



Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

PREPARING THE PEACE PLUS PROGRAMME

European Territorial Co-operation
2021–2027

Stakeholder Engagement Information Document

December 2019 to February 2020



Northern Ireland
Executive

www.northernireland.gov.uk



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

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Part 1: Introduction

1.1 We want your views!

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is one of the six cross-border Bodies set up under the “Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing implementing bodies” signed on 8 March 1999 (the British-Irish Agreement of 8 March 1999).

We are responsible for the implementation of the EU’s PEACE IV (€270m) and INTERREG VA (€283m) Programmes. We also have a signposting role to promote involvement in the INTERREG VB Transnational and INTERREG VC Interregional Programmes.

The SEUPB would like your input to the development of a new PEACE PLUS programme; funding activities related to peace and reconciliation and to economic and social development in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland¹.

PEACE PLUS is a new cross-border EU funding programme for the 2021-2027 period, which will succeed both of the current 2014-2020 PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

This new programme represents an exciting opportunity to continue to fund peace building interventions alongside activities which help to make the region a more prosperous, healthier place to live through funding areas of mutual interest on a cross-border basis.

Input is welcomed from persons or organisations regardless of whether you have been involved in the current or previous PEACE or INTERREG Programmes, or whether this is your first encounter with an SEUPB managed programme.

The PEACE IV Programme 2014-2020, worth €270 million, is a European Territorial Development programme dedicated to delivering real and lasting change in terms of:

- **Shared Education** initiatives,
- Support for marginalised **Children and Young People**,
- Provision of new **Shared Spaces and Services**,
- **Building Positive Relations** between people from different communities and backgrounds.

The INTERREG VA Programme 2014-2020 is also a European Territorial Development programme, with a total budget of €283 million with funding provided across the following areas:

- **Research & Innovation**,
- **Environmental** initiatives,
- **Sustainable Transport** projects,
- **Health & Social Care**.

Further detail on the type of project activities currently funded can be found through the links in Section 2.6.

¹ Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo. Organisations from outside the programme area may be funded when the objectives of the project contributes to the programme objectives within the region (for more information see section 2.2).

1.2 Overview of engagement activities

This wider stakeholder engagement process will contribute to the preparation of a Cooperation Programme document. This document will set out funding objectives and delivery arrangements for the new PEACE PLUS programme. The survey will run from **10 December 2019** until 17:00 **25 February 2020**, with a summary of views published after completion.

In addition to the survey, other engagement activities include: a programme of engagement events; engagement with representative organisations; and with government departments. Alongside this, a socio-economic analysis of the region will be carried out.

Input from engagement activities, together with other research and reports, will form the basis of the draft Cooperation Programme document. A further statutory public consultation will then be carried out, which will give the public the opportunity to comment on the draft Cooperation Programme, as well as on any other supporting reports and assessments. This statutory consultation is likely to be held in the Autumn of 2020.

The EU regulations that will cover the new programme are at a draft stage, and have yet to be approved by the European Council and European Parliament. The draft regulations may be amended during this process. The overall EU budget has not yet been agreed, therefore the budget allocation to the programme is still to be finalised. However, in order to ensure the timely implementation of any future programmes, the Member States (UK and Ireland) have requested the SEUPB to begin preparations, of which stakeholder engagement activities are a key part. This programme planning will run in parallel with final negotiations on the regulations and budget.

1.3 Completing the survey

This pack contains the following key parts:

Part 1 Introduction and instructions on how to respond.

Part 2 A summary outline of the PEACE PLUS programme, explaining key features and highlighting changes from the programmes currently managed by the SEUPB.

Part 3 Survey questions, where you can give your views on the themes and priorities for the new PEACE PLUS programme outlined in Part 2.

To complete this survey, you can respond via our online survey, by email, or by post.

Online Survey

To respond to our survey please follow the link to our online survey platform <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PEACEPLUS> An organisation or individual should only respond once.

Email or Post

While responses via our online survey platform is the preferred option, you may wish to respond to the survey by email or by post. If so, you can download the survey from our website <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS> or you can request a hardcopy response document by contacting SEUPB:

PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu
00 44 (0) 28 90 266 660

Email responses should be sent to:
PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu

Postal responses should be sent to:
2021 -2027 PEACE PLUS
Programme Stakeholder
Engagement
Special EU Programmes Body
2 Clarence St West
Belfast
BT2 7GP

All responses will receive an official acknowledgement from the SEUPB.

1.3.1 Use of responses

The survey requires you to provide your name and postal address. This is for verification purposes only and to prevent multiple responses from the same person or organisation. No anonymous responses will be considered.

The SEUPB will publish a synopsis of the responses. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation we may publish your organisation's name, unless you request otherwise. If you are responding as an individual we may refer to the content of your response but not your name or address, nor will we publish anything which may identify you or other individuals.

Notwithstanding the above, the information you provide in your response, excluding personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Code of Practice applicable to North/South Implementing Bodies. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please contact communications@seupb.eu, but be aware that, under the Code of Practice, we cannot guarantee confidentiality.

Additional information

You may make more copies of this document without seeking permission.

Documentation is available in Irish on the website <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>. Documentation in Polish, Arabic or in other languages and accessible formats will be made available on request. If you have questions related to the survey or require any further information or support in accessing this document, please contact us at:

PEACE PLUS Programme
Special EU Programmes Body
2 Clarence St West
Belfast
BT2 7GP

Email: PEACEPLUS@seupb.eu
Tel: 00 44 (0) 28 90 266 660

If you have comments or complaints about the way this survey has been conducted, these should be sent to:

Complaints Officer,
Special EU Programmes Body
2 Clarence St West
Belfast
BT2 7GP

Email: feedback@seupb.eu
Tel: 00 44 (0) 28 90 266 660

Part 2: The PEACE PLUS Programme

2.1 Background

The cohesion policy (or regional policy) of the European Union provides a framework for financing a wide range of projects and investments with the aim of encouraging economic growth in EU Member States, their regions, and third countries. The policy is reviewed by the EU institutions once every seven years. The next round of programmes will cover the period 2021 - 2027.

In the current 2014-2020 period, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) manages two cross-border cooperation programmes: the PEACE IV programme (total budget: €270 million) in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland (including Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Louth, Monaghan and Sligo); and the INTERREG VA programme (total budget: €283 million) which includes the same area plus the west of Scotland³. The SEUPB has commenced the preparation of a single successor programme for the period 2021 to 2027. This new programme will be called the PEACE PLUS Programme. It is anticipated that the new programme will have the approximate value of the current two programmes combined.

In order to ensure that the new PEACE PLUS Programme will be ready for implementation in early 2021, the SEUPB is initiating this planning process based on the regulations that have been published in draft form.

The EU regulations that set out the rules within which the PEACE PLUS Programme must be prepared, agreed and implemented are the following:

- Common Provisions – Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 375 and annexes,
- ERDF and Cohesion Funds – Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 372 and annexes,

- Specific provisions for territorial cooperation
 - Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 374.

These draft regulations have not been approved and are subject to change. However, as currently drafted, the regulations propose a number of important changes to the way cohesion policy is designed and implemented, which will be referred to below.

2.2 Programme design and eligible area

PEACE PLUS is a new cross-border programme that will contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. The programme will achieve this by funding peace and reconciliation activities, and by funding activities that contribute to North/South cross-border economic and territorial development of the region⁴. The combination of the PEACE and INTERREG type activities in a single programme is reflected in the name of the programme where “PLUS” represents the inclusion of wider economic, social and environmental activities.

The area that the PEACE PLUS Programme funding has been made available for includes Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland. PEACE and INTERREG activities do currently, and can in the future, involve partners and activity outside the programme area, as long as they are making a contribution to the objectives of the programme and benefit citizens within the programme area.

³ Click [here for case studies](#) of the projects funded by the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes.

⁴ Previously funded under INTERREG.

2.3 Thematic focus

Although not yet finalised (and therefore subject to change), the draft regulations define the following five Policy Objectives from which programmes should choose themes for investment in the eligible area (for more information, see Section 2.7):

Table 1: Draft Policy Objectives for the 2021-2027 Funding Period

<p>Policy Objective 1</p>	<p>A SMARTER EUROPE by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation.</p> <p>This Policy Objective focuses on boosting the innovation capacity of the region, the uptake of advanced technology, the growth and competitiveness of the SME sector, and improving digital services.</p>
<p>Policy Objective 2</p>	<p>A GREENER, LOWER CARBON EUROPE, by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation, and risk prevention and management.</p> <p>Actions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • measures to improve energy efficiency, • additional renewable energy production capacity, • smart grids for improved energy management, • improved disaster monitoring, warning or response systems, • improved water and waste treatment, • measures to improve biodiversity.
<p>Policy Objective 3</p>	<p>A MORE CONNECTED EUROPE by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity.</p> <p>This Policy Objective focuses on improving transport and ICT infrastructure in the region.</p>
<p>Policy Objective 4</p>	<p>A MORE SOCIAL EUROPE implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights in the region.</p> <p>This Policy Objective focuses on improving employment opportunities; increasing access to quality education; reducing marginalisation through improved housing and services; and increasing access to quality health care. Actions on community and social cohesion would also be supported under this Policy Objective. All of the PEACE activities within PEACE PLUS must be within this objective.</p>
<p>Policy Objective 5</p>	<p>A EUROPE CLOSER TO ITS CITIZENS by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas, and local initiatives in the region.</p> <p>These initiatives can focus on tourism, cultural heritage, community facilities, and security in urban areas.</p>

The process of developing the new PEACE PLUS Programme includes identifying which Policy Objectives are most relevant for promoting peace and reconciliation and for economic and territorial development of Northern Ireland and the Border Counties of Ireland.

In the case of Peace and Reconciliation activities funded by PEACE PLUS, these will be funded under Policy Objective 4.

Figure 1: Policy Objectives that can be funded under PEACE PLUS



2.4 Increasing simplification and focus on results

Sound, effective and efficient management of European Regional Development Fund requires appropriate, effective and transparent systems. Management and control systems must ensure the prevention and detection of irregularities, including fraud, and thus reasonable assurance on the regularity of expenditure. Programmes and projects must be accountable and demonstrate value for money, therefore processes must exist to be able to capture results for assessment and communication. At the same time the delivery system should be as simple and streamlined as possible to ensure efficient implementation and the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries.

The PEACE IV and INTERREG VA programmes include a number of initiatives to simplify participation in the programmes and to ensure that the results of the programme can be measured and assessed. The draft regulations set out a number of provisions that will enable PEACE PLUS to go even further.

Under the current programmes a number of simplified cost options are already used for payment to projects. The idea of payment via simplified cost options, as opposed to payment of real costs, is to reduce the complexity of reimbursement processes by making payments on the basis of predefined rates.

The main kinds of simplified costs options used by the current programmes are:

- “flat rates” – where costs are calculated through an automatic calculation; and
- “unit costs” – where payments are tied to the delivery of pre-agreed outputs rather than based on the direct costs related to producing the output.

The SEUPB already promotes the use of simplified cost options within the current programmes and wishes to extend the use of simplified costs options. For project partners this will reduce the administrative burden and reduce error rates. In the case of unit costs, this would enable partners to devote more attention to quality of outputs. With unit costs, the evidence that partners need to submit in order to receive reimbursement of expenditure is the evidence of the delivery and quality of the output as opposed to the evidence of the related costs.

2.5 Other administrative and delivery arrangements

The SEUPB will continue to act as a Managing Authority, operating under the scrutiny of a Programme Monitoring Committee consisting of EU, Member State, Sponsor Department, cross-border and other relevant stakeholders. However, certain changes to current delivery arrangements are foreseen in the draft regulation.

Single Jurisdiction Partnerships

Both PEACE IV and INTERREG VA are cross-border EU funding programmes designed to forge peace and reconciliation and foster economic development across the region.

Within PEACE programmes there has always been a specific derogation given to fund projects in a single jurisdiction (although cross-border partnerships are encouraged and much of the PEACE IV programme is implemented on a cross-border basis). Under INTERREG programmes, partnerships must involve organisations from both jurisdictions, with projects co-designed and delivered on a cross-border basis.

PEACE PLUS is a cross-border programme. However, single jurisdiction partnerships (i.e. project partnerships involving organisations from a single country) will continue to be eligible for funding provided they meet the objective of Peace and Reconciliation. Projects addressing wider economic and territorial development challenges (as previously funded under INTERREG VA) will need to involve cross-border partnerships and beneficiaries.

Project Development Support

For the current programmes, support to potential applicants is available in a number of forms, including through the SEUPB website and through events promoting calls for funding.

The SEUPB would like to consider other ways of providing project development support during the new programming period. Examples of additional support could be:

- Expert assistance supporting project development
- A wider suite of events, including networking events and project development workshops
- Additional materials published online, including manuals and instruction videos
- Lump sum payments for preparation costs.

Funding Rate

For projects currently funded under PEACE IV and INTERREG VA, projects are commonly funded up to 100% of project costs. However, there are also many projects that include a contribution from the partners where they are capable of doing so.

In the PEACE PLUS programme the SEUPB will continue to explore arrangements where partners contribute some or all of their match-funding if they are in a position to do so.

2.6 Useful links

Further information can be found on [our website](#) about the following:

- Citizens' summaries of the current [PEACE IV](#) and [INTERREG VA](#) programmes,
- Information about projects funded by the [PEACE IV](#) and [INTERREG VA](#) programmes,
- Information about evaluations underway concerning the current [programmes](#),
- [Output Indicator Guides for current programmes](#),
- Cooperation Programme documents for the [PEACE IV](#) and [INTERREG VA](#) programmes.

2.7 Draft Policy Objectives

As part of the programme design process, programmes must tailor specific objectives to local needs. For funding related to Peace and Reconciliation, specific objectives under Policy Objective 4 will be tailored to focus specifically on Peace activities.

Table 2: Draft Policy Objectives and Specific Objectives for the 2021-2027 Funding Period

PO	Policy objective	Specific objective
1	A SMARTER EUROPE by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation	(i) Enhancing research and innovation capacities and the uptake of advanced technologies.
		(ii) Reaping the benefits of digitisation for citizens, companies and governments.
		(iii) Enhancing growth and competitiveness of SMEs.
		(iv) Developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship.
2	A GREENER, LOWER CARBON EUROPE by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk prevention and management	(i) Promoting energy efficiency measures.
		(ii) Promoting renewable energy.
		(iii) Developing smart energy systems, grids and storage at local level.
		(iv) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and disaster resilience.
		(v) Promoting sustainable water management.
		(vi) Promoting the transition to a circular economy.
		(vii) Enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure in the urban environment, and reducing pollution.
3	A MORE CONNECTED EUROPE by enhancing mobility and regional ICT connectivity	(i) Enhancing digital connectivity.
		(ii) Developing a sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent, secure and intermodal TEN-T.
		(iii) Developing sustainable, climate resilient, intelligent and intermodal national, regional and local mobility, including improved access to trans-European and cross-border mobility.
		(iv) Promoting sustainable multimodal urban mobility.
4	A MORE SOCIAL EUROPE implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights	(i) Enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social innovation and infrastructure.
		(ii) Improving access to inclusive and quality services in education, training and lifelong learning through developing infrastructure.
		(iii) Increasing the socio-economic integration of marginalised communities, migrants and disadvantaged groups, through integrated measures including housing and social services.
		(iv) Ensuring equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care.
5	A EUROPE CLOSER TO ITS CITIZENS by fostering the sustainable and integrated development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives	(i) Fostering the integrated social, economic and environmental development, cultural heritage and security in urban areas.

2.8 Glossary

Table 3: Glossary

<p>Common provisions – Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 375 and annexes</p>	<p>This proposed regulation sets out common rules on planning of programmes, thematic objectives, financial management and monitoring and evaluation of programmes. These rules will apply to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).</p>
<p>Cooperation Programme</p>	<p>The Cooperation Programme is the document codifying programme objectives, results and the types of actions that will receive funding. It describes how these respond to identified challenges and needs of the region. It also sets out arrangements for the management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.</p>
<p>ERDF</p>	<p>The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by reducing inequalities between its regions. A specific portion of the fund is dedicated to border regions. This is called European Territorial Cooperation or INTERREG.</p>
<p>ERDF and Cohesion Funds – Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 372 and annexes</p>	<p>This proposed regulation sets out the rules in relation to the overall goals of cohesion policy and the management and control systems for cohesion policy funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Funding for the PEACE PLUS Programme will come from ERDF and is therefore subject to the provisions of this Regulation.</p>
<p>Flat rates</p>	<p>Where costs are calculated through an automatic calculation. An example of a Flat Rate in the 2014-2020 programming period is the Flat Rate at which partners claim costs under the Budget Heading: “Office and Administration Costs”. Projects do not claim actual costs related to Office and Administration (photocopying, electricity bills etc.). Instead the value of these costs are automatically calculated as rate at which “Office and Administration Costs” are reimbursed (15% of eligible Staff Costs).</p>
<p>Green and blue infrastructure</p>	<p>Green and blue infrastructure is a strategically planned network of natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services such as water purification, air quality, space for recreation and climate mitigation and adaptation.</p>
<p>ICT</p>	<p>Information and Communication Technology.</p>
<p>Intervention Rate</p>	<p>The percentage of the total project budget financed by ERDF.</p>

<p>Simplified Cost Options</p>	<p>The idea of payment via simplified cost options, as opposed payment of real costs, is to reduce the complexity of reimbursement processes by making payments on the basis of predefined rates.</p> <p>The main kinds of simplified costs options used by the current programmes are: “flat rates” and “unit costs”.</p>
<p>SME</p>	<p>Small and Medium Enterprises. SMEs are defined by the European Commission as having less than 250 persons employed. They should also have an annual turnover of up to EUR 50 million, or a balance sheet total of no more than EUR 43 million.</p>
<p>Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)</p>	<p>We are one of the six cross-border Bodies set up under the “Agreement between the Government of Ireland and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland establishing implementing bodies”.</p> <p>The SEUPB is responsible for the implementation of the EU’s PEACE IV (€270m) and INTERREG VA (€283m) Programmes. The SEUPB also has a signposting role to promote involvement in the INTERREG VB Transnational and INTERREG VC Interregional Programmes.</p>
<p>Specific provisions for territorial cooperation – Proposal for a Regulation COM(2018) 374</p>	<p>This proposed regulation sets out the specific programming and reporting arrangements for cross-border, transnational and interregional programmes. It sets out the Policy Objectives, the ERDF, eligibility criteria, financial resources available and criteria for their allocation. It also sets the implementation arrangements, including plans for financial management and control. The PEACE PLUS Programme will be funded as a European Territorial Cooperation Programme and is therefore subject to the provisions of this Regulation.</p>
<p>TEN-T</p>	<p>The TEN-T programme consists of hundreds of projects – defined as studies or works – whose ultimate purpose is to ensure the cohesion, interconnection and interoperability of the trans-European transport network, as well as access to it.</p>
<p>Unit Costs</p>	<p>Where payments are tied to the delivery of pre-agreed outputs rather than based on the direct costs related to producing the output. An example of a Unit Cost in the 2014-2020 programming period is the Unit Cost for SMEs attending a project workshop. Under this Unit Cost, partners can claim a fee for each SME that attends a workshop, rather than the actual costs associated with the workshop.</p>

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