

The PEACE PLUS Programme – Skills Development

The PEACE PLUS Programme is a €1bn investment in the social, economic and environmental development of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Building upon the success of previous cross border PEACE and INTERREG Programmes, it will contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society, leaving a lasting legacy across the Programme area. This will be achieved by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation across six themes, which encompass 21 individual investment areas as outlined below. These have been developed to optimise engagement and participation across all ages, communities and sectors.



A public consultation regarding the potential PEACE PLUS Programme design was held in 2019-20. In response to the views expressed, SEUPB has developed the Programme to encompass a theme (2) entirely focused upon economic regeneration and transformation, including an Investment Area specifically focused on **Skills Development**. This is in addition to other investment areas which encompass a skills development focus.

Skills development is a key priority for the Northern Ireland Executive and the Government of Ireland, so it is important that PEACE PLUS activities are complementary to national statutory programmes. Therefore, the Programme Area Skills Development investment will focus on initiatives with a distinct cross border and/or cross community distinctiveness and added value. This will include enabling increased labour market mobility and inclusion, particularly within those areas where legacy issues have prevented such developments to date. As such, in addition to the associated economic benefits, this investment will result in a more cohesive and inclusive society.

We now look forward to receiving your views on the investment areas proposed as part of the Statutory Public Consultation process and wish to outline all the areas across the Programme which may provide opportunity for skills focused organisations to become involved and begin the preparation of potential projects.

Theme 2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation

<p>Theme 2 is entirely focused upon economic regeneration and transformation. It encompasses four distinct investment areas, including one measure (2.3), entirely dedicated to skills development.</p>	
<p>2.1 SME Development and Transition (€20m)</p>	<p>This investment area will build upon existing investment to support SMEs to operate at scale through cross border collaboration; engage in commercially led innovation; effectively transition to engage in the low carbon, circular economy; and deliver productivity improvements or transition to the latest digitisation tools.</p> <p>It will strengthen the Programme area SME base for maximum engagement in a post Brexit, post COVID-19 economic landscape. It is envisaged that related interventions will incorporate a skills development dimension.</p>
<p>2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund (€58m)</p>	<p>This investment area will support high level, commercially focused research, development and innovation within key Programme area growth sectors; resulting in increased productivity and higher export levels; and sustainable employment. It will deliver major change innovation projects, which result in lasting local and national economic and social benefits. It will contribute to increased and enhanced skills development within key growth sectors including Life & Health Sciences; Renewable / Bio Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Agri-food; Cyber Security; and Artificial Intelligence. It is envisaged that skills development will form a component part of supported projects.</p>
<p>2.3 Programme Area Skills Development Programme (€35m)</p>	<p>This investment area will support area-based approaches, designed to address evidenced skills gaps aligned with national priorities. It will result in increased productivity and labour market participation by providing skilling and upskilling opportunities in sectors with existing and emerging skills requirements. It will also include an opportunity for overseas training and job placement opportunities.</p> <p>The Programme will seek to support projects designed to address evidenced area-based skills barometers on a cross border basis. This will encourage and enable increased levels of cross border labour mobility, contributing to the economic development of the Programme area.</p> <p>The Programme will also enable education and community-based training organisations to develop and deliver skills programmes in those areas in which the legacy of the conflict has led to reduced labour market participation and as a consequence, higher levels of social exclusion. Supported projects will be delivered on a cross community basis and be designed to build the capacity and aspiration of participations to avail of employment opportunities sectors and areas not previously unconsidered.</p>
<p>2.4 Smart Towns and Villages Programme (€30m)</p>	<p>This investment area will utilise a social innovation led approach to maximise the potential of Information Communications Technology (ICT) to deliver improved social and economic outcomes in target areas; particularly those of a rural nature. It will encompass a skills development dimension which is focused upon creating a more balanced economy in which citizens living in rural areas can avail of higher valuer employment opportunities.</p>

Other Skills Development Opportunities in PEACE PLUS

Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	
1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans (€90m)	This investment will enable and empower local community partnerships, led by the local authorities, to select and deliver priority projects on a cross community basis. This will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces, which make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation. A central theme of the plans will be the regeneration and transformation of communities, which will encompass skills development and upskilling initiatives.
Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People	
3.1 Shared Learning Together Programme (€45m)	<p>This Programme will provide direct and sustained contact between children from all backgrounds through collaboration between early childhood settings, schools and youth organisations, to promote good relations and enhance children’s skills to contribute to a cohesive society.</p> <p>The Programme will encompass skills development training in youth work methods for teachers and youth workers, which are proven to be effective in changing attitudes and behaviours.</p>
3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme (€45m)	This investment area will build the capacity of marginalised and disadvantaged young people within the Programme area, while enhancing their confidence, citizenship and employability. Supported projects will develop the capacity of our young people to participate within the labour market. This investment will improve the life circumstances of participants. It will also address key skills shortages and contribute to a more peaceful, productive and profitable Programme area.
Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities	
4.1 Collaborative Health & Social Care (€80m)	This investment will build upon existing and new cross community and cross border collaborative approaches to health and social care delivery models (within specified treatment areas), to deliver an increased number of episodes of care. It will support the development of innovative community based health care interventions, which complement statutory provision (including social enterprise models). As such, it will encompass targeted cross border skills development programmes for those working within the Health and Social Care Sector.
4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion (€50m)	<p>This investment area will support social, economic and environmental projects, which contribute to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas. This will include increased delivery of community services, and development of social enterprise programmes focussed on health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Projects will include those focused upon delivering rural specific further education and upskilling programmes, including those focused on diversification within the Agricultural Sector, such as social farming.</p>

