



PEACE PLUS

Environment 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**.



Environment Sector and PEACE PLUS

Our natural environment is one of our most important assets and its enhancement and protection is critical to the future economic and social development.

In recovering from COVID-19, there is an opportunity to deliver a sustainable thriving environment, in which businesses can flourish.

A clean, green and accessible environment makes a major contribution to people having long, healthy and active lives, as well as creating a place where people want to live, visit and invest.

Strategic cross-border investment will enhance and protect our environment, while strengthening the economy in the Programme area.

Environment Sector and PEACE PLUS



PEACE PLUS includes a dedicated Environment Theme: **Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future (€265m)**

- This comprises six individual investment areas:
 - **5.1 Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience €15m**
 - **5.2 Marine and Coastal Management €12m**
 - **5.3 Water Quality and Catchment Management €21m**
 - **5.4 Water Quality Improvement Programme €32m**
 - **5.5 Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme €20m**
 - **5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity €165m**

There are other investment areas within PEACE PLUS, which although not exclusively for the Environment Sector, will provide significant opportunities for sectoral involvement (**Themes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6**).

5.1 Biodiversity, Nature Recovery and Resilience €15m



Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems contribute significant social and economic services including: the provision of fresh water; the air we breathe; healthy soils and food supplies; and medical and pharmaceutical developments.

The **Biodiversity, Nature Recovery & Resilience Programme** presents an opportunity to build upon current INTERREG VA Programme by continuing to promote cross border co-operation and facilitating the recovery of additional protected habitats and priority species.

Investment will support further conservation actions proven to redress biodiversity loss and preserve important environmental, social and economic assets.

5.2 Marine and Coastal Management

€12m



Marine and coastal heritage assets are irreplaceable and can be damaged and/or destroyed by natural processes and human activities. As such, there is an increasing need for the development of marine environment specific climate change mitigation and adaptation plans.

The **Marine and Coastal Management Programme** will enable a cross border approach to the protection of the marine and coastal environment from natural and anthropological threats; safeguarding this irreplaceable natural asset and resulting in economic, social and cultural benefits to the Programme area.

5.3 Water Quality & Catchment Management €21m



Water is essential for the functioning of all life forms that exist on earth. However, it is a limited resource and needs to be carefully managed to protect human life and the natural environment.

The **Water Quality and Catchment Management Programme** will enable a cross border collaborative approach to the management and improvement of water quality in selected cross border water bodies. It will:

- promote sustainable water management
- improve freshwater quality in cross border river basins and increase the percentage with good or high quality.

5.4 Water Quality Improvement Programme €32m



The current INTERREG VA Programme has illustrated the benefits of adopting a cross border, collaborative approach to adequately address the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, in all water bodies, including transitional waters.

The **Water Quality Improvement Programme** will result in an improvement in the water quality of three specific transitional water bodies through cross border collaboration: Lough Erne, Lough Melvin and Donegal Bay. In addition, raw drinking water quality will be improved through the reduction of pollutants, including those of an agricultural nature.

5.5 Geothermal Demonstration Programme €20m



Reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and increasing the uptake of renewable energy sources is a global priority. Heat production is a significant contribution to GHG emissions. Geothermal energy can provide consistent, sustainable and more cost-effective low carbon energy.

The **Geothermal Energy Demonstration Programme** will build the knowledge, skills and capacity required to develop a policy framework and encourage investment in the geothermal technology sector. Associated cross border collaboration to achieve the replacement of fossil fuels by indigenous renewable energy in the heat sector, will result in a reduced reliance on fossil fuels and enhanced energy security. It will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits.

5.6 Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity €165m



Increasing the level of cross border mobility is essential for economic and social and territorial cohesion across the Programme area. Transportation facilitates connectivity and contact between people from Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

The **Enhanced Sustainable Travel Connectivity Programme** will increase connectivity in the form of sustainable public transport. It will involve significant investment in sustainable rail stock. The improvement of the rail service will result in economic and environmental benefits, including contributing to the long-term development of a zero emissions rail network.

Environment Sector and PEACE PLUS



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

THEME	INVESTMENT AREA
1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities	1.1 Co-designed Local PEACE Action Plans
	1.2 Empowering Communities
	1.4 Re-Imaging Communities
2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation	2.1 SME Development and Transition
	2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund
	2.3 Programme Area Skills Development Programme
	2.4 Smart Towns and Villages
3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People	3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme
4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities	4.2 Rural Regeneration & Social Inclusion
6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration	6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement
	6.2 Managing and Forging Relationships Between Citizens

Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities



INVESTMENT AREA	ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ALIGNMENT
1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans (€90m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will enable and empower council led local community partnerships, to co-design Local PEACE Action Plans.• will provide <i>opportunities to develop local projects to be delivered by local organisations, including those with an environmental focus.</i>
1.2 Empowering Communities (€30m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will support the <i>delivery of people-to-people projects, including those in rural communities</i> by local Community & Voluntary Sector organisations through provision of a small grants programme.
1.4 Re-Imaging Communities (€60m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will offer the potential to <i>develop new and transform existing spaces</i> into shared environments for use by all communities. From an environmental perspective, <i>these spaces will be constructed and operated with an emphasis upon sustainability.</i>

Theme 2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation



INVESTMENT AREA	ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ALIGNMENT
2.1 SME Development and Transition (€20m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">will support SMEs to operate at scale through cross border collaboration; engage in commercially led innovation; and effectively transition to engage in the low carbon, circular economy.
2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund (€58m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">will facilitate high level cross border research and innovation projects, including those with an Environment focus, within key sectors such as Renewable Energy and Bio Energy.
2.3 Programme Area Skills Development (€35m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">will support area-based approaches to address emerging skills requirements across the Programme area. This will include a focus upon key Environmental sectors, including Renewable Energy.
2.4 Smart Towns and Villages (€30m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">will result in increased opportunities for remote working within rural communities, which will contribute to a more inclusive and balanced economy and a corresponding reduction in CO2 emissions across the Programme area.

Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People



THEME	ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ALIGNMENT
3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme (€45m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will build the capacity of marginalised and disadvantaged young people within the Programme area, while enhancing their employability.• <i>will provide young people with the opportunities to participate in social action projects, including those of an environmental nature.</i>

Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities



INVESTMENT AREA	ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ALIGNMENT
4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion (€50m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will adopt <i>a strengths-based approach</i> to supporting key social, economic and environmental projects.• will contribute to <i>sustainable regeneration</i>, social inclusion and the creation of healthy and thriving rural communities.• will include the <i>development of natural assets in the form of green infrastructure</i>. This will promote active lifestyles and <i>sustainable connectivity between rural and urban areas</i>.

Theme 6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration



INVESTMENT AREA	ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ALIGNMENT
6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement (€27m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will support engagement of strategic stakeholders, targeting legal and administrative obstacles to cooperation in relevant sectors.• will facilitate dialogue between different actors to establish the challenges and possible solutions to facilitate <i>increased cross border collaboration in key sectors such as Energy and the Environment (including air quality).</i>
6.2 Maintaining and Forging Relationships Between Citizens (€20m)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• will support smaller projects which increase social and civic cohesion on a cross border basis.• will provide opportunities for <i>cross border initiatives led by Statutory, Community & Voluntary Sector</i> organisations, including those with an <i>environmental focus.</i>

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>