

## Newsletter – Winter 2023



Welcome to the Winter 2023 and final edition of the Interreg France (Channel) England programme newsletter.

As the FCE programme draws to a close, our newsletter celebrates all that has been achieved since the programme first started and provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the programme's journey. In this final edition, there is a link to an article providing an excellent summary of many of the project's achievements together with contributions from Carolyn Reid, former Programme Manager, the National Delegations and our current Programme Manager, Sallyann Stephen.

During its lifetime, the FCE programme has committed €227 million ERDF to 51 projects which have been funded across 3 priority areas with 5 specific objectives focused on driving innovation, low carbon technology and protecting the regions natural and cultural heritage. We would like to thank all the projects that have been on the journey with us and for their dedication, enthusiasm and, of course, considerable achievements.

At the end of the newsletter, you will also find a summary of the most recent media coverage received by our projects together with details of the many awards that projects have received over the years.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to let you know that, although the programme is closing, we will be providing ongoing support. We recommend that you download a copy of the cooperation programme and programme manual from the website - [www.channelmanche.com](http://www.channelmanche.com). Please continue to refer to Guidance Note 13 of the programme manual for the full requirements after project closure. The Joint Secretariat will continue to be available should you require any further support by contacting [interregv@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:interregv@norfolk.gov.uk).



### **FCE programme marks project closure**

At the end of June this year, the France (Channel) England Programme reached a huge milestone with nearly all 51 approved projects having completed their project activities.

The programme has committed €227 million ERDF to 51 projects (including 8 micro projects) that have been funded across 3 priority areas with 5 specific objectives focused on driving innovation, low carbon technology and protecting the regions natural and cultural heritage.

In total, 12 projects have now been fully closed with the most recent being LabFact and BIOCIRC. With two or three exceptions, the remainder of our projects had completed their activities by 30 June 2023 and the majority of projects will be fully closed by the end of this year.

Over the lifetime of the programme, projects have overcome multiple hurdles from Brexit to Covid-19, demonstrating flexibility and resilience. We've highlighted some of our project's greatest achievements in the article below.

Click [here](#) to read our programme closure web article in full.

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**Former Programme Manager, Carolyn Reid (seen above at the 2019 Regiostar Awards), reflects on the FCE journey**

### **Beginnings**

It all began with a victory, securing a programme that set the stage for what would be an incredible adventure. The first (and sadly the last) cross border programme to be managed by an English local authority. There was an air of intrepidation at the start but that was outweighed by the feelings of gratitude, excitement and overwhelming opportunity. The initial steps involved setting up new systems and processes, ensuring a strong foundation for what lay ahead, navigating through complex compliance requirements and recruiting a dedicated team which were crucial elements in this early phase. Setting up a base in France proved to be a strategic move (but not without challenge), further enhancing our capabilities and contributing to the overall success of our endeavours. The learning curve was a steep one and we were putting in place systems and processes that were yet to be tested. A significant turning point in our journey came with the approval of our first projects where we would start to learn what this meant in practice and how we could make improvements that would support projects to deliver.

### **Initial challenges**

As our journey progressed, we encountered many hurdles, including the complexities of compliance, and managing the processes in a live environment. However, the operating environment was one that cannot be underestimated. The UK government could not sign off on the programme's finances until it knew the outcome of the Scottish referendum which could have had a significant impact on the UK's involvement, in 2015 the French regions restructured with 22 regions merging to 13 and the new regions were announced in 2016. These were significant partners and stakeholders in the programme without whom the programme could not progress. Then it was announced that in 2016 there would be a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, which led to devastating consequences for the future of our programme. The result would lead to 3 years of uncertainty and a count down to the UK formally leaving the EU. With the EU withdrawal act finally signed in October 2019,

we had a period of relief that we could get on with business as usual until the Covid pandemic hit.

### **Building the team**

In many ways these hurdles helped us to create a high performing team. The challenge brought us closer together and a renewed belief in our shared vision drove our determination to support projects to successfully deliver project results. The team demonstrated exceptional adaptability, providing unwavering support to one another and our project partners. That together we successfully overcame these obstacles is a testament to our collective resilience.

### **Successes**

Our achievements include delivering an exceptional program against all odds, committing funds, and achieving outstanding results with our delivery partners. The recognition of award-winning projects and the distinction of being the largest-ever Interreg project underscore the magnitude of our success. That we overcame such adversity and were able to support partnerships working on both sides of the channel not only to continue but to thrive, and that we were able to reach our programme targets around commitment and spend makes me feel incredibly proud of all of the people involved.

Throughout this venture, we embraced the ever-evolving landscape, navigating through Brexit's uncertainties and supporting our project partners in overcoming associated challenges. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic prompted a swift pivot to online delivery, reflecting our team's agility in responding to unforeseen circumstances. Amidst these challenges, we seized the opportunity presented by the CRII+ initiative from the EC. While its implementation posed additional challenges, our team tackled them head-on, contributing to the overall success of the program.

### **Proudest moment**

A crowning moment in my journey was handing over the reins as Programme Manager to Sallyann Stephen, a point of immense pride. This marked not only a leadership transition but also a testament to the exceptional team spirit that came about through our collective efforts. And I am so proud that the team that we had built together, characterised by resilience and a commitment to continuous improvement, never gave up, found solutions and continued to build strong partnerships to deliver an extraordinary program that defied all odds.

### **Legacy**

The legacy of the programme is the knowledge of the people involved at all levels (Governance, Programme & Project) and the skills that they have developed along the way as well as the incredible project results. I think that we have proved the power of team work and collaboration and have delivered on the proverb that was shared with me early in my interreg journey "To go fast, go alone, to go far, go together".

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# Interreg EUROPEAN UNION

## France ( Channel Manche ) England

European Regional Development Fund

### A word from the National Delegations

***From Bruno Dumont, Chargé de mission, Mission Politiques contractuelles et européennes et Politique de ville, Préfecture de Région Normandie / SGAR Normandie***

“At a time when the closure of projects is progressing at a good pace, utilising all the strengths of the Managing Authority and the Joint Secretariat, let us collectively salute the progress made since the Interreg FCE 2014-2020 programme began.

Numerous projects, both relevant and structured, have been carried out in a particularly complex context (Brexit, COVID-19).

On both sides of the Channel, project partners have learnt to know each other and how to innovate together for the benefit of ecological and energy transition, a major challenge for the years to come.

There is no doubt that cross-border cooperation has been strengthened thanks to this programme and that it will continue actively in the future.

From 2024, the closure of the program will make it possible to concretely measure the achievement of the programme's objectives and, above all, to promote the projects supported with a view to disseminating the acquired knowledge.

For what has been achieved and for what remains to be done, may the teams in Norfolk, in all their components, be congratulated and warmly thanked.”

***From Sam Lucas, Head of ETC Delivery Team, Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities***

“It's great to have the opportunity to send you all a short message as the France (Channel) England programme comes to its end.

I don't think anyone predicted what would unfold over the decade since we started preparing the programme... It's fantastic to see how you have all stayed the course, and heartening to now be able to see the real world outcomes you're delivering for communities and businesses across the programme area, across such a broad range of themes and sectors, ranging from tightly focused small microprojects all the way up to large and complex strategic projects, all of you adding to the portfolio of achievements delivered by the programme. Be proud of this, and thank you for all your work and dedication over the years to making this happen.

I want to pay tribute to all the current and previous staff at Norfolk County Council for all their efforts to help you through some very challenging circumstances – and, of course, make sure you got paid!

It's still really important that you close your projects properly and with the right measures in place to meet your ongoing obligations after you receive your final payment. You could still be audited, and none of us want you to be in difficulties or repaying money when you should instead be celebrating and building on the successes of your projects.”

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### **Final thoughts from Sallyann Stephen FCE Programme Manager**

It has been a privilege to work and be part of this groundbreaking programme. Firstly, as part of the UK delegation from 2015 until 2019, then as a Deputy Programme Manager responsible for project development and finally taking over the reins from Carolyn when it's fair to say the programme was in good hands and in a good place.

It has been a journey I will never forget, and like others, I am immensely proud of the collective achievements of everyone involved. The projects are fantastic, the partners who have dedicated time, energy, expertise, and passion to continue despite those incredible - and let's face it - unbelievable obstacles and still deliver on time is outstanding.

The functions within the programme that have supported the process, the partners, the projects and ultimately the programme we couldn't have done it without you!

I thank you all.

I know that our projects legacy will go on and I know that the lessons we have learned will go on and others will benefit from those lessons for many years to come.

It is with pride that I can look over my shoulder and see that the programme has left some footprints behind for others to follow and that we can take pleasure in that knowledge.

May I wish you a very restful seasonal break.

Sallyann

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### End of project resources

One of the legacies of the FCE programme is the resource and guidance packs that many projects have created as part of their outputs. Many of these can be accessed via project websites and we've included the links of some of them below:

- **AWE** has provided an in-depth toolkit for potential female entrepreneurs to access [Accelerating Womens Enterprise Legacy Toolkit](#)
- **BLUEPRINT** published slides and reports produced for its Circular Economy Roadshow [Reports and presentations](#)
- **BRIC** which sought to transform flood risk management service delivery at a neighbourhood level has produced a [user manual](#) to help build resilience in communities.
- **C-Care** delivered four cross-border work packages aimed at supporting individuals at risk of exclusion from the labour market and businesses that had been hit hardest during the Covid pandemic. It has published its results [here](#).
- **CobBauge**, which has developed the first domestic CobBauge house in Europe, published training videos, a guide for builders and designers, among other resources to promote low carbon construction using cob. [Technical documentation - CobBauge](#)
- **Cool Food Pro** has been helping to lead the way in getting caterers to reevaluate their practices in order to become more sustainable. The project has provided some excellent resources which can be found [here](#).
- **Connected Communities**, which developed solutions to the growing problem of social isolation has created a [Toolkit for Social Prescribing](#)
- **CPES** which offered financial incentives to farmers and land managers to encourage them to implement more environmentally friendly methods of farming has created a [toolbox user guide](#).
- **E-Channel** has made a wide range of [resources](#) available on how SMEs in the FCE area can successfully enter new markets.



- **EXPERIENCE** has created an [extensive resources hub](#) to assist organisations looking to develop sustainable, experiential tourism.
  - **ICE** looked to design and implement innovative smart energy solutions for isolated territories in the France Channel England area and you can access its resources [here](#).
  - **INDIGO** published multiple resources including research, a good practice guide for end-of-life fishing gear and specification for two prototypes of biodegradable fishing gear [Deliverables – INdIGO \(indigo-interregproject.eu\)](#)
  - **PACCo** restored 100 hectares of coastal wetland at two pilot sites in the FCE area and has produced an extensive [practical guide](#) together with other downloadable resources.
  - **PPP** sought to understand and reduce the impacts of plastic pollution in the marine and freshwater environment. As a result of its findings and as part of its legacy, the project has produced several excellent [downloadable guidance packs](#).
  - **RaNTrans** developed and tested innovative and cost-effective methods to rapidly reduce algal mat coverage and lower nutrient levels. The project's resources are available [here](#).
  - **SAMARCH** carried out vital research on the populations of salmonids (salmon and sea trout) in the Channel area. The project has published numerous papers which are available on the [publications](#) section of its website.
  - **TIGER**, which has been at the forefront of the development of tidal-stream energy, has provided some excellent resources which can be found [here](#).
  - **WfT** brought together relevant stakeholders to co-design and implement new management tools and systems to deliver innovative, flexible and more cost-effective water management solutions. The [Water for Tomorrow Guidance Pack](#) lists all of the tools and resources that the partners have developed.
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## Project Awards

During the programme's lifetime, many projects have received awards including two prestigious Regiostar's:-

Project	Year	Award	Category	Award
COBBAUGE	10/19	Regiostar	Connecting Green, Blue & Grey	Winner
COO-L FOOD	10/20	Regiostar	Circular Economy for a Green Europe	Winner
MARINEFF	09/21	CIRIA Biodiversity Challenge Awards	Habitat Creation	Winner
INCREASE VS	11/21	UK Housing Awards for Innovator	Innovator of the Year	Winner
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES	03/22	Live well at home and age well		Winner
COBBAUGE	2022	Uni of Plymouth Awards	Sustainability Prize	Winner
FLOWER (Kairos)	05/22	JEC Innovation Awards	Design, Furniture & Home	Winner
TIGER	05/22	ADEPT	Delivering Green Growth	Highly Commended
INCREASE VS	05/22	ADEPT	Sharing Places for People	Highly Commended
TIGER	06/22	SEAENERGY Awards	R&D Award – Best Poster	Winner
TIGER	06/22	SEAENERGY Awards	Special Award	Winner

COBBAUGE	09/22	RISE (Research, Innovation, Sustainability & Enterprise)	Field & Laboratory Research	Winner
INCREASE VS (Optivo)	11/22	Franco-British Awards	Community Impact Category	Winner
COBBAUGE	04/23	LABC (Local Authority Building Control) Awards	Best Sustainable Commercial Construction	Winner
PPP	05/23	Queen Mary University London Research and Innovation Awards	Excellent Interdisciplinary Research Project	Winner
EXPERIENCE (Kent Downs AONB)	06/23	Travel Marketing Awards	Best Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Campaign	Winner

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### Media coverage

- **CobBauge** was featured in an excellent report on ITV Anglia which discussed the potential for using low carbon and energy efficient cob mixes in future house building. You can watch the report [here](#).
  - There was an excellent article in the Public Sector Catering magazine about the great results being achieved by caterers using the **COOL FOOD PRO** calculator. Read the article [here](#).
  - Several partners from the **TIGER** project were highlighted in an article on the BBC News website which discussed the potential for tidal stream energy. Watch the report [here](#).
  - **EXPERIENCE** had a fantastic two-page spread in the Evening Standard's Travel Supplement highlighting some of the many possibilities for out of season travel in the FCE region. See it [here](#).
  - BBC's Countrywide featured a report on **Marineff's** innovative creation of artificial rockpools in Poole Harbour. Watch [here](#).
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