



## Atlantic Arc Commission meeting of the Innovation Working Group

3 November 2016 - Ponta Delgada (Azores-Portugal)

### Minutes

In parallel to the General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (2/4 November 2016 in the Azores), the Innovation Working Group of the Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) met on 3 November, in the presence of the Atlantic Regions: Cantabria, País Vasco, Navarra, Northern Regional Assembly and Nouvelle Aquitaine and the Atlantic Transnational Network. Nouvelle Aquitaine Region has been leading the group since June 2015.

Laurence Harribey, Regional Councillor responsible for European affairs of the Nouvelle Aquitaine Region, recalled that the group's strategic objective is to develop Blue Growth for all the Atlantic Regions and to create jobs. Furthermore, the group's operational goal is to make related professional careers attractive to young people and notably in the field of blue biotechnologies.

This political commitment has been materialised through the submission of a European project called "A Blue Biotechnology Master for a Blue Career" (BBMBC) led by La Rochelle University, under the call for projects "Blue Careers in Europe" launched by DG MARE on 29 February 2016.

**As the project's evaluation results were not known yet, two options were raised with member Regions during the meeting:**

- If the project is approved by DG MARE, the Innovation Working Group of the Atlantic Arc Commission would take an active part as member of the project's Steering Committee. For the record, the Atlantic Arc Commission is a project partner in charge of communication and capitalisation activities.
  - o The Regions' role (at institutional level) within the project would be to facilitate results dissemination at the regional level and raise the profile of the "Blue Biotechnology Master for a Blue Career" at a European level.
  - o The Atlantic Arc Commission Innovation Working Group could thus gather in parallel to project meetings in order to establish a strong link between operational activities and technical and political support from the Regions.
- If the project is not approved, because of intense competition for this call <sup>1</sup>, the group would look for other co-financing options (from Atlantic Regions or other European instruments) to implement this Master's degree.

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<sup>1</sup> 69 applications submitted and 5 or 6 approved

Whatever may happen, promoting Innovation in relation with training in emerging Blue Growth sectors would remain a central part of this Working Group's activities.

Pauline Caumont, Executive Secretary of the Atlantic Arc Commission, specified that the President of the Atlantic Arc Commission (Bruno Retailleau) will propose at the next Atlantic Arc Commission Assembly (1/3 March 2017) changes to the way the Working Groups operate, reorganising them into a reduced number of priority issues for the Atlantic Regions. The topic of training in the new Blue Growth sectors is one of these priorities.

The Nouvelle Aquitaine Region indicated that this specific point on the Atlantic Arc Commission Innovation Working Group would be addressed during the next Atlantic Arc Commission General Assembly in Sables d'Olonne (Pays de La Loire, France).

**The project approval will be known by this time, and the Innovation Working Group could** define more precisely the arrangements for the Atlantic Arc Regions' participation in the project "A Blue Biotechnology Master for a Blue Career" (BBMBC).

Furthermore, Laurence Harribey indicated that the National Contact Point of the Atlantic Strategy Action Plan Support Mechanism (Gildas Borel in France) had expressed his wish to organise a regional information event on the Atlantic Action Plan in Nouvelle Aquitaine. This meeting will take place next 13 April 2017 in Bayonne.

Like the two previous regional events organised in France (in Brittany in April and in Pays de la Loire in October), the Nouvelle Aquitaine Region together with the Atlantic Arc Commission will participate and initiate a dialogue with the Blue Growth regional stakeholders.

The theme of youth training in the Blue Growth sectors, notably biotechnologies, could be addressed on this occasion.