



Press Release

Date: 13 May 2017

EU INVESTS €3.28 MILLION TO HELP IMPROVE WATER QUALITY ON A CROSS-BORDER BASIS

The SEUPB has announced a funding offer of €3.28 million, under the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, that will help improve the water quality status of Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle.

The project is called SWELL (Shared Waters Enhancement and Loughs Legacy) and involves a detailed investigation into the causes of water pollution on both sides of the border.

For the first time ever, it will bring together key state-owned water companies from Northern Ireland and Ireland as it will be delivered by both NI Water and Irish Water, in partnership with the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, the Loughs Agency and East Border Region Ltd.

The funding award also has the potential to unlock up to an additional €32 million worth of support from the EU's INTERREG VA Programme to improve wastewater treatment assets that will benefit 10,000 people on a cross-border basis.

The additional funding available to the project will be used in the upgrade and construction of wastewater treatment facilities within the Carlingford Lough drainage basin in Newry, Mourne & Down and Louth council areas as well as the Lough Foyle drainage basin comprising Derry City & Strabane and Donegal council areas.

Upon its conclusion the project will contribute towards improving the status and regional compliance with the EU's Water Framework Directive (WFD) in respect of transitional and coastal waters found in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle and driving a common approach to the management of water resources.

Importantly, the project will also leave a unique 'legacy' model, which for the first time will link various aspects of environmental modelling which will be carried out in the catchments of the respective loughs. This legacy model will assist the regulatory bodies on both sides of the border by identifying approaches to achieving further improvement of overall water quality.



Announcing the funding Gina McIntyre, CEO of the SEUPB which is responsible for the management of the INTERREG VA Programme, said: **“Environmental issues do not recognise nor respect international boundaries. Therefore it is essential that they are tackled on a cross-border basis.**

“By treating each Lough catchment as a single ecosystem, which is impacted by polluters on both sides of the border, this project is truly collaborative in nature. As such it will create a model of co-operation that can be used as a foundation for any future improvement projects for our shared waters,” she continued.

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

David Small, Head of the Environmental, Marine and Fisheries Group at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, said: **“I welcome this good news of EU INTERREG VA monies of €3.3m. This will facilitate important work with the Republic of Ireland to improve water quality. Both the Foyle and Carlingford catchments are international river basin districts under the EU Water Framework Directive and cross-border working on water quality issues is important in tackling pollution. In working with the Republic of Ireland through INTERREG VA, we are able to draw down resources which will lead to real improvements throughout the cross-border catchments.”**

Simon Coveney, TD, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government in Ireland, stated: **“I am pleased to financially support this cross-border project, as it will contribute to achieving the objectives of the EU’s Water Framework Directive. Establishing the causes of pollution and methods to prevent it on an integrated catchment management basis is key to enhancing water quality for the benefit of all.”**

- ENDS.

For more information please contact John McCandless, Communications Manager with the SEUPB on Mob. 07834 778018 or via e-mail john.mccandless@seupb.eu



Notes to Editor:

Background:

- The project is called SWELL (Shared Waters Enhancement and Loughs Legacy) and represents a cross-border partnership comprising of NI Water, Irish Water, Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute, the Loughs Agency and East Border Region Ltd. The partnership will utilise best practice and tap into their individual areas of expertise to effectively achieve outputs and results.

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