



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

EU Funds: Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

2022 Annual Implementation Report – Summary



UNDEB BYWROPEAIDD
EUROPEAN UNION



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**Cronfa Datblygu
Rhanbarthol Ewrop
European Regional
Development Fund**

Contents

Introduction	2
About the programme	3
Programme progress	4

Programme priorities and progress	4
Financial progress	5
Key Highlights	6
Project examples	7

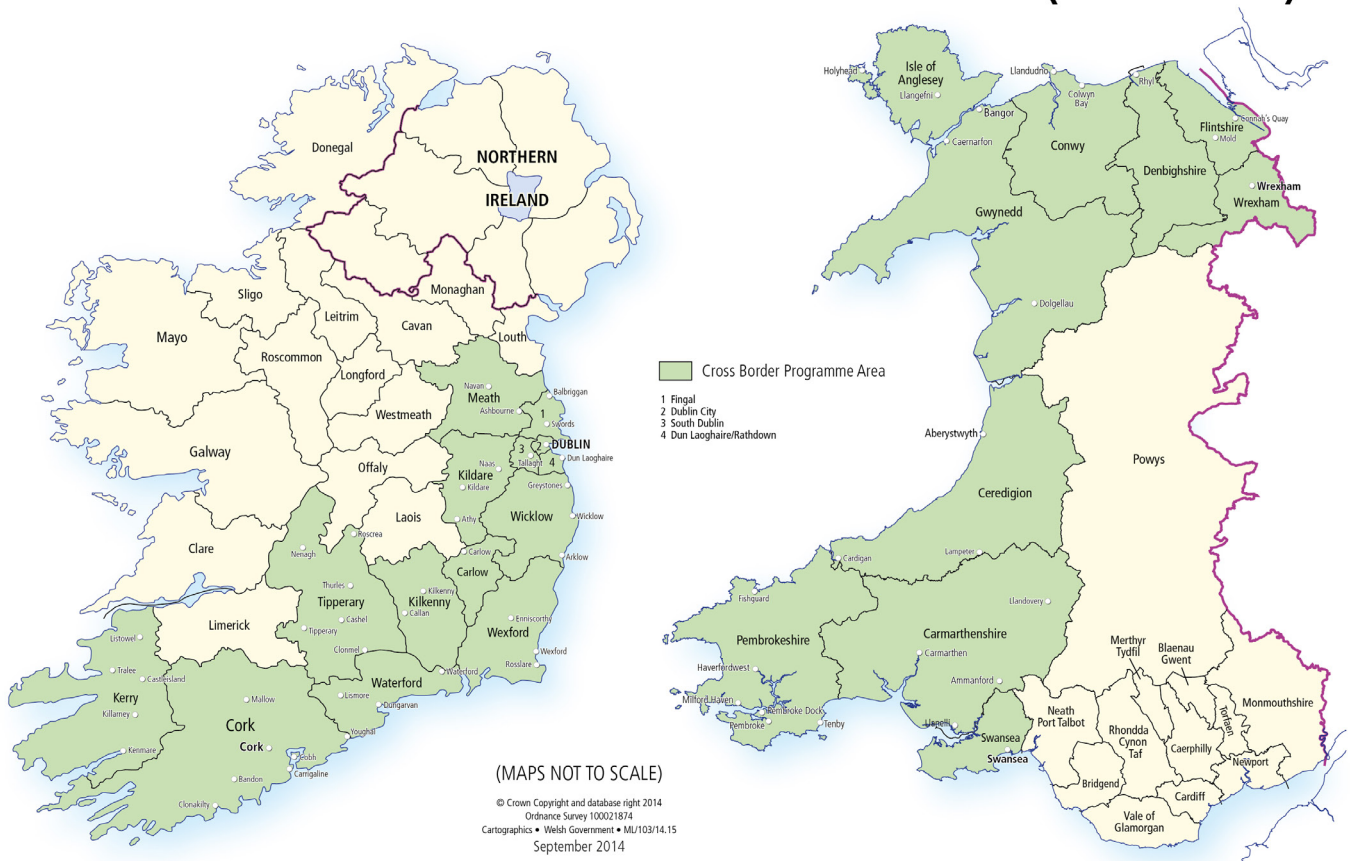
Introduction

The €100m Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme is one of a set of European Territorial Co-operation programmes which provide opportunities for regions in the EU to work together to address common economic, environmental and social challenges.

Funded through the European Regional Development Fund, the programme is connecting organisations, businesses and communities on the West coast of Wales with the South-East coast of Ireland.

The Irish Sea is a central focus for the programme given the maritime nature of the border between the two nations.

IRELAND/WALES CROSS BORDER PROGRAMME (2014-2020)

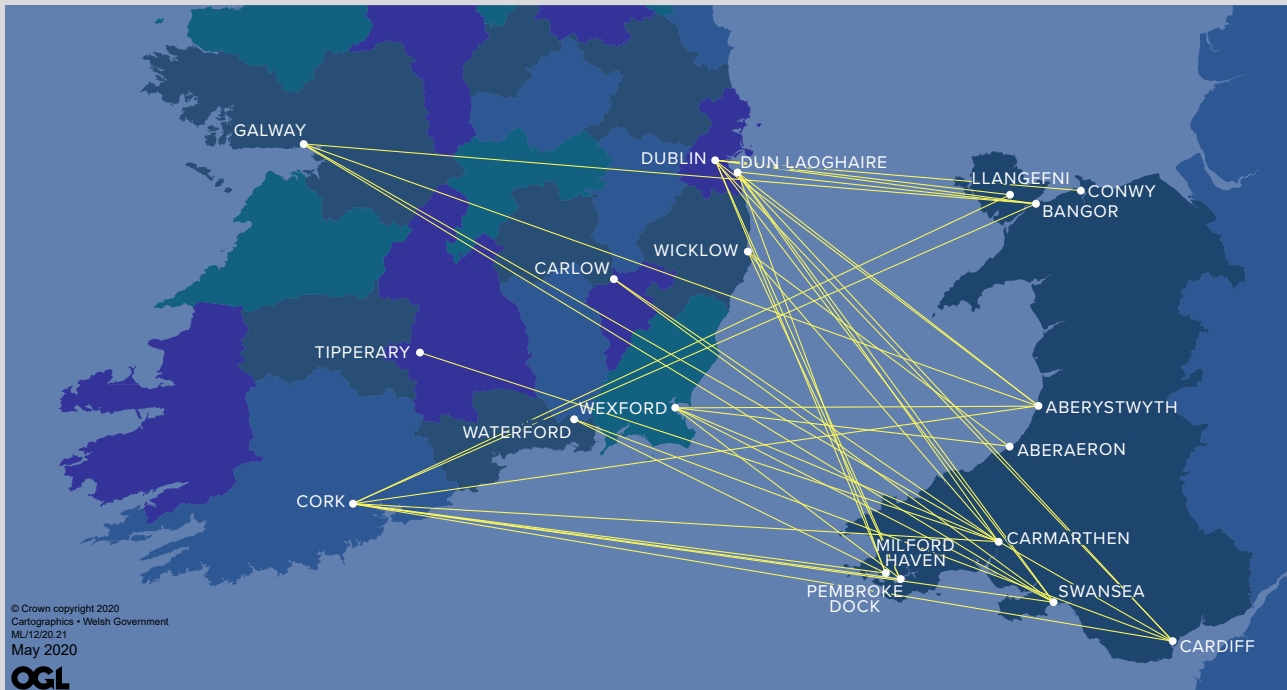


About the programme

The programme's vision is to provide a framework for organisations in the cross-border area to actively co-operate to address challenges and shared priorities on both sides of the Irish Sea, thereby contributing to economic and sustainable development of Ireland and Wales.

The programme's focus on the Irish Sea includes projects that are bringing together scientific expertise from both nations to increase capacity and research into the effects of climate change.

Universities and colleges are also linking with businesses to stimulate collaboration in sectors including food & drink, marine and environmental sciences and life sciences, while the programme is also utilising shared culture, resources and heritage to boost tourism and visitor numbers to the cross-border region.



Collaborative links made between organisations in both nations through the Ireland-Wales Co-operation programme

The Welsh European Funding Office, part of the Welsh Government, is the Managing Authority for the programme and is delivering the programme alongside its operational partners, the Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford, and government partners, the Department for Public Expenditure and Reform in Dublin.



Programme progress

Overview

Taking account of the issues surrounding the UK's exit from the EU and the pandemic, the programme continued to make significant progress. The flexible approach taken to provide pro-active hands-on assistance to project partners, has enabled many projects adapt and recover from the impact.

By the end of 2022, the programme had fully committed with investment in 24 projects in the cross-border region.

During the year, the profile of the programme was raised through news stories and programme progress being announced by Ministers and covered by news outlets and stakeholders in both nations.

The programme website, www.irelandwales.eu, and [@irelandwales](https://twitter.com/irelandwales) twitter channel continue to publish breaking news and information about the progress of the programme.

Programme priorities and progress

Priority 1 – Cross-border Innovation

Projects under this priority are increasing the intensity of knowledge sharing and collaborations between research organisations and businesses. By the end of 2022, the total allocation of EU funds available had been invested under this priority for ten projects.

Priority 2 – Adaptation of the Irish Sea and Coastal Communities to Climate Change

Projects under this priority are increasing capacity and knowledge of climate change adaptation for the Irish Sea and coastal communities. By the end of 2022, the programme had invested the total allocation of EU funds available for seven projects.

Priority 3 – Cultural and Natural Resources and Heritage

Projects under this priority are utilising the potential of natural, cultural and heritage assets to increase visitor numbers to coastal communities. By the end of 2022, the total allocation of EU funds had been invested under this priority for six projects.

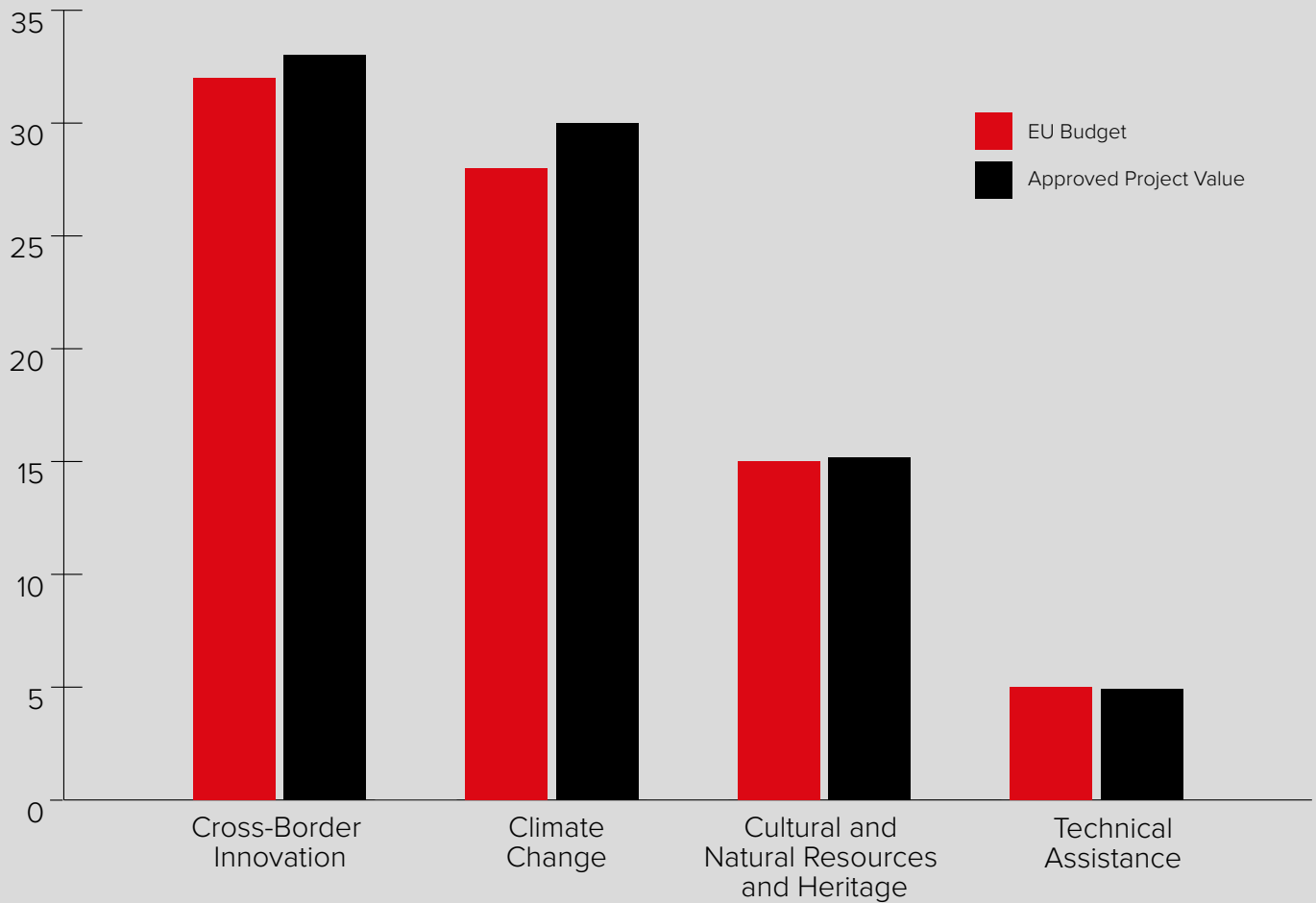
Priority 4 – Technical Assistance

This priority provides funding to support the management of the programme.

Financial progress

The following chart shows the total allocation of EU funds for the Ireland-Wales programme and how much has been invested in each of the three priorities by the end of 2022.

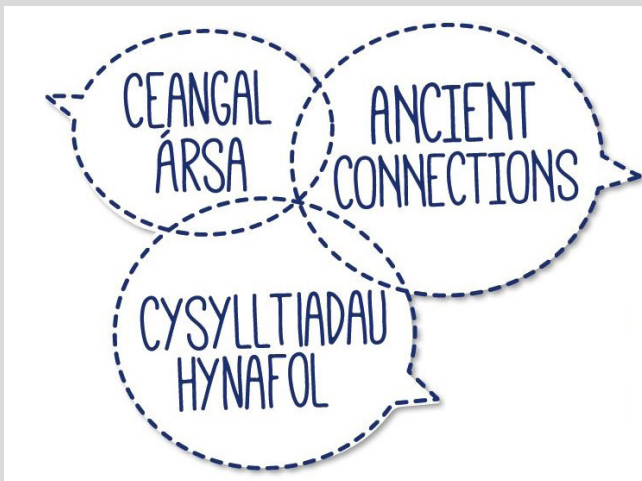
Chart 1: EU Grant: Budget and Approved



The Welsh European Funding Office, part of the Welsh Government, is the Managing Authority for the programme and is delivering the programme alongside its operational partners, the Southern Regional Assembly in Waterford, and government partners, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Dublin.

Key Highlights

- On St. Patrick's Day, the Irish Consulate in Wales held a celebration event in City Hall, Cardiff attended by the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, with several EU funded Ireland Wales Cooperation programme projects also in attendance including Acclimatize, Ancient Connections, CALIN, CHERISH and Ports, Past & Present.
- In May, Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport, attended the premiere of the Ports, Past and Present feature length film 'At the Water's Edge' at Ceredigion Museum and the Rosslare Harbour Festival. They have also developed a series of short documentary films intended to celebrate the best that each respective port community in Ireland and Wales has to offer to visitors.
- In June, Ecostructure held their final conference to mark the completion of the five-year research project on Eco-engineering and Biosecurity of Coastal and Marine Structures. The event which featured a pre-recorded video from the Minister for Climate Change, showcased how ecoengineering tools and resources can help mitigate the ecological impact of artificial coastal structures.
- Healthy Oats won Best Exhibit of Educational and Instructional Value at The Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Royal Welsh Show 2022.
- An additional 1.19m EU funds was awarded for phase 2 of 'The Saints – Ancient Connections' project which celebrates the ancient links between North Pembrokeshire and Wexford, Ireland and will allow more support for local businesses, arts, heritage, tourism and the creation of the Wexford- Pembrokeshire Pilgrim Way, a cross-border pilgrimage route.
- In October, Rt Hon Mark Drakeford, First Minister of Wales and Welsh Rural Affairs Minister Lesley Griffiths visited Ireland for the second annual Ireland Wales Ministerial Forum focussing on the strong economic & cultural connections between Wales and Ireland. During their visit they also had the opportunity to meet with members of several projects from the Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme including SELKIE, Brainwaves and Llŷn Iveragh Ecomuseums (LIVE).



Ancient Connections



Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport attending the Ports, Past and Present event



Ancient Connections pilgrimage route

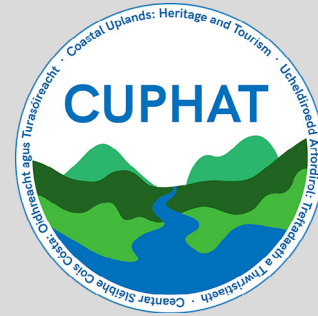


First Minister attending the St Patricks Day celebration event

Project examples

CUPHAT

€2.4m EU funds was awarded to the Coastal Uplands: Heritage and Tourism (CUPHAT) project, led by Aberystwyth University in partnership with University College Dublin and the Dyfed Archaeological Trust. The project held its official launch on 26 April 2022 at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and has held numerous public drop-in events and workshops to boost sustainable tourism by showcasing the natural and cultural heritage of rural and coastal upland areas in Ireland and Wales.



Official launch of the CUPHAT project

Portalis

The Portalis project was awarded €1.5m EU funds, led by Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), in partnership with University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Ceredigion County Council, and Waterford Chamber of Commerce. Exploring the earliest Stone Age connections between Ireland and Wales, the project has been raising awareness to protect

shared cultural and natural heritage and support sustainable engagement, establishing two new experiential tourism and cultural cross-border networks. The project held a series of cultural tourism and citizen science workshops over the year, engaging local business and schools in their archaeological work.

CHERISH

Throughout 2022 CHERISH's team of experts held a series of outreach events and Heritage Walks exploring Welsh archaeological coastal sites at risk from climate change. Patrick Robson, from the project also promoted their work on the BBC's Countryfile programme. In June, Minister for Climate Change Julie James MS & Vice Consul Niall Veale addressed

guests at the official opening of the Cherish Project Exhibition at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay which showcased 6 years work of the project, monitoring and highlighting the threats to coastal communities and local heritage from climate change. The project also featured as The Royal Commission's Christmas Lecture - 'Six Years of Discovery at the Edge of Wales'.



CHERISH Project Exhibition

Ecostructure

The Ecostructure project ran from 2017 to 2022, exploring eco-engineering and biosecurity solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change on coastal communities and environments. The project brought together key research institutions from both sides of the Irish Sea, including Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, and Swansea University in Wales, and University College Dublin and

University College Cork in Ireland. The project worked on the construction of sea walls, breakwaters and other forms of coastal defences to protect homes and infrastructure from erosion and the impacts of climate change, while introducing green spaces, increased water quality and habitats for valuable fish and shellfish, increased biodiversity, and higher abundance of commercially important species such as lobsters.