

## Atlantic action plan 2.0: A revamped maritime strategy to foster a sustainable blue economy and the EU Green Deal



[1]

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The European Commission has adopted an updated action plan for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the EU Atlantic area, covering France, Ireland, Portugal and Spain.

At a time of social and economic uncertainty, the EU is preparing the next generation of EU-funded programmes to foster economic recovery. The revamped action plan will give new impetus to the Atlantic maritime strategy and will strengthen the participating countries' recovery efforts. It will contribute to the European Green Deal, a socially inclusive model of sustainable development and job creation, while safeguarding marine and coastal environments and securing a healthy ocean.

The European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, said: *"In the midst of the crisis, more than ever, we must stay focused on making our future green: the EU Green Deal and the green transition should guide our recovery plan. The development of a sustainable blue economy, targeting specific challenges and opportunities at sea basin level, serves exactly these objectives. We must put green in the blue and blue in the green."*

Focusing on offsetting the adverse socio-economic impact of the crisis, the new action plan proposes concrete actions for the development of the blue economy in the Atlantic, addressing challenges, such as:

- The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the development of renewable energy - by supporting research and investment in marine renewable energy (going beyond offshore wind) for which the Atlantic has a huge potential;
- The fight against marine pollution - by promoting green shipping and coordinating actions against marine litter;
- The creation of new jobs - by addressing the skills gaps in the blue economy sectors and by supporting cooperation between EU training centres and businesses;

- The adaptation to climate change - by improving coastal observation and designing and promoting cost effective coastal protection measures.

The action plan also has a strong international dimension in The Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance including USA, and Canada, Brazil and South Africa. The participating Member States may decide, in consultation with the European Commission, to expand the membership of the Atlantic strategy to any interested state.

The action plan will reinforce cooperation among the participating countries and include coastal regions and stakeholders. A solid monitoring framework will measure progress and impact.

The main sources of funding will be European Structural and Investment Funds, including the future territorial cooperation programme in the Atlantic area and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). In addition to the national and regional funding, the action plan will also rely on sources such as Horizon Europe, Connecting Europe Facility, LIFE programme and innovative financial instruments managed by the European Investment Bank, such as the InvestEU programme for decarbonisation and the circular economy.

## Background

The Commission adopted the [Atlantic maritime strategy](#) [2] in 2011 in response to repeated calls for more ambitious, open and effective cooperation in the Atlantic Ocean area. The strategy identified the challenges and opportunities facing the region, grouping them under five thematic headings:

- implementing the ecosystem approach
- reducing Europe's carbon footprint
- sustainable exploration of the natural resources on the sea floor
- responding to threats and emergencies
- socially inclusive growth.

In 2013, the European Commission introduced an [Atlantic action plan](#) [3] to implement the strategy. This plan provided a framework for dynamic project development at local, regional and national levels, as advocated in the Atlantic maritime strategy.

The original action plan showed tangible results through 1,200 new maritime projects primarily targeting environmental protection, improved connectivity and social inclusion in the Atlantic area. Together, these projects represent investments of nearly €6 billion.

The new strategy has been prepared based on a broad consultation and a mid-term review published in 2018.

## More information

[Atlantic action plan - infographic](#) [4]

[A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy - Atlantic action plan 2.0](#) [5]

[Staff working document accompanying the communication](#) [6]

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