

Press Release

Date: 30 May 2017

EU INVESTS €8.1 MILLION TO AID CROSS-BORDER ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY

The SEUPB has announced that €8.1m worth of funding, under the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, has been offered to a new environmental project that will protect endangered species and restore natural habitats, on a cross-border basis.

The project is called 'Collaborative Action for the Natura Network' (CANN) and will be led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council. In overseeing the delivery of CANN the Council will head a consortium of leading government, local authorities, research institutions, community groups and charities from across the region.

Upon its completion, the project will improve the condition of protected habitats and priority species found within Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland.

The protection of these habitats and species will allow the region to meet targets set under the EU's Birds and Habitats Directives along with the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

In total, CANN will produce seven species action plans and 25 conservation action plans covering over 25,000 hectares of land designated as being a 'Special Area of Conservation'.

The project will also deliver a series of education and outreach programmes to help increase awareness and ownership of local communities to potential threats to natural habitats and endangered species.

Welcoming the funding, Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), which manages the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, said: **"This project brings together a wide range of partners with an impressive depth of experience in the field of environmental protection. By working in collaboration with each other they will be able to make a real and lasting difference on both sides of the border.**

"This approach is reflective of the core objective of the EU's INTERREG VA Programme, which has been designed to support the creation of a more sustainable and prosperous cross-border region."



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, Community and Local Government in Ireland along with Scottish Natural Heritage.

David Small, Head of the Environmental, Marine and Fisheries Group at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, said: **“This important new project 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.”**

Welcoming the project Simon Coveney TD Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, said: **“Protecting important habitats and endangered species pays dividends in many ways, and this cross-border project demonstrates an impressive cross-agency commitment to our shared natural heritage.”**

- 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:

Collaborative Action for the Natura Network (CANN)

- The project represents a consortium led by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council made-up of the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute; Argyll & The Isles Coast and Countryside Trust; Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council; East Border Region Ltd; Golden Eagle Trust, the Institute of Technology Sligo, Monaghan County Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Ulster University and Ulster Wildlife.
- The project will focus on seven protected habitats including alkaline fens, blanket bog, active raised bog, marl lakes, calcareous fens, petrifying springs and transition mires/quaking bogs; as well as seven species including white-clawed crayfish, hen harrier, marsh fritillary, breeding waders (curlew, redshank, snipe), golden plover, corncrake and red grouse.



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