



## Press Release

**Date: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

### **LAUNCH OF THE INTERREG VA COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR THE NATURAL NETWORK PROJECT (CANN)**

**An €8.3m EU funded environmental project which will help to restore natural habitats and protect endangered species across a range of project sites throughout Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland was launched last Tuesday. The project, known as ‘Collaborative Action for the Natura Network’, or ‘CANN’ for short, is funded by the EU’s INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.**

The launch event was held in County Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland, and was attended by representatives from the project’s major funding bodies and partners. The keynote speaker at the event was Ella McSweeney, an independent journalist and presenter, who has previously worked for the Guardian, BBC and RTÉ. Gina McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), also presented to those in attendance about the importance of the INTERREG VA Programme and the EU’s financial contributions to delivering positive environmental change across borders.

The CANN Project Team, a team of leading scientists, researchers, local authorities, charities and community organisations, is led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. The SEUPB is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland, responsible for managing the EU funding for this vital project that will see actions carried out to help improve the condition of valuable habitats, to help protect vital species, and to work with local people and communities to manage these unique peatland and wetland landscapes and iconic species.

Welcoming the funding, Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, which manages the INTERREG VA Programme said: **“The EU is committed to the protection of our shared natural environment across Europe as demonstrated through its Birds and Habitats Directives. Under the current INTERREG VA Programme approximately €84 million has been allocated to support a wide-range of cross-border environmental**



**protection projects. This project, CANN will serve to further this European environmental policy by improving the conservation status of 3,150 hectares of natural habitats found across Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.”**

Welcoming the project Councillor Mark Murnin, Chairperson of Newry, Mourne & Down District Council, said, **“Newry, Mourne & Down District Council are proud to lead this important new project which will help raise awareness among cross-border communities about the potential threats to the natural habitats and endangered species in their area. It is through effective cross-border collaboration that we can best protect, improve, restore and sustain the threatened habitats and species in our shared regions.”**

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Overall, the project will focus on **seven protected habitats**, as well as **seven priority species** including birds such as the hen harrier, golden plover and red grouse, insects such as the marsh fritillary butterfly, and freshwater species such as white-clawed crayfish.

- **ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editor:**

#### **SEUPB**

The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border co-operation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.



The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.

For more information on the SEUPB please visit [www.seupb.eu](http://www.seupb.eu)

Should you have any further queries on the project please contact:

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