

Key info: Strategic Projects

1) Extract from the 2 Seas Operational Programme:

(...) Strategic cross-border cooperation projects can be identified by the Programme bodies. These should be projects that are essential for achieving the programmes objectives and be relevant for the Programme area as a whole. Such projects could be developed in different ways. The Programme Monitoring Committee may identify themes for these projects, and invite partnerships to come forward in open calls for proposals. The national and regional level actors represented in the programme bodies may also choose to take an active role in the development of these projects or invite selected actors to participate in such projects.

The exact specifications of these types of projects (e.g. regarding budget, partnership, application process and other requirements) will be determined in the Programme Manual and can evolve during the programming period. For all projects the basic requirement applies to have at least one partner from the UK and one partner from the European main land side (as specified in paragraph 3.3.3).

2) Hallmarks to be met by Strategic Projects:

In April 2010, the Programme Monitoring Committee approved the following Hallmarks for Strategic Projects:

- **To deal with a major thematic issue:** the project addresses one or more issues of common concern strongly linked to various regional, national and European policies and strategies, and to the Programme priorities.
- **To generate impacts which are manifest in a large area:** the geographical area of the project or its area of influence encompasses a large part of the 2 Seas area.
- **To have a long-term perspective and deliver tangible results:** the project has a strong focus on implementation taking into account past and present experiences in order to deliver better solutions in the future.
- **To have a clear maritime dimension:** the project has clearly explained how the 2 Seas are an obstacle or an opportunity for its development.
- **To involve key actors:** the project has a strong back-up from the regional level authorities. Programme Monitoring Committee representatives of the regions in the project's geographical area or area of influence are either partners in the project or support the project as associated organisations.
- **To ensure excellent communication:** the communication and dissemination activities and the potential of the project regarding these latter must be well thought and emphasized at application stage.

3) Indication of supported themes:

Potential activities under the **environment theme** have been elaborated in which the Programme particularly wishes to see Strategic Projects developed.

- **Protection of the maritime environment against human activities**

The Channel and the North Sea represent one of the busiest corridors in the world, and their coastlines are integrated into densely populated metropolitan areas. Both seas and shorelines are therefore prone to damages and disasters resulting from human activities. Innovative actions will have to be developed to ensure that this fragile environment is protected from human activities.

- **Responding to climate change and its interaction with the marine environment**

It is now established that Climate change is going to lead to important changes in the marine environment. Some of these changes will notably be the mean sea level rise and the modification of the temperature, the acid concentration and the chemical composition of marine waters. As the 2 Seas is strongly linked to the sea both in terms of economic development, environment and social sustainability, it is clear that innovative actions related to mitigation and/or adaptation to climate change have to be undertaken.

- **Maximizing the sustainable use of the maritime environment**

It is clear that the economy linked to the exploitation of the 2 Seas (fishing, transportation, tourism, energies, etc.) significantly contributes to the economy of the area. This area also represents a great potential in terms of development of renewable energies and sustainable tourism. It is expected that innovative initiatives matching the great potential of the 2 Seas, contributing to the integrated sustainable development of the area and ensuring the upholding of the maritime ecosystem's health will be developed.

- **Protecting marine biodiversity**

The 4 Member States of the 2 Seas region shares the same marine biodiversity and are confronted to the biodiversity erosion. As the biodiversity in general, marine biodiversity is threatened in the area, being harassed by multiple factors. Essential to protect marine biodiversity from erosion, integrated preservation initiatives will be supported through the creation of marine reserves networks and the implementation of ecosystem-based management in the 2 Seas area.

The Programme Authorities have also agreed activities related to **sustainable economic development** in which they particularly wish to see Strategic Projects being developed:

- **Improving accessibility and the transport infrastructure of the area**

The 2 Seas area is at the heart of a highly densely populated area, at the cross road of North-South and East-West corridors. However there are still insufficient links that connect all parts of the area. Initiatives tackling the main challenges faced by the area in terms of congestion, transport related pressure on infrastructure, environment and communities on the one hand and poor connections to the main infrastructure in parts of the area on the other hand would be a strategic contribution to the development of the 2 Seas area.

- **Developing cross border competitiveness clusters around the maritime economy**

The maritime economy and its related sectors are great contributors to the overall economy of the area. Enhancing the development of crossborder competitiveness clusters around the maritime economy, facilitating cross-sectoral research and innovation, would greatly contribute to improve the competitiveness of the 2 Seas area.

4) Distinctiveness with the **Common Priority**

Strategic Projects can be developed in all the priorities of the Programme. A Strategic Project's impact should ideally be as wide as possible but it is not compulsory for a Strategic Project to cover the enlarged eligible area (i.e. the eligible area relating to the Common Priority). What is essential regarding Strategic Projects is the theme addressed rather than the area covered. Not all projects developed under the Common Priority are necessarily Strategic Projects but a Strategic Project can be developed within the Common Priority.

5) Benefits for the projects deemed Strategic Projects

Although the ERDF rate will remain at 50%, strategic projects will benefit from:

- a wider exposure in the Programme's activities and events;
- increased technical support from the JTS and facilitators during the project development and implementation;
- promotion and possibly direct access to decision makers including National Governments and the European Commission.

6) Points of attention

When to apply?

There is no specific call set regarding proposals for strategic projects so far. The calendar of the calls published on the Programme's website applies.

How to apply?

In terms of application, there is no specific procedure relating to strategic projects. Project applicants are asked to submit the standard application form together with the letters of support by the closure of the call. Strategic projects can be developed under all 4 priorities of the Programme. The projects will be assessed and scored against the regular Programme eligibility and selection criteria.

During the evaluation phase, special attention will be paid to how the submitted project fulfils the hallmarks. In the end, it is the responsibility of the Steering Committee to decide whether a project should be deemed as a Strategic Project or not. Selection will not only be based on the fulfilment of the hallmarks but will also take into account the national opinion presented by the PSC members regarding the theme addressed and the importance of the submitted project both in their region and for the whole 2 Seas area.

There is therefore no specific action requested from project applicants.

[Version: 16/02/2011](#)

