment Priorities and Specific Objectives sits below.

| Thematic Objective   | Investment Priority   | Specific Objective   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>1 - Strengthening research, technological development and innovation</b>            | <b>1.b)</b> Promoting business investment in innovation and research, and developing links and synergies between enterprises, R&D centres and higher education, in particular product and service development, technology transfer, social innovation, eco-innovation, cultural and creative industries, public service applications, demand stimulation, networking, clusters and open innovation through smart specialisation and supporting technological and applied research, pilot lines, early product validation actions, advanced manufacturing capabilities and first production, in particular in Key Enabling Technologies and diffusion of general purpose technologies. | <b>1.1</b> Increase the delivery and uptake of innovative products, processes, systems and services in shared smart specialisation sectors                                       |
|  |   | <b>1.2</b> Increase the quality and effectiveness of service delivery to the most socially and economically disadvantaged groups through social innovation                       |
| <b>4 - Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors</b>            | <b>4.f)</b> Promoting research in, innovation in and adoption of low-carbon technologies.   | <b>2.1</b> Increase the development and uptake of existing or new low-carbon technologies in sectors that have the highest potential for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions |
| <b>6 – Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency</b> | <b>6.c)</b> conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage;   | <b>3.1</b> To realise the potential of natural and cultural assets to deliver innovative and sustainable growth  |
|  | <b>6.d)</b> protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000, and green infrastructure;   | <b>3.2</b> Enhance and protect the coastal and transitional water ecosystems   |

## IV. Innovation

At the heart of the Programme Intervention Logic is a focus on innovation, not only in Priority 1, but across all the Priorities of the Programme Area. We are looking for new approaches to the problems which the Programme aims to address, and new ways to capitalise on the opportunities and assets of the Programme Area

It is therefore important that Project Partners understand what is meant by innovation within the Programme context.

### A. How is innovation understood?

Innovation is about positive and sustainable changes in thinking, in products, in processes, in systems and in services. It is typically understood as the successful introduction of something new and useful, for example introducing new methods, techniques, or practices or new/altered products and services.

In economic terms, it aims to increase the value of a product or process (often driven by consumer demand). In an organisational context, innovation aims to achieve greater performance and growth through improvements in efficiency, productivity, and quality, competitive positioning, market share etc.

The strategy for innovation needs to engage diverse stakeholders. This is because the innovation process involves not only the business sector but also public authorities at different levels. At the regional level, the capacity to innovate requires close collaboration between different agents, public, private, research centres, citizens and varied stakeholders.

Within the FCE Programme, innovation does not only mean technological solutions, but includes new or developed ideas in any field.

### B. Innovation in the broader context

The Europe 2020 targets aim to bring about Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive growth, and the Programme's overall strategy has been designed with this in mind. These targets imply that new ideas are needed, not just in research and development and the specific development of new products (although this is a key part of the FCE programme) but new methods to tackle ongoing challenges and to build on existing and emerging opportunities.

### C. What does my project need to demonstrate?

All projects regardless of their thematic focus need to demonstrate that they are adopting an innovative approach to tackling the challenges of the Programme Area. An innovative approach may be the result of capitalising on existing knowledge or on previously-funded activities. It may include the testing of new approaches which have proven successful elsewhere.

Overall, it is important to explain why the project breaks new ground, why tackling the particular issue is original, and how the approach itself is inventive, throughout each phase: planning and design, implementation and construction, promotion and publicity etc.

#### **D. What about projects under Specific Objective 1.1**

In addition to the above, projects falling under Specific Objective 1.1 need to address innovation through ensuring that there is delivery and uptake of products, processes, systems and services to address economic challenges.

The challenges for innovation identified under the Specific Objective 1.1 are;

- the need to achieve a critical mass of expertise required to develop, adapt, test and/or adopt innovative products, processes, systems and services,
- the need to better exploit and commercialise research, within and outside of the FCE area, to deliver tangible economic benefits for its territory and its inhabitants.

The Programme is hoping to use projects to support new innovations through Specific Objective 1.1 to facilitate;

- increased business opportunities and actions to support the export of innovations to new markets
- the creation of new high value and knowledge-intensive jobs and the attraction of expertise to the area
- the development of new tangible solutions to the economic challenges facing the FCE area
- enhanced competitiveness and growth through innovation (developing, testing, and adopting new products, services, processes and systems)

Projects under Priority 1 therefore need to not only consider how their project will be innovative, but how these innovations will achieve the objectives of the priority.

#### [V. A bit of history: key dates in Franco-British Cooperation within the European Community](#)

The first Interreg Programmes began in 1989, but formal Cross Border Cooperation in the Programme Area predates this. This section sets out some of the milestones which led to where we are today.

##### **1986: Launch of the Channel Tunnel project**

The Nord Pas-de-Calais Region (France) and Kent County (UK) signed a memorandum of agreement on support measures and efforts to be implemented in the wake of the Channel Tunnel construction, in the areas of training, regional planning development, infrastructures, tourism, etc.

##### **1992: Drafting of the first Franco-British European INTERREG programme, called “TransManche”**

The Transmanche Programme supported regions directly concerned by the opening of the Channel Tunnel: Kent County Council and Medway Unitary Authority on the English side and the Nord Pas-de-Calais region on the French side. Although significantly smaller than today’s programme in size and scope, it represented an important step towards what was to come.

### **1996: The INTERREG II “Rives-Manche” programme widened the scope of activity**

Alongside the Transmanche programme, the Rives-Manche programme was formed, and the following regions became involved in cooperation schemes: the départements of Somme in Picardie and Seine-Maritime in Haute-Normandie on the French side and East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority on the English side.

### **2000-2006: The Franco-British INTERREG III programme merged “TransManche” and “Rives-Manche” into a single programme**

Compared to the current Programme Area this programme was still fairly limited, with funds of 68 million euro, covering the coastline of England from Brighton to Medway, and the coast of France from Basse-Normandie to Nord Pas-de-Calais. However this represented one more step along the road to the current Programme Area by merging the programmes into a single area.

### **2007-2013: The cooperation area was once again enlarged with the “France (Channel)- England” programme**

Moving from the third to the fourth generation of Franco-British cooperation programmes, it was decided to continue to support regional cooperation by widening the perimeter of the area to encompass the whole Channel zone and a part of the North Sea, now covering from Cornwall to Norfolk in England, and from Finistère to Pas-de-Calais in France. The budget and therefore the impact of the Programme expanded at the same time to €175 million, supporting 150 cross border projects.

### **2014-2020: The fifth round of Interreg was approved, with an increased budget for the France (Channel) England INTERREG VA Programme**

The new programming era also marked a change in management for the Programme, with Norfolk County Council becoming the first English Managing Authority for a cross-border programme. Previously adjacent territories were merged into the Programme Area, which also expanded to include Peterborough and Swindon. The support for the Programme has also been increased to €223 million.

## **VI. So what’s new in the INTERREG VA France (Channel) England programme?**

In the run up to the end of the 2007-13, there has been a process of review to ensure that the Programme both builds on the successes and learns from the mistakes of the past. This has taken place not just at a programme level, but across the entire structure of ETC programmes to ensure we can deliver the best and most effective programmes possible.

### *New Managing Authority*

The biggest single change for the France (Channel) England Programme management structure between 2007-13 and 2014-2020 is the new Managing Authority. Norfolk County Council has taken over the responsibility from Haute-Normandie Regional Council.

At the same time the functions of the Joint Secretariat, Audit Authority and Certifying Authority have been transferred to Norfolk County Council as well, bringing all the Programme administration bodies under one roof.

This has created new opportunities for efficiency and communication between these bodies.

### *SME Involvement*

In order to bring the Programme into line with the Europe 2020 goals of ensuring that there is growth across Europe, the Programme has a new focus on encouraging SMEs to take part in the Programme, as they are seen as being key to new innovations and new growth in employment.

### *Increased Intervention Rate*

In the past ETC programmes have often operated on the basis that the programme would pay half the cost of the project, and the partnership would have to find “match funding” to support the other half of the cost of the project.

In the Interreg VA FCE Programme the intervention rate will be up to 70%, thereby reducing the amount of match funding that Project Partners will need to find to take part in the project.

### *Project Development Support*

The new programme has increased the number of facilitators covering the Programme Area to 8, with a particular focus on direct support and guidance to each project. This support will include;

- Advice on the project’s relevance to the programme priorities
- Advice on the structure of the Partnership
- Locating additional Partners
- Advice on the technical aspects of applying to the Programme.
- Advice on the technical aspects of managing the reporting and claims procedures
- Advice during the closure of the project

In the development stages of the project, this support will be provided by one of the 8 programme facilitators, whereas during the implementation of the project, the support will be provided by one of the JS’s Finance and Appraisal Officers.

### *Simplification*

In line with all INTERREG programmes, the France (Channel) England Programme has worked to simplify its expenditure rules to reduce the burden on Project Partners when compiling their claims. For example, Office and Administration costs are now based on a flat rate percentage of direct expenditure rather than requiring complicated evidencing of overheads. Methods for calculating eligible staff costs have also been substantially streamlined and simplified.

### *Harmonisation*

Also in line with all INTERREG Programmes, the France (Channel) England Programme has worked to ensure that as far as is possible (bearing in mind variations in local conditions and national legal systems) the rules and procedures are harmonised with those of other programmes across Europe. This should greatly reduce the burden on Partners with experience of other programmes who then wish to apply to the FCE programme as they will find that the procedures and rules are already familiar to them.

### *New claims procedures*

In order to ensure that claims can be processed as speedily as possible, there will no longer be a single claim date for all projects participating in the Programme. The Programme will instead operate a series of monthly claim dates, with each project assigned a month in which to submit their claims. This will reduce the peak workload of the Finance and Appraisal staff, meaning that payment claims can be processed more quickly and more efficiently.

## VII. Project Lifecycle

Projects of all types have very similar lifecycles whether these projects are engineering operations or cross-border cooperation projects. The life of a project from idea development to closure should not be considered substantially different to any other project.

However at the same time partners should not think of the formal end of the project under the Programme as the end of activities or impact. The Programme expects projects to be long lasting and to be able to continue once the formal relationship with the Programme is over.

A Guidance Note is available for each project phase, providing relevant information to guide projects, step by step, through the project lifecycle.

The aim is to facilitate easy access to information by people who are in different phases of the development or implementation of their project.

The titles below indicate what is understood by every project phase and the contents of the dedicated Guidance Notes.

### **A. Project Idea Generation**

This is the time when an idea is being shared among and pitched to potential Partners, and further developed in accordance with the recognised needs of the area.

The main actions are:

- To arrange a meeting with a programme facilitator, and keep in regular contact with the JS Facilitators
- To check if the project idea fits the Programme Strategy; To establish the need for a project based on an analysis of the shared needs, challenges, or opportunities of the Programme Area;
- To establish what has already been carried out and how to build on this.
- To search for and involve Partners;
- To outline the general scope and content of the project
- To contact the JS Facilitators for support and guidance

The Guidance Note 3 “Project Idea Generation” contains further information on this phase.

## **B. Project Development**

In this phase Partners develop the initial project idea into a project proposal, by defining the project details as well as dividing responsibilities among Partners. The aim of this phase is to be able to formally apply to the France (Channel) England Programme.

The main actions are:

- Keep in regular contact with the JS Facilitators to get support for the development of the project and the application.
- To agree on what exactly needs to be achieved and how to get there;
- To organise the responsibilities and accountabilities in the partnership and agree on who will take the role of the Lead Partner;
- To develop the project content and rationale with the Partners and stakeholders;
- To submit an Intervention Logic Outline for review by the Programme (Optional)
- To work in detail on the project proposal, its justification and expected contribution to the Programme Strategy, using the dedicated templates;
- To prepare the project budget;

Further information on this phase is contained in the Guidance Note, “Project Development.”

## **C. Project Application**

This phase concerns the submission of the project proposal to the Programme through the established procedures.

The main actions are:

- To fill out the Application Form submit it to the Programme in accordance with the applicable procedures and rules;

The Guidance Notes on this project phase focus on:

1. The templates and procedures required in order to apply to the Programme
2. The information needed for a successful application

The Guidance Note 4 on “Project Application” contains further information on this phase.

## **D. Project Selection**

This phase does not require action from the Partner, as the selection is decided by the Programme Authorities. However it is important that applicants understand how this procedure works so they can ensure their application stands the best possible chance of being accepted.

The main action is a formal Member State’s decision on the application: approved or rejected. If a project is approved, then the date when the decision of approval is taken is considered the formal start date of the project for the purposes of the Programme.

The Guidance Note 5 on “Project Selection” contains further information on this phase.

## **E. Project Implementation**

This phase is the largest and most important. The partnership carries out the work planned to produce the outputs and results as set out in the Application Form. Regular administration, management, monitoring and reporting activities will all take place, along with communication and promotion tasks as set out in the Application Form. Changes in the project should be managed according to the established procedures and rules, as set out in the “Project Implementation” Guidance Note.

The main actions are:

- To finalise the Partnership Agreement and have it signed by all Partners;
- To sign the Grant Offer Letter with the Managing Authority;
- To set up the project coordination and decision-making
- To carry out the project activities to deliver the agreed project outputs to budget and time schedule;
- To set up smooth monitoring and reporting procedures;
- To submit progress reports and payment claims in accordance with the deadlines set out in the Grant Offer Letter.
- To anticipate and manage risks in agreement with the Partners and the JS;
- To communicate and promote project work and achievements;
- To build up a network of relevant contacts and initiate the uptake and use of project knowledge, outputs and results.

During this phase it is also important that projects give consideration to ensuring that the project outputs and results are able to continue beyond the end of the project.

Further information on this phase is contained in “Project Implementation Guidance Note.”

## **F. Project Closure**

In this phase the project main activities should be completed and all outputs delivered. The partnership takes care of the final administrative requirements before the funded project is over.

The project lifecycle formally ends with the closing date of the project, however the project outputs and results are intended to continue producing value. Project Partners should be aware that it is too late to address the transfer of and sustainability of project results in the closing phase of the project, and this is something that should be considered from the very start of the project planning and implementation.

The Guidance Note 13 on “Project Closure” contains further information on this phase.

## VIII. Introducing the Programme Bodies

### *a) Programme Monitoring Committee*

The Programme Monitoring Committee works with the Managing Authority to ensure the quality and efficiency of programme implementation. It meets at least twice a year to assess progress made to reach the Cooperation Programme's Specific Objectives. It examines the results of implementation and in particular progression in achieving each priority's set objectives.

There are two Programme Sub-Committees, one for Project Selection and one for Performance Monitoring and Audit, who will support the work of the Programme Monitoring Committee.

### *b) Joint Secretariat*

The Joint Secretariat (JS) will be the main point of contact for Project Partners during the lifetime of their project. It is responsible for the day to day management of the Programme under the supervision of the Managing Authority. The JS is hosted by Norfolk County Council and most of its staff are based at County Hall, Norwich. However in order to support the development of projects members of the facilitation team work at various locations across the Programme Area.

Its Functions include;

- **Monitoring projects performance and expenditure**
- **Providing training for Partners and First Level Controllers**
- Supporting the development of projects through the network of facilitators
- Appraising project applications and making recommendations to the Project SSC
- Preparing and providing all necessary information to the Monitoring Committee, Managing Authority and Certifying Authority to allow the fulfilment of their responsibilities
- Implementing the Programme Communication Strategy

The work of the JS is carried out by two Teams, the Finance and Appraisal Team and the Facilitation Team. The Facilitation Team consists of 8 facilitators located throughout the Programme Area, who make the first contact with projects and support them as they prepare their applications to the Programme.

The Finance and Appraisal Team is responsible for evaluating the project applications submitted to the Programme, and will monitor and support approved projects during their implementation and closure.

### *c) Managing Authority*

The Managing Authority for this Programme is Norfolk County Council. It supervises the overall management of the France (Channel) England Programme and is responsible for the sound financial management and implementation of the Cooperation Programme.

Its functions include;

- Liaising and coordinating with the Programme Monitoring Committee, the JS and other interested parties
- Supporting the activities of the Monitoring Committee by providing information on programme progress, financial data, and data on indicators and milestones
- Submitting the approved Annual Implementation Report to the Commission
- Ensuring the existence and implementation of appropriate risk management and anti-fraud measures

### *d) Audit Authority*

The Audit Authority for this Programme is Norfolk Audit Services. It is charged with checking effectiveness of the financial control system set up by the Managing Authority. They will review the system as a whole, and also carry out specific audits on a sample of projects to check that the system is functioning correctly.

This will be carried out in accordance with the Programme Audit Strategy.

### *e) Certifying Authority*

The role of the Certifying Authority responsibilities are to;

- Pay the Payment Claims of projects after they have been approved by the JS Finance Team
- Prepare the Accounts of the Programme and submit them to the European Commission
- Manage the Programme Bank Account containing the ERDF monies paid by the Commission

This role has been entrusted to the Norfolk County Council Financial Services department.