



Press Release

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NEW €240M INTERREG PROGRAMME IS SUCCESSFULLY ADOPTED FOR THE REGION

Following detailed negotiation with the Member States (UK and Ireland) the European Commission has formally adopted a new INTERREG cross-border co-operation programme for the Border Region of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Western Scotland for 2014-2020.

In addition to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) investment of more than €240m in the Programme, €43m will also come from national contributions, raising its total value to €283m. The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) will invite potential beneficiaries to apply for funding through a series of open calls starting in the spring of this year.

Welcoming the news Pat Colgan, Chief Executive of the SEUPB, which will be managing the new INTERREG Programme, said: **“This is exciting news and highlights the Commission’s continued commitment to supporting greater levels of cross-border co-operation across the region, in order to improve the lives of local people.**

“The SEUPB looks forward to working with our partners, throughout the delivery of the Programme, in order to bring about positive change in the areas of cross-border healthcare provision, environmental protection, sustainable transport and research and innovation development.”

Commenting on the successful adoption of the Programme, Ireland’s Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin, TD, said: **“I am pleased that the new Interregional Cooperation Programme – INTERREG VA - between Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland has been adopted by the European Commission. This considerable EU investment enables us to continue the important work of previous INTERREG Programmes, which have played an important part in fostering cross border cooperation. The programme will build on the work of economic and social development in the eligible area and fostering cross border co-operation.**

Welcoming the new INTERREG Programme, the Northern Ireland Minister for Finance and Personnel, Simon Hamilton MLA, said: **“I am pleased to note that the 2014-2020 INTERREG VA programme has now been approved by the European Commission.**



Northern Ireland has already benefited significantly from previous INTERREG programmes and this new round presents a further opportunity to benefit, both socially and economically, from the significant funding available in order to improve and enhance the lives of those living in Northern Ireland, the border region of the Republic of Ireland, and Western Scotland.”

In Western Scotland the new INTERREG Programme for 2014-2020 will cover Dumfries and Galloway, East Ayrshire and the North Ayrshire mainland, South Ayrshire, Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, Arran and the Cumbraes, Argyll and Bute and the Western Isles.

Welcoming the announcement, **Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities, Keith Brown MSP**, said: **“This is very welcome news for these communities. This funding will have a positive impact on many people’s lives across a wide-range of important issues like health, sustainable travel and the environment.**

“The cross-border work to improve sustainable travel will complement the work we are already doing in Scotland as we look to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve local air quality and reduce noise pollution.

“I congratulate all those involved in preparing the programme and look forward to its successful implementation. The themes for this funding will make an important contribution to the Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy and help to share best practice across borders.

“I would encourage those in Western Scotland who are eligible for funding to get involved with this programme.”

The new INTERREG Programme has four key priority areas, each with a series of expected outputs, in line with the Commission’s focus on results for the 2014-2020 programming period. These priority areas include research and innovation, the environment, sustainable transport, and health.

- Funding will be available under Research and Innovation (R&I) to build effective cross-border collaboration between SMEs and relevant research institutions across the Programme area. Expected results for the R&I funding include over 400 SMEs in receipt of one-on-one innovation support and over 500 researchers engaged in the delivery of business relevant research for the Health & Life Science and Renewable Energy sectors. (Value: €61m).



- A significant level of funding has been allocated to protect the integrity of environmental habitats, improve water quality, and enhance sewerage networks on a cross-border basis. Expected results include over 10,000 people benefiting from improved wastewater treatment, improved conservation status of 4,500 hectares of natural habitats, and the implementation of 25 conservation action plans. (Value: €72m).
- Funding has been allocated to sustainable transport initiatives to create greater connectivity between the three regions. Expected results include an increase from 8.8% to 25% of the daily share of cross-border journeys using public transport. The number of electric vehicle registrations will also increase ten-fold across the region. (Value: €40m).
- A high level of support will be available for health related projects that will increase the number of healthcare interventions delivered on a cross-border basis. These projects are expected to benefit up to 15,000 patients and 5,000 vulnerable families. (Value: €53).

Over the coming weeks the SEUPB will publicise a rolling calendar of funding call dates on its website www.seupb.eu to inform potential Programme beneficiaries of application submission deadlines.

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Notes to Editor:

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu