

PORTUGAL

Europe's Atlantic platform for investment and innovation

A stable, competitive and future-focused economy connecting global investors to talent, technology and high-growth sectors

Lisbon: Fostering a new era of dynamism

Portugal's capital region is one of Europe's most competitive, innovative and future-ready hubs for foreign investors

Generating around 43% of Portugal's gross domestic product, the Lisbon and Tagus Valley region is the country's economic engine. It is home to roughly 28% of the population while covering just 3% of the national territory, illustrating its high urban density and strong economic centrality.

"It is also the country's fastest-growing region, with a 5.0% population increase between 2013 and 2023, reflecting strong economic attractiveness," says Teresa Almeida, president of the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission (CCDR LVT), which plays a central role in shaping the region's economic, environmental and territorial strategy.

The public institute oversees major development frameworks that channel Portuguese and European Union (EU) funding into the region. Among them is the Lisbon 2030 Regional Program, which has allocated nearly \$450 million to competitiveness and innovation, sustainability and resilience, mobility, inclusion and urban development.

The region also benefits from Portugal's \$26 billion Transformation, Recovery and Resilience plan, partly focused on infrastructure. Almeida describes the frameworks CCDR LVT is delivering as "strategic, programming and financial instruments with strong transformative potential," noting they are built through collaboration with businesses, universities, institutions and civil society.

The region is attracting a growing number of global investors, supported by excellent connectivity with the rest of Portugal and countries along the Atlantic. Lisbon is Europe's only Atlantic-coast capital and the region is a key participant in the Atlantic Arc Commission, an EU-backed network spanning Portugal, Ireland, the UK, France, Spain and Canada, which is developing a new Atlantic Macro-Region to address shared opportunities and challenges.

Sustainability is another defining priority. Lisbon was recognized as European Green Capital in 2020 and CCDR LVT is advancing urban development through coordinated public and private initiatives focused on serviced areas, vacant buildings and zones selected on economic, social and environmental criteria. Climate efforts include renewable energy storage, hydrogen adoption, carbon capture and expanded electric mobility.

According to Almeida, three factors make the region truly competitive for investors: "talent concentration, a mature innovation ecosystem and outstanding quality of life. At its core, the region's greatest asset is knowledge."



Teresa Almeida
President, Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission

Lisbon — often called Unicorn City — hosts one of Europe's largest startup systems. It was named European Innovation Capital 2023 and attracted 15 international unicorns over the next two years. This entrepreneurial environment is supported by five universities and leading research centres, including the Champalimaud Foundation, ranked 11th globally in neuroscience. Institutions collaborate closely with local companies, and the overall innovation ecosystem accounts for 45% of national research and development spend.

The combination of talent and innovation is driving investment into sectors like biotechnology, digital technologies and energy. "Even the region's largest sectors are evolving," Almeida says, highlighting advances in gene therapies, automotive robotics and new materials. Other knowledge-intensive high-potential sectors include mobility, aerospace, ocean engineering, defense, decarbonization, agribusiness and creative industries.

"The region emphasizes high-quality infrastructure investment, leveraging natural assets, culture, gastronomy, resilient networks and strong connectivity," she adds. "The focus is on high-impact, catalytic investments ... The challenge is to translate opportunities into cohesive and competitive outcomes that serve the common good and drive progress."



Atlantic Macro-Region: Europe's western gateway emerges as a new investment frontier

A coordinated transnational strategy is transforming the Atlantic into a hub for growth, innovation and global connectivity

As Europe redefines its economic priorities in a shifting global landscape, the Atlantic Macro-Region is gaining momentum as a strategic initiative with strong investment potential. Bringing together Portugal, Spain, France and Ireland, the project aims to reposition the Atlantic seaboard from a peripheral space into a central platform for trade, innovation and sustainable development.

The rationale is compelling. Despite its historical role as a gateway for global exchange, the Atlantic area today faces structural challenges — from limited connectivity to uneven innovation performance. The Atlantic Macro-Region project addresses these gaps by aligning existing cooperation frameworks into a unified strategy, improving governance and channeling funding toward shared priorities.

Portugal, and particularly the Lisbon and Tagus Valley region, is at the heart of the transformation. With its strategic Atlantic location and growing innovation ecosystem, Lisbon is emerging as a key node in this new geography of growth.

The Portuguese capital is the only European capital on the Atlantic coast and, as the most westerly capital in continental Europe, it acts as a key bridge to the Americas. As Teresa Almeida, president of the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Coordination and Development Commission, explains: "The region benefits from a privileged global location as Europe's Atlantic gateway ... Lisbon has gained geostrategic relevance and is actively engaged in the development of the new Atlantic Macro-Region."

The initiative that has been given a mandate by the European Union's main council is structured around four investment-driven priorities: building an innovative and sustainable econo-

my, enhancing connectivity, strengthening climate resilience and promoting social cohesion. These translate into tangible opportunities for investors across a range of high-growth industries.

Among the Atlantic Macro-Region's flagship projects are the Atlantic Clean Industry Valley that seeks to accelerate industrial decarbonization, large-scale offshore renewable energy deployment and the creation of integrated maritime innovation platforms. The Atlantic already leads in marine renewable energy, offering strong potential for investors aligned with the energy transition.

Connectivity is another cornerstone. Plans to modernize rail corridors, develop green shipping routes and expand hydrogen infrastructure aim to reduce bottlenecks and reinforce the Atlantic's role in global logistics and energy networks. Ports across the region are set to become key interfaces between Europe and international markets.

The macro-region also leverages a dense network of universities, research centers and industrial clusters, supporting innovation and talent development. For investors, this means access to skilled human capital and collaborative ecosystems capable of driving high-value industries.

Sustainability is embedded throughout the strategy, with initiatives addressing climate adaptation, biodiversity and coastal resilience — key considerations for long-term, responsible investment.

Ultimately, the Atlantic Macro-Region represents a strategic shift in Europe's economic map. By turning its western edge into a new center of gravity, it offers international investors a scalable, future-oriented platform at the crossroads of continents.