



Roadmap for the Atlantic Centre

The establishment of the Atlantic Centre has been developing, under Portuguese leadership, since 2018. Initially conceived as the Centre for the Defence of the Atlantic, based in the Azores Island of Terceira, at the Lajes military airbase, and entrusted to the Portuguese Ministry of Defence, the concept underpinning this initiative has evolved and now reflects the fruitful interactions with many partners across the Atlantic over this period. The formal launching of the Centre took place on May 14th, 2021, in the Azores, in the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The Centre has been developing its activities around **three mutually reinforcing tiers**: a platform of **political dialogue**, a **research centre**, and a centre dedicated to **defence capacity-building**. Signalling the support that this vision gathered among partners, by December 2021, 19 Atlantic states had signed a **political declaration** stating their commitment to jointly developing this initiative and sharing its principles, goals and objectives. The initiative remains open to cooperation with all Atlantic nations and organisations, in a flexible and tailor-made approach, and aims to enrol the support of other entities in developing the Atlantic Centre as a facilitator of dialogues, contributing to more and better mutual knowledge in the whole-of-Atlantic, and as a promoter of cooperative mechanisms in security and defence.

The creation of the Atlantic Centre reflects Portugal's **commitment to keeping the Atlantic an area of peace and prosperity, through dialogue and common action**. The Centre acts as a forum for Atlantic dialogue, to address existing challenges and opportunities in the region, but also to shape the role of the Atlantic region in international affairs. In a context of growing geopolitical competition, increases in violent and illegal activities, and ever more complex forms of insecurity affecting Atlantic communities, the establishment of a platform of dialogue bringing together Atlantic nations should be regarded as a shared responsibility.

Portugal's long-standing good relations with countries in all shores of the Atlantic basin, our commitment to multilateralism and peace and security, as well as the valuable geographical position of the Azores, make this initiative an integral part of Portugal's foreign and security and defence policies. The Portuguese Government is committed to developing the actions listed in this Roadmap, over the next three-years, and welcomes supportive actions by all Atlantic countries, organisations and institutions, civilian and military, from government and civil society that share the objectives of the Atlantic Centre.

This Roadmap establishes the **mission** of the Atlantic Centre for the **next three years**, until 2024, as well as the **principles** underpinning its development, the **objectives**, and the **means** to achieve it. It brings together the ideas presented in the **Concept Paper** and the main activities proposed in the **workplan for 2022** discussed among signatory

countries in the second half of 2021. It does so, considering the human, technical, and financial resources, which Portugal is committed to making available, with case-by-case support from the entities cooperating in the activities of the Atlantic Centre.

The **informal character** of the initiative offers important advantages in this early stage of its development. There is **flexibility** regarding the type of activities that can be developed, there are diminished costs for its action, since there is no permanent staff, and there is the possibility of differentiated forms of participation, reflecting varying levels of interest and resources among partners. In order to increase **sustainability** of its projects and **predictability** of the Centre's activities, some level of **institutionalisation** is needed. Portugal will continue working with those partners who are committed to the gradual institutional development of the Atlantic Centre, in order to clarify responsibilities and expectations, as well as to allow for the existence of a dedicated staff in the Azores, who can help this ambition grow.

The Roadmap should also serve as the basis of the work of the **Coordinating Structure** being set up by the Portuguese Government to lead the establishment of the Centre over the next three years. What activities should this team privilege? What end-state does it need to achieve? How long should the process take to develop? What resources will be available? In sum, **what will the Atlantic Centre look like in the coming years?**

Answering this will be critical to ensure ongoing and future projects and activities and to the consolidation of the initiative in the medium and long-term.

Principles

1. **Whole-of-Atlantic approach.** The added value and uniqueness of this initiative rests on the promotion of a whole-of-Atlantic approach, which respects the differences of identity and perception in sub-regional groupings and builds on those distinctive features to develop a more complete and encompassing view of Atlantic security, overcoming divisions between North and South and East and West. This means that efforts need to be made to ensure that a whole-of-Atlantic approach is promoted across all domains of activity, respecting differences, but committed to developing inclusive interactions that contribute to a **shared vision** of the security of the Atlantic.

2. **A broad concept of security, beyond strict military issues.** The focus on security and defence, as parts of a broader spectrum of activities that need to develop in tandem for stability in the Atlantic to be ensured, is key to success. This means that the Atlantic Centre should look for ways to **engage different security agencies** across governments (defence and internal affairs), but also justice departments, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, among others, including regional institutions and civil society, particularly research centres, universities, and community-based organisations whenever relevant. Addressing complex issues in an integrated way will require the Atlantic Centre to develop actions focused on the facilitation of partnerships, committed to **long-term transformation and sustainability**, in land and at sea, in the air, cyber and space domains.

3. **Complementarity.** The Atlantic Centre should develop its activities in a way that complements **existing initiatives**, reinforces partners' initiatives when relevant, responds to existing needs and requests, and promotes new approaches that contribute to the development of an **Atlantic community of interests**. This means developing a permanent effort of information gathering, assessment of opportunities, and investment in cooperative actions.

Mission

The Atlantic Centre will contribute to the development of an Atlantic community of interests, focused on the security of the Atlantic region understood in broad terms, and committed to developing cooperative initiatives and actions to tackle jointly-agreed priorities, under the principle of complementarity.

Objectives

1. **Promote the AC and reinforce commitment to its objectives and activities;**
 - 1.1. Develop outreach activities
 - 1.2. Engage the Centre in relevant partnerships
 - 1.3. Attract new signatories to the Joint Declaration
 - 1.4. Develop Atlantic Centre activities and projects among Atlantic states and organisations.
2. **Promote a whole-of-Atlantic view of security**
 - 2.1. Promote regular exchanges and political dialogue among Atlantic states
 - 2.2. Organise and participate in seminars, workshops and international conferences
 - 2.3. Develop publications and research projects
 - 2.4. Support the development of strategic documents to promote integrated security policies
 - 2.5. Develop training activities in a cooperative manner.
3. **Consolidate an Atlantic Community of interests**
 - 3.1. Facilitate regular high-level dialogue at governmental level
 - 3.2. Develop studies on Atlantic security
 - 3.3. Promote track-two expert meetings
 - 3.4. Create opportunities for dialogue on key issues of Atlantic security across governments and societies.
4. **Establish a multinational Centre**
 - 4.1. Propose a relevant format to institutionalise the Centre
 - 4.2. Enlarge the number of partnerships supporting the AC
 - 4.3. Increase the level of co-funding for AC activities and outputs
 - 4.4. Develop the AC infrastructures in the Terceira Island, Azores.

Actions and Means

In order to achieve these objectives, three main areas of activity have been identified and which will be developed in an **integrated and mutually-reinforcing way**:

- **Tier one - Dialogue** – for an Atlantic community of interests to develop, regular meetings and dialogue on security and defence need to be facilitated, at all levels of society. Starting with governments and their agencies, but also at the level of civil societies and regional organisations, so that a better understanding of the varied realities existing around the Atlantic can develop and so that long-term institutional and personal links can take root. **Trust** emerges when we know and understand each other better. Transparency and dialogue facilitate this **common understanding** of challenges. **To achieve these objectives, the Atlantic Centre should facilitate regular high-level dialogue at governmental level, track-two events with experts focusing on specific topics of interest, and establish itself as a forum for dialogue on key issues of Atlantic security.**
- **Tier two - Research – knowledge production** is key to sound policymaking in a context of fast evolving changes, including through research that deepens our understanding of the threats and risks affecting Atlantic security. It is also crucial to raise awareness on the common problems, to develop shared assessments on how action can be developed, and to mobilise public opinion and expert communities around this important topic of Atlantic dialogue and security. **With this in mind, the Atlantic Centre will foster seminars, workshops and international conferences to develop publications, research projects, and strategic documents that can shape more integrated security policies.**
- **Tier three - Capacity Building** – Two key features shape the security landscape of the Atlantic region: first, the **discrepancy in capabilities** to respond to security challenges; second, the **fast-evolving nature of security challenges**. As all Atlantic nations share the responsibility to address the threats evolving in this region, capacity-building is a permanent requirement. **The Atlantic Centre will team up with existing initiatives to reinforce training and education, to assess and share best practices, and to provide means and opportunities for capability development in leading technological areas and in operational standards, including updating doctrine and means available to Atlantic countries, in the field of security and defence.**

Activities

Considering the tripartite structure of the AC's activities and the proposed goals, the following types of activities will be privileged:

1. **Regular meeting of signatory states and organisations**
 - a. Regular meetings among Points of Contact (POC) of signatory countries and organisations (every three months or whenever relevant), in multilateral and bilateral formats, dedicated to developing specific activities and outputs and to assessing the implementation of this Roadmap.

- b. Annual political level meeting with participants from Defence and Foreign Affairs ministries, as well as from the coordinating and management structures of organisations, to take stock of activities and provide political guidance.

2. Amplify the network of partners and outreach activities

- a. Development of an Action Plan of outreach activities and strategic communications to disseminate the work of the Atlantic Centre, its main objectives and activities nationally and internationally. This should be supported by national, tailor-made action plans developed by each of the signatory states and organisations, to support the activities of their diplomatic, defence and academic networks.
- b. Identification of relevant partners in think-tanks, academia e expert communities and development of outreach activities of the Atlantic Centre for these particular audiences.

3. Political and technical dialogue

- a. Identify opportunities to support and actively contribute to the development of the existing structures of maritime governance in the Atlantic, particularly the Yaoundé Architecture.
- b. Promote regular exchanges on the security environment in the Atlantic and activities that contribute to the development of a shared awareness of existing threats and risks, as well as to compatible forms of action to tackle them.
- c. Support efforts aimed at building trust, preventing conflict and supporting humanitarian responses to crisis situations, under the principle of complementarity and committed to support the sustainability of initiatives.
- d. Promote actions aimed at improving response capacity of states and regional organisations to deal with climate-related events and illicit and criminal activities at sea.

4. Public events and Seminars

- a. Annual Seminar of the Atlantic Centre should continue as a regular activity of the Centre, taking place annually in the Fall (October). The seminar is a partnership with the National Defence Institute of Portugal, aimed at discussing major issues in Atlantic security, with a commitment to:
 - i. promoting a whole-of-Atlantic understanding of security
 - ii. bringing together experts, activists and decision-makers to discuss Atlantic security
 - iii. Increase mutual knowledge

- iv. Identify opportunities for future cooperation
- v. Contribute to the outreach activities of the Centre.

- b. Promote thematic seminars in partnership with universities and research institutions across the Atlantic.
- c. Events dedicated to presenting and discussing relevant studies and reports, in cooperation with diplomatic network and partner countries and organisations.
- d. Promote regular initiatives on Atlantic security, online and in person, dedicated to the general public.

5. Publications

- a. Commission reports/studies, dealing with topics particularly relevant for the Mission of the Centre, co-funded by the participating states, and gathering the most relevant expertise on Atlantic security available in all Atlantic countries. Reports should also contribute to deepening partnerships between the Centre and other research centres and think tanks across the Atlantic.
- b. Raise awareness around relevant subjects for security and prosperity in the Atlantic and disseminate the findings of works and developed research to improve existing policies on the subject.
- c. Publish policy-briefs, gathering expertise across the Atlantic, on topical issues for Atlantic security.
- d. Publish conference proceedings, to make the most significant findings publicly available.

6. Capacity-building

- a. Training of military personnel, public servants and high-level officials in matters related to maritime security and domain awareness.
- b. Doctrine standardization, implementation and information sharing on maritime security.
- c. Collect and disseminate information to benefit signatory states and organisations and develop research on maritime security or related themes.
- d. Information-sharing.
- e. Support the development of best practices that address the land-sea security nexus and maritime security.

7. Institutional Development

- a. Enlarge the number of signatory states and organisations of the Joint Statement.
- b. Develop guidelines for different forms of participation in the Atlantic Centre that reflect the level of interest and commitment of each participating entity.
- c. Establish regular forms of interaction among signatory states and other participants.

- d. Enlarge the number of protocols signed with non-state entities.
- e. Consolidate a network of “Friends of the Atlantic Centre” and alumni through regular communication.
- f. Develop legal acts and gather the necessary human and financial resources needed to establish a multinational centre in the Azores, under Portuguese leadership.
- g. Design the plan to achieve IOC of the Centre.

Methodology

Portugal will continue to lead and invest in this initiative in the coming years, as the Atlantic Centre continues to develop and grow. The existing Joint Statement is an expression of interest in and commitment by the signatories to establishing regular dialogue and cooperation on Atlantic security and defence, as well as to develop the Atlantic Centre itself.

Enlarging the number of countries adhering to the joint statement remains crucial to the success of this initiative. The Centre will also actively enlarge the network of partnerships with organisations and institutions across the Atlantic. There are specific regions where renewed engagement would be very useful: the Caribbean, European Nordic countries, large parts of the African west coast and South America.

Due to the nature of the mission, **MoDs remain the appropriate point of contact for the Atlantic Centre**, but close articulation with other areas of government and society will be key, namely with the **Ministries of Foreign Affairs** and **Home Affairs**. In order to facilitate exchanges, national Points of Contact (PoC) should be indicated within MoDs, which in turn will articulate with other national entities as required. Embassies and diplomatic structures should be engaged to support these efforts, namely in line with the outreach action plans that will be developed. Considering the variations in government organisation among Atlantic nations, the MoDs emerge as a relevant common feature, on which we can build on.

Ensuring the realisation of **regular activities** of the Atlantic Centre is of great importance to prove the benefit of this initiative and the relevance of the mission attributed to the Centre.

Enlarging the number of **partnerships** and support relevant organisations through joint initiatives, across the three tiers is also relevant.

Resources

Portugal is investing in setting up the **facilities** at the Lajes airfield, in the Azores and will reinforce the annual budget dedicated to the AC for 2022, in order to expand and develop the proposed activities. Similar reinforcements would be expected for the following years.



Portugal will also support the establishment of a **Coordinating Structure**, for a period of 3 years that should consolidate this project and initiate the transition towards a formal existence of the centre.

Co-funding, through financial and human resources, should be made available by partners on a case-by-case analysis.

Monitoring

Monitoring the implementation of this Roadmap rests with the Portuguese MoD, namely the General Directorate for National Defence Policy (DGPDN), to whom the new Coordinating Structure for the AC should provide the relevant information. An annual report should be made available by DGPDN to be presented to the Portuguese Minister of Defence for approval, and to signatory countries and organisations, for information. A final report will be prepared by DGPDN.