



PEACE PLUS

SMEs



PEACE PLUS Programme



PEACE PLUS is a €1bn social, economic and environmental investment Programme

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



PEACE PLUS and Cross Border Economic Development



- 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.

PEACE PLUS and Cross Border Economic Development



- 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**).

How PEACE PLUS will Benefit SMEs



INVESTMENT AREA	OPPORTUNITIES FOR SME INVOLVEMENT
2.1 SME Development and Transition €20m	<p>This will result in a support programme designed to enable SMEs from all sectors to become more profitable and competitive. This will enable SMEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>(i) To operate at scale through cross border collaboration;</i><i>(ii) To increase productivity through digitisation; and</i><i>(iii) To transition to the circular economy</i>
2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund €58m	<p>This will support SMEs and education institutions to engage in commercially focused research, development and innovation within key growth sectors including: Life & Health Sciences; Renewable / Bio Energy; Advanced Manufacturing; Agri-food; Cyber Security; and Artificial Intelligence.</p>
2.3 Programme Area Skills Development €35m	<p>This will support education and training organisations to lead partnerships with SMEs to provide skilling and upskilling opportunities in sectors with existing and emerging skills requirements.</p>
2.4 Smart Towns and Villages €30m	<p>This will support the development of economic focused digital hubs in towns and villages designed to enable SME clustering and networking and facilitate remote working within rural areas.</p>

How SMEs Can Communicate Needs and Opportunities and Get Involved



Now is an opportune time for SMEs to communicate the following to trade associations, enterprise agencies and chambers of commerce, training organisations and education institutions:

- (i) specific areas in which they require developmental support (2.1 SME Development and Transition);**
- (ii) potential concepts for commercially driven research, development and innovation to increase productivity and profitability (2.2 Innovation Challenge Fund);**
- (iii) existing and emerging skills requirements within their sector (2.3 Programme Area Skills Development); and**
- (iv) ways in which digital developments will improve their business (2.4 Smart Towns and Villages)**

This will inform the development of PEACE PLUS projects to benefit SMEs across the Programme Area and beyond.

SME Partnership Opportunities



PEACE PLUS presents new opportunities for SMEs in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland to partner with those located elsewhere on the island of Ireland, where this will contribute to commercial advantage and increased competitiveness.

Now is the time to consider such natural and beneficial linkages, so these relationships and projects can be supported by PEACE PLUS.

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>