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PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy – Atlantic action plan 2.0

*An updated action plan for a sustainable, resilient and competitive blue economy in the
European Union Atlantic area*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This staff working document provides additional information on the European Commission's proposal for a new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy-Atlantic action plan 2.0.

The purpose of the Atlantic action plan 2.0 is to unlock the potential of blue economy in the Atlantic area while preserving marine ecosystems and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation. This will be achieved through coordination and cooperation among the relevant countries across seven priority areas (goals) backed by concrete actions.

While geographically speaking the Atlantic action plan 2.0 focuses mainly on the seas and coasts surrounding the EU Atlantic Member States, including their Outermost regions in the Atlantic Ocean, it also addresses the marine and coastal areas as interconnected systems. The scope of the actions may therefore vary depending on specific needs, and the action plan remains open to other partners in the EU Atlantic area.

The Atlantic action plan 2.0 builds on the original Atlantic action plan¹ (adopted in 2013) and its mid-term review² (published in 2018). With a track record of only 4 years, it has spurred more than 1,200 projects that can be attributed to implementation of the action plan across the Atlantic area. Altogether, these projects represent investment of nearly €6 billion, including funding from the EU, the European Investment Bank and national, regional and private sources.

Despite these positive developments, the mid-term review revealed some important weaknesses in the:

- *strategy design*: with the wide-ranging nature of the objectives of the action plan, it was not possible to meaningfully influence concrete policy developments at national and regional level;
- *monitoring and evaluation*: a solid framework for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the action plan was absent; and
- *governance structure*: the governance mechanism was informal and thus rather weak.

Backed by the results of a public consultation, the mid-term review showed that the action plan could deliver even better. It suggested various avenues to improve its implementation, mainly by:

- improving the action plan's architecture and internal coherence;
- developing a framework for monitoring and evaluating performance;
- strengthening governance and better involving the regions; and
- further improving the strategy for communication on the action plan among funding authorities and investors.

Recognising the results of the review and the fact that the economic and political landscape has changed both in the EU and its coastal regions and worldwide, the five EU Member States

¹ Communication from the Commission – Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area Delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, COM/2013/0279 final

² Commission Staff Working Document on the mid-term review of the Atlantic action plan, SWD(2018)49 final, 23.02.2018

decided to adjust the priorities of the Atlantic action plan based on a comprehensive, bottom-up stakeholder consultation.

To this effect, a series of workshops were organised in Gran Canaria (Spain), Viana do Castelo (Portugal), Dublin (Ireland), Liverpool (UK) and Bordeaux (France). They involved a wide range of stakeholders from the region representing international, national, regional and local authorities, but also the private sector, academia and civil society. The work focused on a few, but highly relevant, areas with development potential for the EU Atlantic area. Here joint action is expected to increase competitiveness and foster growth, while reflecting a higher level of environmental and climate ambition, and address people's concerns about the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean.

This work resulted in the following four mutually-reinforcing pillars:

- Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy;
- blue skills and ocean literacy;
- marine renewable energy;
- a healthy ocean and resilient coasts.

To make sure that concrete results are obtained, the Atlantic action plan 2.0 sets seven goals to be pursued and outlines some of the possible actions, including potential avenues for implementation. It is conceived as a rolling document, meaning that new actions are added over time and existing ones are adapted as they move towards completion.

The five States concerned have been fully involved in preparing the Atlantic action plan 2.0. Its implementation is the responsibility of all (at national, regional, and local level), and throughout its duration sufficient information and outreach will be crucial to make it widely known among all types of stakeholders.

Finally, it is worthwhile highlighting that the revision exercise that resulted in this revamped plan started already almost two years ago. However, the global unprecedented socio-economic crisis triggered by the current COVID-19 pandemic has put this action plan into a new perspective.

Notably, as a result of the crisis, several sectors linked to the blue economy in the Atlantic area are expected to suffer. Coastal and maritime tourism represents a significant part of the EU tourism industry and is the largest sector of the EU Blue Economy. While blue economy in Atlantic is more diversified and less dependent on tourism than in some other coastal regions, the impacts on local economies including jobs and revenue losses is expected to be severe.

Still, the actions identified by the national and regional actors prior to the outbreak of the crisis remain valid offering innovative solutions to accompany the Atlantic member states' recovery efforts towards sustainable growth and jobs while safeguarding the environment and securing a healthy ocean to make blue economy more resilient. They complement the recovery plan recently adopted by the European Commission and will contribute to its implementation.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE ATLANTIC ACTION PLAN 2.0

The Atlantic action plan 2.0 reflects the goals and actions selected in the Communication. Its structure includes:

Pillars: The pillars focus on issues that one coastal region and one single State cannot solve alone or where it is more efficient to act together and deliver on challenges that matter in the daily lives of people living in the coastal areas. For each pillar, the action plan presents tables with possible actions. Research and innovation, as well as the international dimension of the action plan, cut across all pillars to complement and add value to the implementation.

Goals: The goals address the core challenges for the region and are therefore essential to the action plan's success. The seven goals are: 1. Ports as gateways for trade in the Atlantic; 2. Ports as catalysts for business; 3. Quality education, training and life-long learning; 4. Ocean literacy; 5. The promotion of carbon neutrality through marine renewable energy; 6. Stronger coastal resilience; 7. The fight against marine pollution.

Actions: Actions and interventions (such as new approaches, closer coordination in policy making, investments, training or networking initiatives, policy reviews) that countries and stakeholders carry out to address the different goals of the action plan. All actions and interventions should not preclude existing EU competences and legislation.

Avenues for implementation: Implementation of the proposed actions will rely on existing working groups or inter-institutional and transnational cooperation frameworks in order to avoid overlaps and duplications.

Governance: A formal governance architecture of the Atlantic strategy ensures political and operational coordination of the revised action plan and supports its implementation.

A monitoring framework: Result indicators are proposed and, to the extent possible, quantified for each goal. Baselines and timeframes have been determined or estimated for most targets.

PILLAR I: PORTS AS GATEWAYS AND HUBS FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY

Coastal tourism, aquaculture, shipbuilding, as well as growing industries like marine renewables, are centred on or closely interlinked with the activity of ports. Ports can play a major role in the sustainable development of these sectors and for the transition to carbon-free economy. To seize this opportunity, the role and potential of Atlantic ports need to be re-considered. At the same time, *the role of port operators as catalysts for blue businesses needs to be strengthened*. On the other hand, *ports must cooperate among themselves to mobilise financing for smart infrastructures and better plan the development of capacity to accommodate trade growth*.

Maritime innovation can help with the decarbonisation of maritime sources. For instance, there are available technologies that reduce the carbon produced by vessels. They include liquefied natural gas, hydrogen production, air lubrication, wind propulsion and exhaust technologies. Installing recharging and refuelling infrastructure for alternative fuels in ports and cargo terminals, including for docked vessels, would significantly improve the air quality in coastal communities.

To address the needs identified above, the pillar includes *two specific goals* and a set of concrete actions.

Goal 1: Ports as gateways for trade in the Atlantic

The central supporting tool to advance this goal is the recently created **Atlantic Sea-Basin Working Group**³. It will allow Atlantic ports to get together and coordinate in areas where they are not directly competing. It will also facilitate further actions included under this goal. For example, through the group, Atlantic ports that have taken a leadership role in environmental action can cooperate to create a **network of green ports**, which will allow them to exchange and share best practices to develop environmentally friendly service.

To further advance the development of ports to become eco-friendlier, this specific goal also includes the **development of eco-incentive schemes**, as well as the **joint development of waste reception and handling plans for ports**⁴. Currently, Portugal, Italy, France and Spain are already working on a common scheme⁵, which could be shared through the coordination mechanisms established and expanded across the Atlantic area. Further environmental action under this specific goal includes the launch of an **Atlantic strategy for liquefied natural gas**. A coordinated strategy would help avoid unnecessary investments and could be supported by the EIB's financing programme for green shipping.

Next to environmental action, this specific goal also includes actions to foster short-sea shipping activity in the Atlantic area. This area is of increasing importance in light of Brexit. One concrete action would be to develop a **strategy to better integrate Ireland with continental Europe**. This would include ensuring the ports have the necessary capabilities

³ The Atlantic Sea-Basin Working Group was set up at a joint seminar on 'Ireland's European Connectivity - ports and maritime links in the Atlantic sea basin' in Dublin on 16-17 April 2019. The seminar was organised by the three European TEN-T Coordinators (Kurt Bodewig (MoS), Peter Balazs (NSM) and Carlo Secchi (ATL) in close cooperation with the Irish Maritime Development Office. The working group will be chaired by the TEN-T Motorways of the Sea Coordinator in cooperation with the Atlantic and North Sea Mediterranean Corridor Coordinators.

⁴ The new Directive on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships (COM/2018/033 final) suggests that the waste and handling plans which Member States must put in place, may be developed jointly by two or more neighbouring ports in the same geographical region for reasons of efficiency, provided that the need for and availability of port reception facilities are specified for each port (see Article 5(3)).

⁵ <http://mae-project.eu/>

and infrastructure to further develop short-sea shipping in the region. To better understand the circumstances and needs for developing this field, this specific goal includes commissioning a **study to analyse the existing freight flows**, looking at both the maritime and hinterland flows.

The actions will be mainly implemented through the Atlantic Sea-Basin Working Group, led by the European Coordinator of the Motorways of the Sea. Partners will include all core ports of the Atlantic and North Sea Mediterranean corridors, as well as comprehensive ports within the range of between Amsterdam and Algeciras. They will also include EU Member State representatives, as well as shipping and ferry lines, freight forwarders and other logistical stakeholders.

Actions

- ▶ **Develop the TEN-T Motorways of the Sea in the Atlantic**
- ▶ **Create a network of green ports by 2025**
- ▶ **Foster short-sea shipping links in the Atlantic area to better integrate Ireland**
- ▶ **Launch an Atlantic strategy on liquefied natural gas**
- ▶ **Develop eco-incentive schemes to upgrade port infrastructure**
- ▶ **Jointly develop waste and handling plans for Atlantic ports**

Goal 2: Ports as catalysts for business

In order to act as blue growth hubs, ports need to become enablers and catalysts for blue businesses. This specific goal includes a few actions to address this issue. A first action is to **create blue hubs of excellence** across the EU Atlantic area. This would entail ports actively seeking cooperation with other local maritime stakeholders and acting as a catalyst for the blue economy. To ensure this action has maximum effect, it will be important to simultaneously **create conditions to attract new stakeholders** in ports. This could be done by encouraging partnerships with research institutions or the tourism industry, for example, or by installing incubators and accelerators for blue economy start-ups or allocating dedicated areas to industry.

For ports to develop and evolve, they need the support of the public and should be underpinned by communication and awareness campaigns and the regular engagement of citizens. To ensure support from legislators and make necessary funding available, ports will need to **expand the collection of data** beyond traditional data on logistics. Although in terms of logistical activity ports are already among the largest hubs, they may increase their impact on the local economy through diversification. To show this, it will be important for ports and communities **to gather and communicate data on the impact ports have on social and environmental issues**, particularly on employment and air pollution.

The creation of blue hubs of excellence could be built on the example of successful initiatives in Portugal and Spain, namely the Portuguese Port Tech Accelerator⁶ programme, as well as the Port of Vigo's blue growth strategy⁷. The Atlantic ports themselves and local blue

⁶ <http://bluetechaccelerator.com/>

⁷ <http://bluegrowthvigo.eu/en/impact>

economy stakeholders should lead the implementation.

On the other hand, the Atlantic Sea-Basin Working Group will help to share knowledge and exchange best practices, aiming to raise political awareness and leverage the necessary funding.

Actions

- ▶ **Develop a blue accelerator scheme for Atlantic ports to help scale up innovative businesses**
- ▶ **Share best practices, exchange ideas and tackle problems jointly**
- ▶ **Expand data collection beyond traditional (logistics) data**
- ▶ **Increase communication and availability of data on the economic potential of ports**

PILLAR II: BLUE SKILLS OF THE FUTURE AND OCEAN LITERACY

Having the right set of skills is essential to take advantage of innovation and rapidly deploy blue technologies. *A specialised blue education and training offer based on a business intelligence scheme can attract young talent to the blue economy, stimulate productivity and increase the competitiveness of the EU Atlantic area.* While specialised clusters already operate at local and regional level, *efficient sea-basin cooperation can facilitate cross-border circulation of qualified workers to match the evolving labour market demand.*

Another focus area is ocean literacy. *Ocean literate citizens can ‘adapt their everyday behaviour to make informed and responsible decisions that promote ocean stewardship in a co-creation approach’.*

To address the needs identified above, the pillar includes *two specific goals* and a set of concrete actions.

Goal 3: Quality education, training and life-long learning

To ensure quality training and the promotion of blue skills, it will be important to continue identifying the existing **blue skills gaps** in maritime communities through a comprehensive mapping of current and future skills sets and training programmes on offer. The premise is that both need to cooperate in a structured and regular way: curricula need to be reviewed and updated in order to keep pace with the requirements and skills needs of the labour market. Projects such as *MATES*⁸ work on this aspect by looking closely at two specific sectors of the blue economy, namely shipbuilding and offshore renewable energy. It will be important to deepen cooperation between stakeholders by building, for example, on the results of all relevant projects in this area, and expand it further.

⁸ MATES implements the Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills, which is an initiative of the 2016 Skills Agenda for Europe; the Blueprint will be continued through the updated Skills Agenda.

A first step would be to **enhance data collection** across all sectors in the EU Atlantic area, tapping into existing databases, studies, project deliverables and experiences to avoid duplication. To facilitate this process, it will be important to improve cooperation between businesses and training providers. One action could be to **promote institutions that act as liaison centres**. These institutions can help align the future workforce with the skills demand. On this basis, a **business intelligence scheme** can help collect data from businesses on their demand (for apprenticeships, permanent workforce skills, etc.), building upon existing EU big data projects on skills and try and match them with relevant skills supply for all actors, thus facilitating exchange. A functioning social dialogue could also be an important factor for such a cooperation.

Further, it will also be important to facilitate cross-border mobility of workers to match evolving labour demand. This specific goal could foresee as an action the identification of good practices, through peer learning, to help match employers and jobseekers in the blue economy. A mapping of their roles and responsibilities across coastal regions would help understand the labour demand and supply in the blue economy of each region. Through strengthening the links between these actors, best practices should be shared and approaches possibly further coordinated. At the same time, taking advantage of a **geographic information platform** on the existence of job opportunities in the blue economy could assist mobility and help fill short-term demand gaps. This could be explored also with the support of the existing EURES portal⁹. Cooperation and exchanges through it would be useful to avoid a duplication of efforts.

Projects funded through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and launched under the blue careers topic of the 2016 and 2018 blue economy calls for projects could also serve as a starting point for future actions. Actual implementation will rely on local and national authorities, regional development authorities and agencies as well as employers, facilitators, regional social partners, educators and VET providers. In bringing together a variety of stakeholders, maritime clusters can play an important role in this respect too.

Cooperation and exchanges through it would be useful to avoid a duplication of efforts.

The actions under Goal 3 could also inform the international work under the Galway and Belém Statements.

Actions

- ▶ **Identify blue skill gaps in the EU Atlantic area**
- ▶ **Harmonise data collection in the area of blue careers**
- ▶ **Create a business intelligence scheme and promote liaison centres for improved cooperation between businesses and training providers**
- ▶ **Identify through peer learning best practices for matchmaking employers and jobseekers that serve as inspiration**
- ▶ **Take advantage of existing information platforms for job opportunities and harvest their potential for blue jobs.**

⁹ At EU-wide level: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/language-selection> and in particular for the young: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/opportunities><https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/opportunities>

Goal 4: Ocean literacy

A key action under this specific goal would be to pursue activities under the future **pan-European Ocean Literacy platform, ‘EU4Ocean’**¹⁰, specifically in the EU Atlantic area. This can complement and build on the already existing transatlantic **ocean literacy implementation strategy**¹¹ developed by the **Ocean Literacy Working Group of the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance (AORA)**. This strategy would serve as an additional guiding document for ocean literacy actions in the EU Atlantic area, as it includes actions on formal and informal education involving schools, civil society, training and general awareness. Synergies between ocean literacy actions in the EU Atlantic Member States and those in other parts of Europe could also be sought.

Regarding schools, the ‘EU4Ocean’ platform can be used to pursue two actions to increase ocean literacy and education on maritime issues in the EU Atlantic area. One action would be to screen the national curricula to understand to what extent the intrinsic value of the ocean is embedded in what schools teach with a view to launching an **Atlantic Ocean literacy pilot curriculum**. Such a pilot would detail the potential actions that schools and education departments of the Atlantic area can implement to increase ocean literacy among students. This action could be integrated into existing curricula, or act as a stand-alone action. It would serve as a basis to create **25 Atlantic blue schools by 2025**, inspired by the Escola Azul action¹² in Portugal.

The AORA Ocean Literacy Working Group could serve as an additional vehicle to promote best practices in this field and help distinguish schools with a genuine maritime focus in order to promote, for example, the EU Atlantic area as a ‘marine educational area’¹³. In all cases, to step up the formal education component, a dialogue should be opened with the national education systems to explore the best ways possible to include ocean literacy in the national curricula.

To ensure that ocean literacy is part of a robust life-long learning process, future national and EU blue skills training projects as well as research and innovation projects are encouraged to include an **ocean literacy component** in their activities. For instance, research projects on blue growth in Horizon 2020 are already including specific evaluation criteria on the impact of such projects in raising public awareness and engaging citizens. Good practices and ideas can be exchanged through the ocean literacy implementation strategy.

The EU continues to work on implementing the Galway and Belém Statements towards an All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance by fostering closer cooperation with Atlantic partners along and across the Atlantic basin. Through the **All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Forum**¹⁴, the EU will support the implementation of an All-Atlantic wide community of Youth Ambassadors

¹⁰ The ‘EU4Ocean’ platform on ocean literacy envisages various actions, including the creation and management of a network of blue schools across Europe active or potentially interested in ocean-awareness activities. This network would be open to primary schools as well as lower and upper secondary technical and vocational schools.

¹¹ <https://www.atlanticresource.org/aora/sites/default/files/GalleryFiles/Publications/TransAtlanticOceanLiteracyImplementationStrategy22Jan2016.pdf>

¹² For which the blueprint was developed as part of a Horizon 2020 project called ‘SeaChange’ on ocean literacy.

¹³ To recognise and highlight the commitment of schools that raise awareness about ocean protection, France has developed a national label – ‘Marine Educational Area’. Each year, selected schools receive an award for actively promoting participatory management of the marine environment. More information can be found here: <http://www.aires-marines.fr/Proteger/Sensibiliser-le-public/Les-aires-marines-educatives/Le-label-Aire-marine-educative>

¹⁴ The All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Forum was launched by the European Commission on 6-7 February 2020 and follows on from the first All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassador Summer School in Galway (Ireland) on 23–27 August 2019. The Forum is an example of how the EU works with its transatlantic partners along and across the Atlantic basin, to empower the next generation of leaders to engage in sustainable development along and across the Atlantic Ocean.

and work towards the integration of training on science and citizen engagement, communication and outreach as part of their training pathway for career development.

Actions to raise awareness in civil society at large and engage citizens with the ocean should be organised, for example, around the celebration of World Oceans Day on 8 June¹⁵. These can include an **annual Atlantic beach-cleaning** day or initiatives such as the Irish pilot action ‘Go Atlantic Blue’¹⁶. More events could also be organised annually on European Maritime Day¹⁷ and under the future ‘EU ocean literacy’ platform to give these issues more visibility and generate impact, with marine research institutions and museums opening their doors and facilitating access for the general public to help raise ocean literacy throughout the EU Atlantic area.

The actions on ocean literacy for the EU Atlantic area in particular could also be implemented with or through AORA and build on the work of its Ocean Literacy Working Group.

There should be more coordination of activities with the work under the future ‘EU4Ocean’ platform, which will include the European Network of Blue Schools and the European Youth Forum for the Ocean. The latter will support and where appropriate complement the European Commission’s All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Forum and its Youth Ambassador Programme launched in the summer of 2019.

The actions under Goal 4 will also be part of the international work under the Galway and Belém Statements.

Actions

- ▶ **Launch an Atlantic Ocean literacy pilot curriculum**
- ▶ **Create 25 Atlantic blue schools by 2025**
- ▶ **Implement an ocean literacy component (dissemination) in relevant projects**
- ▶ **Make use of the All-Atlantic Ocean Youth Forum**
- ▶ **Engage citizens in ocean-related actions in the EU Atlantic area**
- ▶ **Engage citizens in activities organised for European Maritime Day, International Ocean Day and under the future EU4Ocean platform**

PILLAR III: MARINE RENEWABLE ENERGY

The EU Atlantic area is the leader in and testbed for the development of novel marine renewables¹⁸, especially ocean energy and floating offshore wind. To reach the *next step of development, namely the commercial maturity of successful prototypes*, is essential to *maintain technological leadership, retain talent and provide affordable clean energy*. The countries participating in the Atlantic maritime strategy have developed a strong

¹⁵ Potential activities on World Oceans Day, 8 June, could include ensuring open doors and easy access for the general public to marine research institutions and museums in order to help raise ocean literacy throughout the EU Atlantic area.

¹⁶ <https://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/news-events/press-releases/go-atlantic-blue-celebrate-our-atlantic-ocean-world-oceans-day>. The pilot action was developed under the framework of the Galway Statement and will be replicated through the All-Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance on World Oceans Day.

¹⁷ <https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/maritimeday/en>

¹⁸ Marine renewable energy includes offshore wind (bottom fixed and floating) and ocean energy (waves and tidal energy).

cooperation on maritime spatial planning. This pillar responds to several interconnected challenges, which are to *increase access to finance, obtain the necessary political support and public acceptance, facilitate knowledge sharing and make use of best practices* across the region.

To address the needs identified above, the pillar includes *one specific goal* and a set of concrete actions.

Goal 5: The promotion of carbon neutrality through marine renewable energy

The Atlantic has the most powerful tide and wave resources in Europe and is home to most of Europe's marine renewable energy test centres and development sites. Renewable electricity is key to decarbonisation, contributing to the decarbonisation of transport, home heating and industry. Hydrogen cannot contribute to decarbonisation if it is not produced with a low carbon footprint. It is therefore essential to use the Atlantic resources to the maximum possible extent.

To this aim, it is proposed to set **specific deployment objectives in the Atlantic** region by supporting the work of the Set Plan Implementation Group for Ocean Energy¹⁹.

By setting specific objectives, development could be steered in a concrete direction and the next steps taken towards commercialisation. It would be part of a more general action to **pool together different initiatives** in the area, which would facilitate knowledge sharing and avoid duplication of efforts. Part of the knowledge sharing would entail defining the **best sites for marine renewable energy farms** across the Atlantic as demonstrated by the use of Copernicus data, while ensuring appropriate attention to environmental impacts and information services²⁰. This includes both identifying which type of renewable energy would be the most profitable in a certain area as well as which infrastructure, especially which type of ports, are available in the area to facilitate the deployment of the technology. The area should also be selected taking into account the ecosystems found there and taking all necessary measures to prevent and minimise negative impacts on the marine environment. Exploiting synergies with other economic activities, e.g. fisheries, in the selected area could also prove beneficial. In this sense making the best use of the existing planning tools at EU level can facilitate the attainment of this goal. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (SEA Directive)²¹ allows the consideration of reasonable alternatives to be taken into account with view of the geographical scope of the plan and programme and thus better allow integrating environmental considerations in the plan making process. The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive is also an important tool to integrate different sectors and ensure good appropriation by the different actors.

To ensure funding availability, the goal includes two actions. The first would see the development of **incentives for demonstrations** that recognise that costs are higher for technologies before they are deployed at scale, such as floating wind turbines and devices harnessing the energy of waves and tides. The second would **strengthen the regional funding mechanisms**²² implemented beyond 2021, through longer projects and funding

¹⁹ <https://setis.ec.europa.eu/ocean-implementation>

²⁰ https://www.copernicus.eu/en/use-cases?f%5B0%5D=domain_taxonomy_term_name%3ABlue%20Economy,
<http://marine.copernicus.eu/natural-resources-energy/>

²¹ Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, OJ L 197, 21.7.2001

²² Based on the experience of the Ocean ERA net mechanism. More information can be found here: <https://oceaneranet.eu>

possibilities. This would also entail facilitating access to test facilities through a future scheme designed according to the lessons learnt from past or ongoing projects such as Marinet²³, Marinet2²⁴, Foresea²⁵, Blue-Gift²⁶ or OceanDemo²⁷, for example. The closer cooperation through these networks would also make it possible to identify flagship projects for each of the ocean energies. This could help inform the coastal communities about ocean energy and engage them in it.

On a more general level, this specific goal includes developing public awareness using appropriate communication tools on marine renewable energy in the Atlantic and assessing the socioeconomic and environmental impact of the different available technologies. This would help local communities to better understand the risks and benefits of marine renewable energy. This would help inform and engage both policy makers and the wider public. In this sense, it will complement the work of stakeholders and flagship projects.

Lastly, the specific goal can be attained by **developing a specific framework for islands** that facilitates the development of ocean energy. This could be done through the Clean Energy for EU Islands initiative²⁸ and would need to be coordinated with both national and local authorities to allow fast-track processes. It would help to address the issues of cost and administrative burden.

The actions could be initiated and steered through the SET Plan²⁹ Working Group on Ocean Energy, under the co-leadership of the European Commission. Technical implementation would rely on marine renewable energy developers and interest organisations. It would also need the expertise and support of regional and local authorities.

Actions

- ▶ **Set specific deployment objectives for marine renewable energy in the Atlantic regions taking into account their environmental impacts**
- ▶ **Define best sites for marine renewable energy farms (including offshore wind) and adjacent ports across the Atlantic**
- ▶ **Implement incentives for deployment of innovative renewable energy installations**
- ▶ **Pool together different marine renewable energy initiatives covering the EU Atlantic area, based on the philosophy and furthering the objectives of the Strategic Energy Technology plan (SET plan)**
- ▶ **Develop a communication strategy on marine renewable energy in the Atlantic**
- ▶ **Strengthen cooperation in the European ocean energy community**
- ▶ **Develop a specific ocean energy framework for EU islands in the Atlantic, in line with the Clean Energy for EU islands initiative**

²³ <http://www.fp7-marinet.eu/>

²⁴ <http://www.marinet2.eu>

²⁵ <http://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/funding-ocean-renewable-energy-through-strategic-european-action/>

²⁶ <http://bluegift.eu/>

²⁷ <http://www.nweurope.eu/projects/project-search/oceandemo-demonstration-programme-for-ocean-energy-pilot-farms-and-supporting-technologies/>

²⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/renewable-energy/initiatives-and-events/clean-energy-eu-islands>

²⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/technology-and-innovation/strategic-energy-technology-plan>

PILLAR IV: A HEALTHY OCEAN AND RESILIENT COASTS

The EU Atlantic coast is vulnerable, considering the high number of human activities in this area. Large storms, floods and erosion also have a detrimental effect on large parts of the coast and will likely be exacerbated through climate change. Both the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate³⁰ report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change³¹ and the annual ocean state report³² from the EU Copernicus Earth Observation programme³³, predict a continued rise of sea level at an accelerated pace by the end of the century, increased marine heat waves or storm surges. *Risk prevention and adaptation measures are necessary to protect the coastal habitats and biodiversity, as well as infrastructure and economic activities at risk.* Marine and coastal habitats should be preserved and valorised, notably with the view to develop new forms of maritime and coastal tourism. In this particular economic sector, circular economy, zero pollution, energy efficiency and biodiversity preservation should be the guiding principles to develop more sustainable practices that benefit local development and local employment all over the year. Although shipping has become safer over the past decades, marine pollution resulting from deliberate and accidental spills of oil and other harmful substances remains a high risk. *Effective risk management of spills and their impact requires cross-sectoral cooperation and work at regional level.* Marine pollution and notably plastics, is another major problem. Materials valuable for recycling are polluting Atlantic beaches and damaging the environment They could be collected and pumped back into the economy, making it more circular. *Coastal regions and citizens can develop an Atlantic response to marine litter through a system of coordinated actions,* adding to the ongoing initiatives under the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR)³⁴ the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive³⁵ (MSFD), the SEA Directive and the EU Strategy for Plastics.

To address the needs identified above, the pillar includes *three specific goals* and a set of concrete actions.

Goal 6: Stronger coastal resilience

To test the level of protection of coastal communities and make them safer, it is necessary to **demonstrate a comprehensive EU Atlantic area-observing system** that provides enough advanced notice and precision to support ocean climate forecasting and projections at regional scale and successful **emergency response to storm surge, hurricane, floods and tsunami warnings**. To this effect, the results of research projects and EU-wide and international initiatives³⁶ in this area, including those of EU Member States, should be taken into account,

³⁰ <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/home/>

³¹ The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was tasked with assessing the scientific evidence on climate change.

³² <http://marine.copernicus.eu/2nd-ocean-state-report-available/>, <http://marine.copernicus.eu/3rd-ocean-state-report-now-available/>

³³ www.copernicus.eu

³⁴ The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the 'OSPAR Convention') was open for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992. It was adopted together with a final declaration and an action plan. All five EU Member States, participants in the Atlantic strategy, are members of OSPAR.

³⁵ Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)

³⁶ For example, the results of EU research infrastructure projects such as EMSO ERIC (<http://emso.eu/>), the AtlantOS project funded under Horizon 2020 (<https://www.atlantos-h2020.eu/>); as well as international initiatives, for example: the Global Ocean Observing System – GOOS (<https://www.gooscean.org/>), GEO – GEOSS and the G7 Future of the Seas and Oceans initiative (<https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/rcn/702822/en>).

e.g. the AtlantOS project that will become a programme³⁷, the evolution of the Copernicus marine environment and climate services to the regional and coastal scale.

In addition to that, **closer synergies between existing infrastructures for coastal protection** will improve the monitoring of the coastline's evolution in the EU Atlantic area. As a first step, this would include **compiling an inventory of regional adaptation strategies and infrastructures** to know what has already been done and share potential best practices. The link between the strategies and the risk assessments as well as risk management plans should be established³⁸. Following an environmental impact assessment, **test spaces and pilot areas** should be developed to test different methods of coastal protection.

Accelerating sea level-rise exacerbated by loss of sediments due to damming of rivers mean that authorities need to decide appropriate remedial action to protect coastal populations – retreat, traditional grey infrastructure or green infrastructure. Coastal wetlands can filter pollutants and regulate flooding but should not be considered only as useful for humans. There are no formal assessments of European wetland loss for the European continent, but losses have been roughly estimated at 80% of the total resource with the greater part in the past 75 years. The value as hotspots for biodiversity cannot be estimated only in economic terms. To support these management, conservation and restoration measures, the partners of the European Marine Observation and Data Network³⁹ (EMODnet) will begin **mapping European coastal wetlands** to complement the existing Europe-wide digital maps of seabed habitats, sea-level rise and beach erosion.

More research will strengthen the available knowledge base. Potential **research topics** can include identifying tools for measuring hydro sedimentary dynamics, strengthening the network of tide-gauges (inside and outside ports), measuring the impact of marine activities on hydro sedimentary dynamics, and researching the social acceptability of risks related to coastal erosion.

As proposed in the proposal for a space regulation⁴⁰, the Copernicus programme will develop in the next multiannual financial framework to address coastal environment, maritime security, impacts of climate change. Regional ocean climate forecasting, decadal predictions, remote-sensing of coastal areas, high-resolution ocean forecasts better addressing meso-scale features and coastal dynamics will be addressed in co-development with Member States.

At the same time, it will be important to ensure that the public is aware and engaged on the issue. One action would be to **educate young people** about the natural evolution of the coastline and the potential dangers of coastal erosion. This could be done through the ocean literacy activities and potential relevant blue school programmes proposed under goal 4 of pillar II. A second action would be to **create information campaigns** for Atlantic coastal communities, particularly residents and property developers in the coastal areas. This would inform on the natural evolution of the coastline, the role of vegetation and natural habitats and protection and emergency plans.

³⁷ The AtlantOS project and the future programme (developed as part of the Galway and Belém Statement implementation) have already developed a European strategy for an All-Atlantic Ocean observing system, which will guide future observation work. This strategy is an integrated concept for a forward-looking framework and basin-scale partnership to establish a sustainable, multi-disciplinary, multi-thematic, efficient, and fit-for-purpose ocean-observing system in the Atlantic as a whole.

³⁸ For the next multiannual financial framework, the Commission has proposed to strengthen the strategic approach to investments in disaster risk management that can be co-funded by EU cohesion policy funds. The new proposed approach requires national authorities to plan multi-annual investments on the basis of disaster risk management plans, that should be based on the assessment of disaster risks, taking into account climate change impacts and outlining prioritised prevention and preparedness measures.

³⁹ <http://www.emodnet.eu/>

⁴⁰ Proposal for a Regulation establishing the space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) No 912/2010, (EU) No 1285/2013, (EU) No 377/2014 and Decision 541/2014/EU – COM(2018)447 final

The implementation should build upon LIFE projects and progress towards a pilot joint strategy on coastal observation in the EU Atlantic area. This would also need to involve local and national stakeholders, such as CEREMA in France.

The actions should ensure that all uses and designations of sea areas are coherent by implementing the EU Directive on Maritime Spatial Planning⁴¹, in particular by taking into account the Natura 2000 network (the largest international network of protected areas, including coastal and marine habitats). Where relevant the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, in the sense of the SEA Directive, should ensure that these plans and programmes are made subject to an environmental assessment and screening prior to their adoption.

The actions under Goal 6 will also be part of the international work under the Galway and Belém Statements.

Actions

- ▶ **Demonstrate a comprehensive alert and observing system for incoming storms and floods in the EU Atlantic area**
- ▶ **Develop synergies between existing EU infrastructures for coastal observation and protection and increase the development of in-situ ocean observatories**
- ▶ **Develop test spaces, pilot areas to test methods of coastal protection and promote nature-based solutions**
- ▶ Promote sustainable practices in coastal and maritime tourism
- ▶ **Compile an inventory of regional adaptation strategies, share best practices**
- ▶ **Create information campaigns for Atlantic coastal communities**
- ▶ **Educate young people and coastal communities about the natural evolution of the coastline**
- ▶ **Share best practices on the application of maritime spatial planning to coastal adaptation and resilience**
- ▶ **Map coastal wetlands for preservation and to monitor their role as carbon sinks**

Goal 7: The fight against marine pollution

A major action under this specific goal could be the development of **litter-free coastal communities and zero-waste islands**. Within these communities, systemic solutions would be united under a common scheme to prevent waste generation and reduce the leakage of litter into the ocean by improving waste collection, management and recycling, promoting circular business models, raising public awareness, and removing litter from the environment (e.g. promoting fishing for litter actions and beach clean-up activities). This project could be implemented across different communities in the EU Atlantic Member States. This would firstly allow the sharing of knowledge and minimise duplication of efforts, and secondly help

⁴¹ Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning

raise awareness of marine litter issues specific to the regions. Within these communities as well as beyond, **joint actions could be organised to prevent and address marine pollution, including by raising public awareness** of the problem. Beach clean-up days, as mentioned previously under the specific goal of ocean literacy, could be one of them.

There are already some ongoing research projects⁴² and monitoring initiatives that map marine litter across the Atlantic. Building on these projects, the specific goal includes an action to use available tools to **identify major pathways, trends and the composition of marine litter, as well as hotspots**, and subsequently to work together with communities to tackle these pathways and, where appropriate, collect litter from the hotspots. This could also help pilot new approaches to prevent leakage of litter into the marine environment, including end-of-life fishing gears.

To further motivate business action, **circular economy-based business models** could be promoted through the development of incentives and environmental certification themes.

Prevention, preparedness and response to accidental and deliberate marine pollution by oil and other harmful substances is the area of work under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism⁴³ and the Bonn⁴⁴ and Lisbon Agreements⁴⁵. Common activities are not equally advanced in all areas, e.g. response strategies and decision-making tools adapted to the regional context require further development, particularly in the Lisbon Agreement. Capacity-building activities like multi-sectorial trainings and exercises for at-sea and shoreline responders, e-learning tools and case studies at regional level should also be enhanced. They will benefit from existing operational services, training and outreach services for oil spill monitoring developed under the Copernicus maritime surveillance service⁴⁶ operated by the European Maritime Safety Agency.

Implementation of these actions would rely to a large extent on local communities. However, research projects such as MARELITT, EUFIR, LIFE GHOST, MARGNET, AquaLit, and NetTag, which are funded under various EU funds (Horizon 2020, LIFE, Interreg, EMFF), and the relevant actors involved provide a first community of stakeholders. Furthermore, conferences and workshops taking place within the scope of the EU action on plastics could serve as a starting point for first exchanges between stakeholders.

On a more general level, the AORA (marine ecosystem approach) Group could also provide a platform to increase overall ocean health by reducing marine litter. Furthermore, the OSPAR marine litter regional action plan proposes a number of actions in the area. Under the MSFD, EU MS are required to monitor and assess litter quantities and impacts in the marine environment and take measures to reduce them; these measures must be coordinated at regional level. Baselines for beach litter have been established for all marine regions around EU and the setting of regulatory thresholds for litter quantities is underway. The EU Strategy for Plastics includes a number of actions to combat plastic marine litter and microplastics and has also an international dimension.

Under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism funds are available also for prevention and preparedness for cross-border risks and for marine pollution at sea and on shore.

⁴² For instance: the GoJelly project to develop a gelatinous solution to plastic pollution; the CLAIM project to clean litter by developing and applying innovative methods in European seas; the TOPIOS project to track plastic in our seas. CleanAtlantic and Oceanwise are major INTERREG projects supporting also the implementation of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan against marine litter

⁴³ Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 December 2013 on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, as amended by the Decision (EU) 2019/420.

⁴⁴ The Agreement for Co-operation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances.

⁴⁵ Cooperation agreement for the protection of the coasts and waters of the north-east Atlantic against pollution.

⁴⁶ <http://emsa.europa.eu/copernicus.html>

The actions under Goal 7 will also be part of the international work under the Galway and Belém Statements.

Actions⁴⁷

- ▶ **Develop a pilot project of ‘litter-free’ coastal communities**
- ▶ **Make use of available tools to identify major sources, pathways and hotspots of marine litter, as well as accidental or deliberate pollution**
- ▶ **Promote circular economy-based business actions, develop incentives and environmental certification schemes**
- ▶ **Launch joint actions to promote a public perception of the problem, e.g. beach days where communities meet to clean the beach**
- ▶ **Promote fishing for litter actions to encourage all fishermen to bring ashore the waste caught into their nets during their normal fishing operations**
- ▶ **Engage under OSPAR to implement collective actions of the marine litter regional action plan**
- ▶ **Promote coordinated and effective implementation of actions against marine litter and underwater noise required under the MSFD for the EU MS**
- ▶ **Support the work under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and of Bonn and Lisbon Agreements towards effective prevention, preparedness and response to deliberate and accidental pollution**
- ▶ **Promote cooperation among sectors for a coordinated at-sea and shoreline response**

3. COMMUNICATION

Improving communication of the action plan and the overarching Atlantic maritime strategy is important for the action plan’s successful implementation. An **assistance mechanism**, funded by the European Commission, will have a key role in devising and coordinating a consistent communication approach in the EU Atlantic area and its coastal regions through a set of visible initiatives: webpage, social media, annual stakeholder conferences, national events. In addition, the assistance mechanism will amplify the efforts of funding institutions to inform the stakeholder community about open funding and financing opportunities and support them to access private investment. Keeping track of the genuine Atlantic projects that received funding and implementing the action plan are another key task that will require maintenance and regular updating of the **maritime data hub**⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ The actions on marine litter must be carried out in coordination with the authorities in the respective countries, which are implementing the OSPAR regional action plan against marine litter that has been in place since 2014.

⁴⁸ <https://maritime.easme-web.eu/>

4. GOVERNANCE OF THE ATLANTIC STRATEGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The governance builds on the existing Atlantic Strategy Group, which will be renamed the Atlantic Strategy Committee, and suggests a framework for operation of the pillars, and it promotes engagement of relevant stakeholders across sectors, coastal regions and countries in complementarity to already existing cooperation structures.

There are both political and operational dimensions to governance: after setting the strategic objectives, the participating countries need to ensure consistent management, guidance and swift decision-making in the implementation, including proper oversight and transparency regarding the achieved results.

4.2. GOVERNANCE

Political coordination is in the hands of the participating countries' designated ministers responsible for maritime affairs. The Member States define the broad political guidelines (including the geography of the Atlantic strategy), take stock of implementation and emphasise ownership of the initiative. The Member States may decide, in consultation with the European Commission, to expand membership of the Atlantic strategy to any interested State.

Operational coordination is ensured through the Atlantic Strategy Committee that acts, within its functions (see chapter 5.1), as a decision-making (executive) body of the action plan and ensures proper involvement of representatives of the coastal regions.

4.3. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

To enable effective implementation, a number of key conditions must be met, with clear decisions taken at an early stage. These conditions are the following:

- ministerial endorsement is required for the revised action plan and its implementation; participating countries must acknowledge that the action plan priorities cut across policies, ministries and levels of government; they set priorities, take ownership and responsibility, align policies and funds at national and regional levels, and encourage the participation of regional authorities, private investors within existing mechanisms and frameworks and provide the relevant means and resources, based on the capacity countries have;
- the Atlantic Strategy Committee proposes/approves flagship actions⁴⁹ and may label projects;
- the European Commission promotes a strategic approach at EU level, including coordination and, to the extent possible, funding alignment with existing EU-related initiatives and instruments⁵⁰ relevant for the pillars and agreed actions;

⁴⁹ Based on avenues of funding (see also Chapter 4).

⁵⁰ Subject and without prejudice to the assessment of the evaluation procedures and criteria for the concerned funds, programmes and projects.

- Governments monitor and evaluate national progress at country level as appropriate, including with the support of the Atlantic assistance mechanism, and provide guidance for implementation;
- the key stakeholders should be involved, including national, regional and local authorities, economic and social actors, civil society, academia and non-governmental organisations. Public events will also promote this involvement (for example, annual fora, business to business and investors pitch/speed-funding events);
- the Atlantic Strategy Committee will make use of periodic progress tracking to report to the political level, and will be responsible for ensuring the action plan's implementation.

4.4. GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE

Atlantic Strategy Committee

The Atlantic Strategy Committee is the decision-making (executive) body responsible for the operational coordination and implementation of the Atlantic strategy and its related action plan. It must ensure continuous political commitment to it at all levels, i.e. national, regional and local. The Committee will be composed of participating countries (standing members), representatives of coastal regions, cities and economic and social stakeholders (associated members), the European Commission and defined observers. The Committee will be chaired in turn by the country members on a yearly rotating basis following an agreed order. The chair-in-office will be supported by the European Commission and in the administrative tasks by the Atlantic assistance mechanism.

Role of the Atlantic Strategy Committee:

- review and update (i.e. define and update the priority areas of) the Atlantic action plan
- ensure strategic coordination of the Atlantic action plan's implementation, including tackling obstacles to its implementation
- define selection criteria, work plans and actions proposed by the priority area coordinators. Approve proposals of (flagship) actions. Review the annual reports of the thematic priority area coordinators
- promote alignment of programmes/ financial instruments at transnational, national and regional levels (e.g. engage with the monitoring committees and managing authorities of ESI funds)
- engage (dialogue and cooperation) with non-EU countries and international organisations in order to support implementation of the Atlantic action plan
- define communication guidelines
- prepare a biennial Ministerial conference (political guidance & validation, review of the action plan's implementation)
- prioritise actions and propose/approve/label projects that help to implement the Atlantic action plan
- provide guidance and inputs to the activities of the assistance mechanism, notably on events and fora (e.g. setting the agenda)

- support the monitoring and evaluation framework of the Atlantic action plan and report once a year to the political level
- elaborate its own detailed working arrangements, if needed.

Composition

The Committee will be composed of standing members (participating countries and the European Commission), associated members and observers.

Standing members

- National coordinators: each participating country decides according to its constitutional framework to be represented by either one or two representatives, including representatives of coastal regions; a country has the prerogative to choose the competent representatives at the Atlantic Strategy Committee.
- European Commission (represented by the relevant departments).

The European Commission will support the implementation of the Atlantic strategy and its action plan, and ensure its coordination at EU level, i.e. between the different EU institutions and related bodies. In particular, the European Commission will pursue the strategic approach at EU level, including coordination with existing EU-related policies and initiatives (including the WestMED initiative, as well as with the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance) and alignment with funds and programmes (including the European territorial and cooperation programmes).

Associated members

- the Committee of the Regions,
- the European Economic and Social Committee,
- the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions,
- the Atlantic Arc Cities, and
- the ATN-Network.

Associated members participate in the meetings of the Atlantic Strategy Committee, but unlike standing members, they do not have voting rights.

Observers

A non-exhaustive list of observers is provided as follows:

- OSPAR Commission,
- INTERREG Atlantic Area programme,
- INTERACT,
- Co-Chairs of the Galway Statement and Belém Statement
- Atlantic assistance mechanism,
- Motorways of the Sea European Coordinator,
- Third-country representatives that expressed interest in joining the strategy.

The Atlantic Strategy Committee may invite observers on a case-by-case basis (e.g. based on the agenda of the meeting).

Meetings and working arrangements

The Atlantic Strategy Committee will meet indicatively three times per year.

Following consultations within the Committee, the standing members define detailed working arrangements.

Working groups

Where opportune and agreed by the Atlantic Strategy Committee, established working groups may be used to help reach the agreed goals, e.g. the Atlantic Sea-Basin Working Group (on connectivity), the AORA Ocean Literacy Working Group, the AORA Marine Ecosystem Approach Working Group, and the SET plan Working Group on Ocean Energy (on marine renewable energy). The chairmanship-in-office acting under the mandate of the Atlantic Strategy Committee is responsible for detailing the exact terms of such cooperation.

The Atlantic Steering Committee may also be convened in an appropriate technical format for discussions on one or more pillars of the action plan.

Pillar/goal coordinators

To advance and coordinate implementation, the Atlantic Strategy Committee will nominate one coordinator per pillar and/or per goal. The role of the coordinator is to facilitate the pillar's implementation and the achievement of the specific goal, including by promoting flagship actions for the Steering Committee's approval. The coordinator will do this by involving and cooperating with relevant stakeholders (e.g. public authorities, business operators, investors, clusters, research centres, regional organisations, European institutions and related bodies) from the entire EU Atlantic area and by shaping flagship project proposals, identifying funding sources, and supporting and reporting on the state of implementation of the pillar/specific goal. To this effect, the coordinator will be supported by the Atlantic assistance mechanism.

The pillar coordinator may be supported by a co-coordinator(s) appointed by the Atlantic Strategy Committee. Regional organisations or representatives of relevant regions can also be appointed as pillar coordinators.

4.5. The assistance mechanism

The Atlantic assistance mechanism, funded by the Commission, supports the governance and implementation of the action plan and the involvement of relevant stakeholders, while also providing operational, logistic and administrative support to the chairmanship-in-office and the pillar coordinators. It supports the Atlantic Strategy Committee in monitoring, reporting and evaluating the initiative and action plan. It also assists with the drafting of working documents and the revision of the Atlantic action plan, which includes defining and quantifying targets, indicators and baselines if necessary. The assistance mechanism will support the pillar coordinators in analysing project proposals, identifying funding sources for selected projects and liaising with the coastal regions, funding authorities and other relevant bodies.

5. MONITORING FRAMEWORK

A monitoring and evaluation framework will measure the success of the new action plan and help to:

- identify whether the plan is being applied on the ground as expected;
- address any implementation problems of an intervention; and/or
- identify whether further action is required to ensure that it can achieve its intended objectives.

The evaluation will be based on the work of the pillar coordinators, who will report on progress towards the agreed targets. While the prime measure of success is the action plan's implementation, a set of **key performance indicators, in line with the intervention logic**, describe in detail what evidence needs to be collected. The indicators aim to serve the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the progress made towards the objectives. Furthermore, the indicators are linked to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The monitoring framework is detailed in the table which follows.

Objectives		Indicator description	Type	Related SDG	Data source & collection	Baseline	Target
	Pillar I: Ports as blue economy hubs	Ports acting as community managers	Qualitative		Evaluation of the Atlantic action plan 2.0 / Stakeholder consultation	No baseline	Stakeholder report activities of ports have evolved by 2025
	Goal 1: Ports as gateways for trade in the Atlantic	Short Sea Shipping - weight of goods transported to/from main ports of the Atlantic regions	Quantitative (tonnes)		Eurostat [mar_sg_am_ewx] Study for Motorways of the Sea 2018-2021 ⁵¹	261 021 kilotonnes (2016)	>0% growth per year
	Goal 2: Ports as catalysts for business	Number of ports that have developed a blue growth strategy	Quantitative (number of ports)		Evaluation of the Atlantic action plan 2.0 /DG MARE	1 (Port of Vigo)	At least 1 port per Atlantic Member State by 2025

⁵¹ The study for Motorways of the Sea 2018-2021 also provides numerous data on the transport and trade flows per short-sea shipping in the Atlantic Region, e.g. with regard to the actual number of regular container and ro-ro service as an indicator for maritime connectivity, the total cargo traffic in tons by cargo categories (e.g. dry bulk, liquid bulk, container etc.) and the number of ship calls by type and size classes. This data is being collected for all core and comprehensive ports on the TEN-T network.

Objectives		Indicator description	Type	Related SDG	Data source & collection	Baseline	Target
	Pillar II: Blue jobs of the future	People employed in blue economy jobs in the Atlantic area	Quantitative (number of people)		DG MARE EU Blue Economy Report (2019) and Blue Indicators tool	1,5 million (2016)	>0% growth per year
	Goal 3: Quality training and life-long learning	Participation rate in education and training for people over 18 in the Atlantic Member States	Quantitative (number of people)		Eurostat (NUTS 2)	12,9% (2016 average), 3,8% lower than EU average	<3,5% lower than EU average by 2025
	Goal 4: Ocean literacy	Perceived ocean literacy in coastal regions	Qualitative		Evaluation of the Atlantic action plan 2.0 / AORA Working Group on Ocean Literacy	No baseline	Stakeholders report increased ocean literacy by 2025
	Pillar III. Marine renewable energies	Installed capacity by technology (MW) in the Atlantic Area	Quantitative		JRC (Petten) and EU Blue Economy Report Business and industrial organisations	7,230 MW (2017)	Increased installed capacity in the Atlantic area

Objectives		Indicator description	Type	Related SDG	Data source & collection	Baseline	Target
	Goal 5: Promote carbon neutrality through marine renewable energy	Investments in the offshore wind and ocean energy sectors (sites, technology, machinery etc)	Quantitative		JRC (Petten) and Business industrial organisations	2017/2018 figures	Increased investments in capacity and infrastructure in marine renewable energy
	4. Pillar IV: Healthy ocean and resilient coasts	Overall health of the Atlantic Ocean environment	Qualitative		MSFD and Ospar assessment Copernicus ocean monitoring indicators	MSFD reports (2018) and Ospar Intermediate Assessment 2017 1 st Copernicus Ocean state report (2017)	Improvement of the overall health of the EU Atlantic by the next MSFD reporting round (2024) and next Ospar Assessment (Quality Status Report planned for 2023)

Objectives		Indicator description	Type	Related SDG	Data source & collection	Baseline	Target
	Goal 6: Enhance Coastal resilience	Percentage of coast vulnerable to erosion	Quantitative		European Environment Agency Data and JRC Ispra Blue Economy Report 2018 and 2019 section/case study Copernicus coastal land service	No baseline (latest reports from 2004 show 11%)	Lower than 10% by 2025