



# PEACE PLUS

## Business Sector



# PEACE PLUS Programme



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

It comprises **six themes**, which encompass **21 individual investment areas**.



# Business Sector and PEACE PLUS



- The former PEACE Programme had a social investment focus designed to improve peace and reconciliation. However, peace and prosperity are intrinsically linked and **the new PEACE PLUS Programme places particular emphasis upon cross border economic development and support for SMEs.**
- **PEACE PLUS can facilitate the involvement of partners outside the Programme area** (Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland), where this will address challenges and opportunities, which transcend geographical borders; and in the case of the Business Sector, contribute to commercial advantage and increased competitiveness.

# Business Sector and PEACE PLUS



- PEACE PLUS includes a dedicated Theme: **Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation (€143m)**
- This comprises four individual investment areas:
  - **2.1 SME Development and Transition €20m**
  - **2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund €58m**
  - **2.3 Programme Area Skills Development €35m**
  - **2.4 Smart Towns and Villages €30m**
- There are other investment areas within PEACE PLUS, which although not exclusively for the Business Sector, will provide significant opportunities for sectoral involvement (**Themes 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6**).

# 2.1 SME Development and Transition

## €20m



- The **SME Development and Transition Programme** will build upon existing investment to support SMEs to:
  - (i) operate at scale through cross border collaboration;
  - (ii) engage in commercially led innovation;
  - (iii) effectively transition to engage in the low carbon, circular economy;
  - (iv) deliver productivity improvements or transition to the latest digitisation tools; and
  - (v) strengthen capacity to engage in a post Brexit, post COVID-19 economic landscape.
- It will result in the development of a stronger, more innovative and collaborative **SME base** across the Programme area, which is **delivering higher levels of productivity, exports and sustainable employment.**

## 2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund €58m



The **Innovation Challenge Fund** will support high level, commercially focused research, development and innovation resulting in increased productivity, higher export levels and sustainable employment.

- It will deliver ***major change innovation projects***, which result in lasting local and national economic and social benefit.
- Investment will be ***targeted within specific sectors***, in which there is the potential for competitive advantage including: Life & Health Sciences; Renewable / Bio Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Agri-food; Cyber Security; and Artificial Intelligence;
- The Programme will provide key ***complementary support for Research & Innovation elements of locally led development plans and area-based strategies***, including the City and Growth Deals, and the National Planning Framework, ***which can deliver cross border economic co-operation***.

## 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development €35m



**Programme Area Skills Development** will support area-based approaches, designed to address key skills gaps, which will result in increased productivity and employment and higher levels of cross border labour mobility.

The Programme will:

- enable ***cross community and cross border collaboration between education and training-based organisations*** which will reduce duplication and maximise the capacity to address existing and emerging skills gaps.
- encompass the opportunity for ***upskilling, reskilling, training and job placement opportunities***.

## 2.4 Smart Towns and Villages €30m



The Smart Towns and Villages Model utilises 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.

The **Smart Towns and Villages Programme** will support:

- the development of Smart Towns and Villages on a ***cluster area basis***
- ***advanced mobile digital hubs***, to ensure the widest possible opportunities for digital access for rural citizens in particular
- ***digital mentoring programmes*** to spread awareness and uptake of telecommunications
- ***digital clusters designed to increase remote working***
- ***transformation of existing assets within town and village centres***

## 2.4 Smart Towns and Villages €30m



### Supported actions will include:

- The design and development of ***advanced mobile digital hubs***, to ensure the widest possible opportunities for ***digital access for rural citizens in particular***.
- ***digital mentoring programmes***
- ***digital clusters designed to increase remote working***
- ***transformation of existing assets within town and village centres*** for citizen recreational and social usage.
- ***Social enterprise / innovation led projects***

# Environment Sector and PEACE PLUS



PEACE PLUS includes other investment areas which not exclusively for the Business Sector, provide significant opportunity for sectoral involvement as follows:

THEME	INVESTMENT AREA
<b>1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities</b>	<b>1.1 Co-designed Local PEACE Action Plans</b>
<b>3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People</b>	<b>3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme</b>
<b>4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities</b>	<b>4.2 Rural Regeneration &amp; Social Inclusion</b>
<b>5. Building a Sustainable and Better Connected Future</b>	<b>5.5 Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme</b>
	<b>5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity</b>
<b>6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration</b>	<b>6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement</b>

# Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities



INVESTMENT AREA	BUSINESS SECTOR ALIGNMENT
<b>1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans (€90m)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will see the creation of <b><i>Co-designed Local PEACE Action Plans</i></b> which enable and empower council led local community partnerships, to self-determine and deliver priority projects on a cross community basis.</li><li>• will provide opportunities to realise <b><i>regeneration and development projects, including those of an economic nature</i></b>, thus providing opportunities for local businesses.</li></ul>

# Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People



THEME	BUSINESS SECTOR ALIGNMENT
<b>3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme (€45m)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will build the <i>capacity of marginalised and disadvantaged young people</i> within the Programme area, while enhancing their confidence, citizenship and <i>employability</i>.</li><li>• will <i>develop the capacity of our young people to participate within the labour market in a manner which addresses key skills shortages</i> and assists SMEs to expand operations and keep pace with economic opportunities.</li></ul>

# Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities



INVESTMENT AREA	BUSINESS SECTOR ALIGNMENT
4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion (€50m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will incorporate a <b><i>strengths-based approach</i></b> to contribute to <b><i>healthy and thriving rural communities</i></b>.</li><li>• will support the <b><i>diversification of rural SMEs, with a particular focus upon the Agricultural Sector</i></b>.</li></ul>

# Theme 5: Building a Sustainable and Better Connected Future



INVESTMENT AREA	BUSINESS SECTOR ALIGNMENT
<b>5.5 Geothermal Demonstration Programme (€20m)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• all SMEs can benefit from introducing energy based technologies which result in both economic and environmental benefits.</li><li>• will incorporate <i>SME focused geothermal energy saving demonstration initiatives and supporting measures</i>. These will be designed to result in <i>increased operational efficiency and profitability</i>.</li></ul>
<b>5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity (€165m)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will <i>enhance the rail network between key urban centres</i> along the economic corridor between Belfast and Dublin.</li><li>• will <i>provide the SME base with increased access to business development opportunities and the labour market</i>.</li></ul>

# Theme 6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration



INVESTMENT AREA	BUSINESS SECTOR ALIGNMENT
<b>6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement (€27m)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• will incorporate activities designed to develop <i>solutions to address current obstacles to cross border collaboration in key areas.</i></li><li>• will include <i>researching future cross border labour market opportunities and related skills mapping.</i></li></ul>

# PEACE PLUS Public Consultation



The purpose of the public consultation is to provide citizens, and other key stakeholders, with an opportunity to share their views on the content and administrative arrangements of the PEACE PLUS Programme, findings from the Equality Screening exercise and the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The consultation started on **Wednesday 10 March 2021** and will end at 5pm on **Wednesday 12 May 2021**.

Information regarding how to respond to the Public Consultation can be found at:

<https://www.seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>