

The PEACE PLUS Programme- Rural Communities

The PEACE PLUS Programme is a €1bn investment in the social, economic and environmental development of Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland.

Building upon the success of previous cross border PEACE and INTERREG Programmes, it will contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable society, leaving a lasting legacy across the Programme area. This will be achieved by funding activities that promote peace and reconciliation across six themes, which encompass 21 individual investment areas as outlined below. These have been developed to optimise engagement and participation across all ages, communities and sectors.



A public consultation regarding the potential PEACE PLUS Programme design was held in 2019-20. In response to the views expressed, the SEUPB has developed the Programme to ensure multiple opportunities for engagement by **Rural Communities**. These include a dedicated measures (4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion), and other areas, which although not exclusively for rural communities, will provide significant opportunities for sectoral involvement (Themes 1,2, 3, 5 and 6) as outlined below.

We now look forward to receiving your views on the investment areas proposed as part of the Statutory Public Consultation process, and wish to outline all the areas across the Programme which may provide opportunity for you to get involved, and initiate the preparation of potential projects.

Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities

Rural Communities have a vital role to play in the creation of a more peaceful and prosperous society. Hence, this Theme includes a dedicated measure to enable rural communities to adopt a strengths-based approach to thrive and reach their full potential through economic, social and environmental interventions.

Projects and activities associated with the **PEACE PLUS Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion Programme** will increase the level of sustained interaction between people from different community, cultural and political backgrounds in rural communities, thus contributing to the creation of a more peaceful and prosperous society.

4.2 Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion (€50m)

This investment area will fund a range of initiatives designed to redress the level of social isolation which can be prevalent amongst people of all ages within rural areas. It will support social, economic and environmental projects, which contribute to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas. This will include investment in: community development human resources; family and community services; social enterprise programmes focused on health and wellbeing (including Social Farming);

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| | and green infrastructure. As such, it will provide a broad range of opportunities for engagement by Community & Voluntary Sector organisations, including those involved in rural development. |
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Other Opportunities for Rural Communities to Engage in PEACE PLUS

| Theme 1: Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities | |
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| 1.1 Co-designed Local Community PEACE Action Plans (€90m) | This investment area will see the creation of Local PEACE PLUS Partnerships across all parts of the Programme area. This structure will enable and empower council led local community partnerships, to co-design Local Community PEACE Action Plans and thus self-determine and deliver priority projects on a cross community basis. It will provide opportunities to develop local projects within rural areas, with many being delivered by rural based Community & Voluntary Sector organisations. These will span a range of areas including: children and young people; health and wellbeing; community regeneration; education and skills; social innovation and social enterprise. |
| 1.2 Empowering Communities (€30m) | This investment area will support the delivery of people-to-people projects in rural communities by local Community & Voluntary Sector organisations. Through the provision of a small grants programme, it will enable participation by smaller organisations who can often be best placed to affect real change and embed peace at local community level. Projects can use any medium which will result in improved cross community relations. Projects will facilitate collaborative approaches by the statutory, community and voluntary sectors, designed to address anti-social behaviours which undermine peace and reconciliation. In this way, the Programme will contribute to the creation of strengthened and more cohesive local communities and provide significant opportunity for engagement by rural communities. |
| 1.3 Building Positive Relations (€30m) | This investment area will provide support for projects which transcend local boundaries and have the potential to achieve significant peace and reconciliation across the Programme area. It will present opportunities for Community & Voluntary Sector organisations with the capacity to deliver large, strategic peace and reconciliation projects, including those involving rural communities. |
| 1.4 Re-Imaging Communities (€60m) | This investment area will offer the potential to develop new and transform existing spaces into shared environments for use by all communities. It will provide Community & Voluntary Sector organisations with the opportunity to develop and manage innovative spaces, including those within rural communities, which contribute to improved peace and reconciliation. These shared spaces will span a range of thematic areas including: children and young people; health and wellbeing; social enterprise, education; arts and culture; tourism and heritage; and sport and recreation. |
| Theme 2: Delivering Economic Regeneration and Transformation | |
| 2.3 Programme Area Skills Development (€35m) | This investment area will support area-based approaches to address emerging skills requirements across the Programme area. It will include a focus upon rural areas. |
| 2.4 Smart Towns and Villages Programme (€30m) | This investment area will support stakeholders including those within the Community & Voluntary Sector to lead the transformation of vacant spaces within town and village centre for communal recreational and social usage. It will support social enterprise / innovation led projects designed to apply advanced ICT to create new |

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| | models of social service and economic development across the Programme area, with a particular focus on rural areas. It will increase opportunities for remote working within rural communities, which will contribute to a more inclusive and balanced economy. |
| Theme 3: Empowering and Investing in Our Young People | |
| 3.1 Shared Learning Together Programme (€45m) | This investment area will be a further development of the PEACE IV cross community and cross border school partnership model. It will provide increased opportunity for Community & Voluntary Sector involvement through the incorporation of non-curricular youth to youth cross community and cross border projects. It will also encompass youth worker collaboration and development. Investment in digital technologies will enable increased participation by schools in rural communities. |
| 3.2 PEACE PLUS Youth Programme (€45m) | This investment area will build the capacity of marginalised and disadvantaged young people within the Programme area, while enhancing their employability. Supported projects will incorporate the 'one good adult' approach. It will provide opportunities for those Community & Voluntary Sector organisations with expertise in working with young people to develop and deliver related projects. The Programme includes a focus on addressing barriers to participation, including transport and as such, will provide increased opportunities for engagement by young people within rural communities. |
| 3.3 Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing (€20m) | This investment area will increase the number of resilient young people within the Programme area, with the capacity to be in control of their own lives and make a positive contribution within their communities. It will focus on the social, emotional and environmental wellbeing of young people, including those within rural communities. An emphasis upon additional, non-formal approaches will create opportunities for Community & Voluntary sector organisations to develop innovative and impactful projects, which will improve of the lives of young people across the Programme area, including those within rural communities. |
| Theme 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities | |
| 4.1 Collaborative Health and Social Care (€80m) | This investment area will support the development of innovative community-based health care interventions, which complement statutory provision (including social enterprise models). As such, it will present opportunities for suitably experienced Community & Voluntary Sector organisations with the opportunity to develop and deliver innovative health and social care projects in communities across the Programme area, including those within rural communities. The Programme includes a specific focus on redressing the health inequalities experienced by many people living in rural communities. |
| Theme 5: Supporting a Sustainable and Better Connected Future | |
| 5.1 Biodiversity , Nature Recovery and Resilience (€15m) | This investment area will focus upon biodiversity and nature protection and as such will directly benefit rural areas. It will include education initiatives and activities, which enable local communities to address climate change. As such, it will provide opportunities for rural based Community & Voluntary Sector organisations to get involved in climate action initiatives. |
| Theme 6: Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration | |

6.2 Maintaining and Forging Relationships between Citizens (€20m)

This investment will finance smaller projects that increase social and civic cohesion on a cross border basis. It will provide opportunities for cross border initiatives led by Community & Voluntary Sector organisations, including those located within and servicing rural communities.