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España – Portugal



*Knowledge and Experience Exchange Event –  
Tourism4SDG Project, Interreg Europe  
Laguna de Duero, 21 January 2026*

# **Interreg Spain-Portugal (POCTEP) Cross-Border Programme**

## **Enhancing Sustainable Tourism through Cooperation**

*Elena de Miguel Gago  
Director, POCTEP Joint Secretariat*



# The POCTEP Area



## The Largest Cross-Border Programme

**6 Cooperation Areas**

**Diverse Needs**

**Over 16 Million people**

**79% Rural Area**

**658 km of River Border**

**1.6 Million ha Protected Areas**



# POCTEP 2021-2027

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## Approved Financial Plan\*

475

M€ (TOTAL)

356

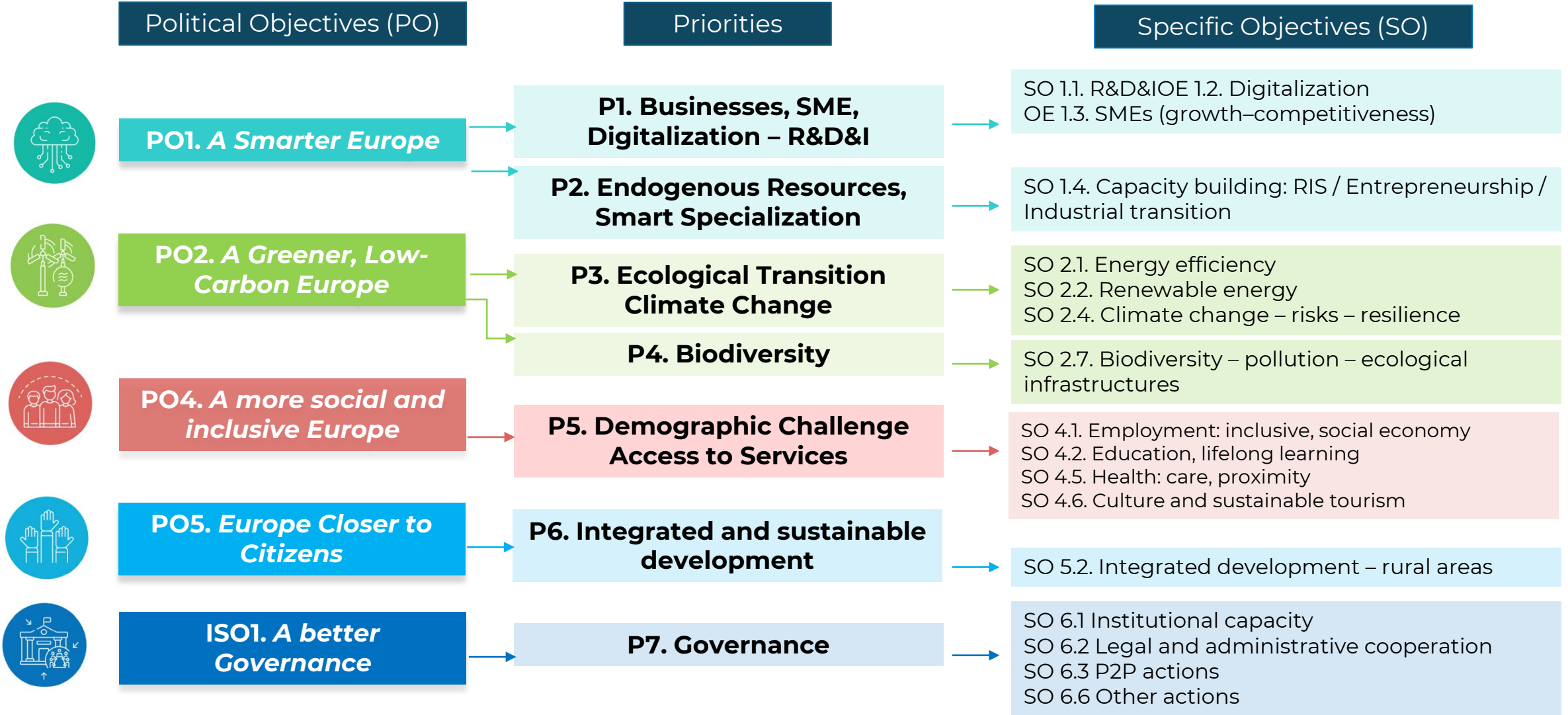
M€ (ERDF)

\* Implementation Decision 16/12/2024 (Programme Revision)  
Execution Decision 22/08/2022



# POCTEP 2021-2027

PO, priorities, SO



**8**  
**Launched calls**

**639**  
**Applications received**

**5 Calls concluded**

**144**

Projects selected

**209**

M€ (TOTAL)

**157**

M€ (ERDF)

**5 Calls concluded**

**144 projects selected\***



**PO1. A Smarter Europe**

**P1: 37 projects**  
**P2: 9 projects**



**PO2. A Greener, Low-Carbon Europe**

**P3: 25 projects**  
**P4: 9 projects**



**PO4. A more social and inclusive Europe**

**P5: 45 projects**



**ISO1. A better Governance**

**P7. Governance: 19 projects**

**Calls 6, 7, and 8 are currently under evaluation, with a decision expected in the first quarter of 2026**



Project's contribution to the Programme's objectives, results, and outputs: clear and coherent justification

Evaluation questions: To what extent does the project align...

...with the **Programme's** cooperation strategy?

...with the priority and specific **objective**?

...with the Programme's **horizontal principles**?

*(Equality between women and men; Equal opportunities and non-discrimination; Accessibility for persons with disabilities; Sustainable development and the New European Bauhaus)*

...with the **environmental** objectives?

...with the **Common** Cross-border Development Strategy and its SDGs?



# POCTEP 2021-2027

## Project evaluation process: strategic criteria



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*Included in the Common Cross-Border Development Strategy (ECDT) and in the agreements arising from the Luso-Spanish Summit*

<p><b>1</b> NO POVERTY</p>	<p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p>	<p><b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<p><b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p><b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p><b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</p>



## POCTEP indicators OE 4.6 – Culture & sustainable tourism

**RCO77. Number of cultural and tourist sites supported**

**RCO83. Jointly developed strategies and action plans**

**RCR79. Joint strategies and action plans adopted by organisations**



## Policy Objective 4 A more social Europe



### Specific Objective 4.6 Culture and sustainable tourism

The Iberian border has **high potential** for development, linked to its rich natural and cultural heritage.

POCTEP has promoted **cross-border cooperation** through a wide range of initiatives, including those related to sustainable tourism.

Themes: green routes, river tourism, rural tourism, historical tourism, fortifications, gastronomy, thermal resources, SME support, sports tourism, "star tourism", Eurocities...



# POCTEP 2021-2027: **sustainable tourism**

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**OP. 4 Social**



**SO 4.6**

**Culture & sustainable tourism**

**21**

Approved projects  
2021-2027



**149**

Partners



**26 M€**

Eligible  
expenditure



**19,5 M€**

ERDF





## POCTEP 2021-2027: Sustainable Tourism

### 0287 FAR PAX 6 P *European Peace through the Bastioned Fortresses of the Raia*

#### Operation of Strategic Importance POCTEP 2021-27

FAR PAX leverages the former military heritage to drive innovation, preservation, and **thematic tourism**

Work with **local communities**: training of professionals, raising public awareness.

**Modernization** of heritage spaces and resources.

**Restoring** fortresses: protecting and improving them

**Cultural activities** to bring heritage to life.

De 01/01/2024 - 31/12/2026

1,2 M€ TOTAL | 894 K€ ERDF



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5 Partners  
Lead: *Município de Valença* (PT)



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## POCTEP 2021-2027: Sustainable Tourism

- ✓ **0311\_CAMINO\_VERTICAL\_6\_E** - *Protecting and promoting tourist sites and cultural heritage along the western Iberian Camino de Santiago routes*

### Operation of Strategic Importance POCTEP 2021-27

Improving historical and cultural **knowledge** of the Routes to create cross-border synergies

Turning the Camino into a **bike-friendly** route

Increasing actual and perceived **safety** for users

**Accessibility**: making sure everyone can access the Caminos, regardless of their abilities.

De 01/01/2024 a 31/12/2026

1,2 M€ TOTAL | 894 K€ FEDER



12 partners

Lead: *Diputación provincial de Badajoz* (ES)





## 0274 HEPRESTONE 4 E - Preventive management of built heritage to protect it from climate change by promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism

**Historic buildings** and sites are increasingly damaged by natural and human risks. Climate change, misuse, and mass tourism affects **both monuments and communities** and their **culture**.

The project identifies and shares good practices, analyzes threats and risks in the EUROACE territory, and **develops early-warning indicators** for **preventive** monitoring.

Developing **IT tools**: algorithm, databases, digital twins and models, pilot monuments, sensors, monitoring, etc.



01/11/2022 - 31/12/2026 | 1 M€ TOTAL | 752 K€ ERDF

**8 partners | Lead: INTROMAC, Instituto Tecnológico de Rocas Ornamentales y Materiales de Construcción**



## 0293\_GERES\_XURES\_MAIS\_SUSTENTAVEL\_1\_P *Cooperation to strengthen the sustainability of tourism activity in the Gerês-Xurés Cross-Border Biosphere Reserve*

**Natural area** shared by Portugal and Spain, with an economy based on agriculture and tourism: environmental protection is a priority.

Sustainability includes **social aspects**: balancing tourism with preserving the environment, but also culture and traditional lifestyle

The project brings **together public administrations** to:

- **Recover and enhance** natural and cultural **heritage**.
- Improve **tourism services**.
- **Train** residents, businesses, and visitors in responsible tourism, circular economy, and entrepreneurship.

**11 partners: Lead: Comunidade Intermunicipal do Alto Minho (CIM Alto Minho)**

01/01/2023 - 31/12/2026

1.3 M€ TOTAL | 1M€ ERDF





## 6 Partners

BP: *Universidad de Santiago de Compostela*



## 0267\_PEGADAS\_1\_E - *Footprints on the Border* — Cross-border experiential learning for youth **SO 4.2 – Skills & Training**

- Participants: **young people** aged 18–29 who struggle to find their first job.
- They take part in local **cultural and work experiences** and create a promotional short film.
- Five-day **expeditions** on the Camino de Santiago. **Mixed groups** from Spain and Portugal.
- **Training programme** in entrepreneurship, digitalization, and sustainability.
- **Tourism promotion** of the Camino, encouraging sustainable tourism, strengthening cultural heritage.



01/11/2022 | 31/12/2026

998 K€ TOTAL | 748 K€ FEDER



## Axis 3: Natural risks and resources

Risk prevention, efficient use of natural resources, and protecting and enhancing cross-border natural heritage have always been key priorities for POCTEP.

In fact, in 2014–2020 it received **the largest financial allocation.**

This **sustainable approach** applies to tourism projects, most of which fall under this thematic objective





How to see the flight or the nesting of the areas with a noisy polluting vehicle?

7 partners | Lead: *Fundación Patrimonio Natural Castilla y León* (ES)



## 0075\_MOVELETUR\_6\_E - Sustainable tourism and electric mobility in natural areas

**UNESCO good practice:** example for Biosphere Reserves

**Clean and ‘silent’ tourism** in cross-border natural areas

A network of “green” tourist routes connected by **electric vehicles** (cars, bikes, carts)

Cross-border cooperation to **connect** strategic charging points

Training for **entrepreneurs and business owners** in tourism with electric mobility

De 01/01/2024 - 31/12/2026

908 K€ TOTAL | 681 K€ ERDF



11 Partners | Lead: Associação Transfronteiriça Lago Alqueva (ATLA)



## 0394\_RDC\_LA2020\_4\_P

### Routes and Cultural Development of Lake Alqueva



*The project has turned lack of industry and population into an opportunity for "Stars Tourism". So that, thanks to its skies, its people do not have to leave their land. Also, the lake´s blue flag beaches attract visitors in search for sunbathing and nautical activities.*

- **Star tourism** and **nautical activities** as an economic resource to fight unemployment and depopulation.
- Promoting "**Destination Alqueva**" by developing tourism products based on its natural and cultural heritage.
- Results: **Dark Sky Alqueva** (award-winning astronomy tourism initiative) and water adventures.

01/07/2015 - 30/06/2019

3,1 M€ TOTAL | 2,3 M€ ERDF



6 partners  
Lead: Extremadura Avante



## 0433\_EUROACE\_SPORT\_4\_E *Deporte y naturaleza en la EUROACE*

- The project uses **sport as an economic resource**, supporting SMEs (hospitality, leisure, and recreation) and people seeking employment who need training.
- By involving **participants from the other side** of the border, the project strengthens relations between neighboring communities and reinforces social cohesion.
- The project creates a unique EUROACE **sports circuit** and tourism packages for athletes and their companions.
- It trains companies and workers by offering **modules for unemployed people** and officially recognizing workers' professional experience.

01/10/2016 - 31/03/2022

2 M€ TOTAL | 1,5 M€ ERDF



LA FRONTERA LÍQUIDA

Eurociudad del Guadiana  
**TERRITORIO MUSEO**

AYAMONTE · CASTRO MARIM · VILA REAL DE S<sup>T</sup> ANTONIO



## 0592\_EUROGUADIANA\_2020\_5\_E European Laboratory of Cross-Border Governance: Eurocity of the Guadiana 2020

- Strengthening institutional cooperation and the **permeability of the border** to improve the quality of life of residents.
- Touristic **joint promotion** (a key sector in Algarve–Andalusia), support for **SMEs**.
- Development of **tourism niches** such as accessible tourism, thematic tourism (“Smuggling Route”), joint cultural agenda, and the “Territory Museum” programme.



3 partners | Lead: Ayto. Ayamonte (ES)  
+ Vila Real Sto Antonio and Castro Marim (PT)

01/01/2018 - 31/12/2022

1,7 M€ TOTAL | 1,3 M€ ERDF

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**Thank you!**

**Interreg Spain-Portugal  
(POCTEP) Cross-Border  
Programme**

*Elena de Miguel Gago  
Director, POCTEP Joint Secretariat*